To: Planning Commission
From: Francie Stefan, Strategic and Transportation Planning Manager
Subject: Overview of the Downtown Crosswalk, Sidewalk and Pedestrian Signal Study

Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Planning Commission:

1. Receive an overview of the study and provide input on identified issues and recommendations.

Executive Summary

Virtually everyone who travels to Santa Monica’s Downtown experiences the area on foot at some point in their journey. While Santa Monica is recognized as a walkable community overall, Downtown is the City’s premier walking destination. The Land Use and Circulation Element reflects this emphasis both in setting goals for the downtown and transportation goals citywide.

This report presents a summary of a study currently underway to evaluate the effectiveness of existing pedestrian elements (e.g. crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian signals), identify potential issues affecting pedestrian mobility and access, and provide recommendations for improving pedestrian mobility infrastructure throughout the Downtown. It also updates the Planning Commission on the immediate, ongoing and longer-term improvements related to the Downtown transportation network which were presented to Council on September 27, 2011.

Staff anticipates that many of the longer term improvements to the pedestrian realm will be addressed and incorporated into the Downtown Specific Plan. This study precedes the specific plan and tackles improvements that can be implemented more immediately.
Background

The Council and Planning Commission have indicated the following circulation priorities in their decisions to date:

- Pedestrian orientation and comfort
- Complete streets
- Improved parking accessibility
- Completing a full bicycle network
- Supporting multi modal choices for travel
- No net new vehicle trips in the PM peak hour
- Connections to the Civic Center
- Supporting the sustainability, both economic and environmental, for the Downtown into the future
- Balancing modes of transport to maintain sustainability

The Planning Commission has repeatedly affirmed the importance of walking in Downtown through policy recommendations and review of specific development proposals including:

- Land Use and Circulation Element process, with the need for a superior pedestrian environment being critical in all areas of the City.
- 5th and Arizona development site to retain the important characteristic of being a pedestrian focused Downtown,
- Palisades Garden Walk as an example of connectivity for pedestrians within the Civic Center, and to both Downtown and the oceanfront.
- Parking Structure 6 and the importance of the pedestrian experience on the public right-of-way.
- Expo Light Rail connections and linkages that serve the projected high pedestrian volumes.
- Colorado Esplanade project by the reiterating the desire to have pedestrians be the guiding design element for that signature project
- Discretionary projects in the Downtown and the attention to detail to ensure pedestrian orientation.

This report is a continuation of discussions regarding Downtown including the review of an integrated framework to coordinate the planning, urban design and circulation improvements for the Downtown Expo Light Rail Station and Civic Center CIP projects reviewed by Council on September 27, 2011. The comprehensive report on simultaneous transportation efforts in the downtown is included as Attachment A. The study session focused on changes to the transportation network in advance of and in anticipation of the arrival of Expo Light Rail. This includes changes to the bus network, cycling infrastructure and services, pedestrian changes, parking upgrades and management of the existing roadway network for automobiles. The future of Downtown
transportation relies on both critical small efforts and potential larger investments and decisions. As Downtown Santa Monica evolves, so will its transportation needs. Strategies will need to be adaptable to changing conditions, with a framework that can be proactive and nimble integrating the myriad of solutions necessary to achieve a vibrant Downtown that is both sustainable and economically healthy.

Significant progress has been underway to integrate multiple City decisions into a cohesive vision for transportation in Downtown. Those efforts include:

- Interim parking plan implementation
- Civic Center/Downtown shared use parking study
- Draft Bike Action Plan
- Expo Station Linkages and Betterments
- Colorado Esplanade
- Integration of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) with development projects
- Initiating specific and area planning surrounding Expo stations
- Zoning Ordinance and Interim Zoning updates

In terms of pedestrian-related issues, staff has historically addressed pedestrian mobility and access issues either as a part of broader streetscape improvement projects or from a corridor perspective. The corridor-based approach was most evident by the implementation of pedestrian improvements, such as along Wilshire, Ocean Park, and Santa Monica Boulevards approximately 10 years ago. Since that time, a dedicated CIP fund has been created to maintain existing pedestrian facilities and provide for new pedestrian mobility enhancements. This has facilitated a number of specific studies including:

- An evaluation of pedestrian mobility issues long Colorado Avenue between Lincoln Boulevard and 20th Street
- An evaluation of pedestrian mobility issues at specific locations on Ocean Park Boulevard
- An evaluation of pedestrian mobility issues in the vicinities of the two hospitals
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) and Circular Rapid Flashing Beacon (CRFB) systems
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of in-roadway warning light (IRWL) systems
Each of these investigations have been undertaken with the overall goal of immediately addressing potential safety issues should they arise. Additionally, these studies helped to provide engineering solutions to address concerns, to assist the City in providing consistent levels of pedestrian improvements throughout the City, and to inform City staff of the performance of various pedestrian traffic control devices and warning systems.

This study session will focus on immediate pedestrian mobility and access issues in the Downtown identified in the current study underway. A number of recommendations in the current study, particularly those types of improvements that impact all modes of transportation, may ultimately be incorporated into ongoing efforts. Other recommendations may be implemented on a case-by-case basis, particularly those types of pedestrian improvements that are of a limited scale and affect only pedestrian mobility. Staff is seeking Planning Commission input regarding some of the smaller-scale pedestrian improvements, specifically a variety of pedestrian-oriented traffic control devices. This input will help increase awareness and will inform staff in device deployment.
Discussion

The study area is generally bounded by Ocean Avenue to the west, Lincoln Boulevard to the east, Wilshire Boulevard to the North, and Colorado Avenue to the south; the study area also includes portions of the Civic Center area and Ocean Avenue from Colorado Avenue to Seaside Terrace. The goal of this study has been to evaluate the effectiveness of existing pedestrian elements (e.g., crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian signals), identify potential issues affecting pedestrian safety, and provide engineering recommendations for improving pedestrian safety throughout the study area. Another key component of this study is to conduct a survey of “best practices” in-use in other similar locations.

Some of the key issues to be addressed include the following:
- Uncontrolled midblock crosswalks, including those on 2nd and 5th Streets.
- Additional midblock crosswalks, particularly on 2nd and 4th Street between Broadway and Colorado and on 5th Street between Colorado and Broadway.
- All-way pedestrian crossing phases (e.g., Pedestrian Scramble) at various signalized intersections in Downtown.

To-date, the study has included a survey of existing pedestrian facilities in the Downtown area, a review of recent accident statistics, a compilation of available vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian count data, and supplemental counts of pedestrian volumes during peak hours on weekdays and weekends. In addition to these components, a separate comprehensive update of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle counts in the Downtown is being done. Some overall themes have emerged, including:
- Variable application of mid-block crossings in terms of signage, marking, and traffic control;
- High volumes of pedestrian/vehicle interactions at intersections;
- High volume of pedestrian/vehicle interactions at driveways and alleys; and
- Jaywalking (e.g., crossing a street in locations where no crosswalk exists and/or no other traffic control devices exist).

During field surveys, staff from the City and its consultant identified a number of specific locations where some of the general issues described above were present. Those specific locations include:
- 2nd Street/Santa Monica Boulevard
- 2nd Street/mid-block - between Santa Monica Boulevard and Broadway (adjacent to youth hostel)
- 2nd Street/Broadway
- 2nd Street/Colorado Avenue
- 4th Street/Santa Monica Boulevard
- 4th Street mid-block/Parking Structure driveway (and all Parking Structure driveways)
- 5th Street/mid-block - between Colorado Avenue and Broadway
- Ocean Avenue/Santa Monica Boulevard
- Ocean Avenue/Colorado Avenue
- Ocean Avenue/mid-block - near Loews Hotel
- Arizona Avenue/mid-block - west of 5th Street
- Colorado Avenue at Parking Structure 8 driveways adjacent to Santa Monica Place

Staff have identified preliminary recommendations to address the general issues identified above. The recommendations provide a “toolbox” that can be used in a variety of locations, and can include conceptual design plans for recommended improvements. Some of the preliminary recommendations include:

1. ISSUE: Variable application of mid-block crossings in terms of signage, marking, and traffic control

   INITIAL RECOMMENDATION:
   
   a. Upgrade all signage at marked unsignalized mid-block crossings to be consistent with current standards in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
   
   b. Consider the deployment of a HAWK pedestrian beacon, tied into traffic signal system, at marked unsignalized mid-block crossings with comparatively higher volumes of pedestrians (e.g., 2nd St. between Broadway and Santa Monica Blvd.).
   
   c. Remove underutilized marked crosswalks in locations not critical for pedestrian mobility.

2. ISSUE: High volumes of pedestrian/vehicle interactions at intersections.

   INITIAL RECOMMENDATION:
   
   a. Consider the implementation of all-pedestrian phases at all signalized intersections in Downtown.
   
   b. Consider the implementation of lead pedestrian intervals at key signalized intersections in Downtown (e.g., 4th St./Colorado Ave., Ocean Ave./Colorado Ave.).
   
   c. Consider reducing all traffic signal cycles to shorten the amount of time pedestrians have to wait for a crossing indication.
3. ISSUE: High volume of pedestrian/vehicle interactions at driveways and alleys.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION:

a. Install STOP signs and STOP bar markings at alley intersections with comparatively higher volumes of pedestrians (e.g., Taft Wy./Lincoln Blvd.).

b. Consider the innovative installation of In-roadway Warning Light (IRWL) systems in sidewalks at driveways, to alert vehicles to crossing pedestrians.

c. Consider developing policy to allow for designated personnel to facilitate pedestrian crossings at driveways (e.g., City parking structures).

4. ISSUE: Jaywalking (e.g., crossing a street in locations where no crosswalk exists and/or no other traffic control devices exist).

INITIAL RECOMMENDATION:

a. Consider installing additional signs, or landscaping features to prohibit pedestrians from making illegal mid-block crossings (e.g., 5th St. between Colorado Ave. and Broadway).

b. Consider installing new marked crosswalks at locations with comparatively higher volumes of pedestrians (e.g., 2nd St. between Colorado Ave. and Broadway), when feasible.

Staff are seeking input and feedback on the following items:

- General issues – are there additional issues that should be included?
- Specific locations – are there other locations in the Downtown that should be investigated?
- Preliminary recommendations – what are the initial thoughts and reactions to the preliminary recommendations described above?

Staff will use input gathered at the Planning Commission study session to further refine the evaluation of existing pedestrian mobility issues. Feedback and input obtained from the Planning Commission will also inform the further development of recommendations. These refinements will then be incorporated into the “toolbox” to be finalized for use on future pedestrian mobility projects in the Downtown area.

Prepared by: Sam Morrissey, P.E., City Traffic Engineer
Beth Rolandson, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner

Attachment A: September 27, 2011 Council Staff Report “Coordinated Planning and Implementation of Circulation Improvements in the Downtown and Light Rail Station Areas”
Attachment A

September 27, 2011 Council Staff Report
“Coordinated Planning and Implementation of Circulation Improvements in the Downtown and Light Rail Station Areas”
City Council Meeting: September 27, 2011
Agenda Item: 4A

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Gigi Decavalles-Hughes, Acting Finance Director
Edward King, Director of Transit Services
David Martin, Director of Planning and Community Development

Subject: Coordinated Planning and Implementation of Circulation Improvements in the Downtown and Light Rail Station Areas.

Recommended Action
Staff recommends that the City Council:
1. Review and comment on the planning and implementation of circulation improvements in the Downtown area; and
2. Provide direction on additional efforts to coordinate Downtown circulation and enhance transit connections to Expo stations.

Executive Summary
An integrated circulation system is critical to the continued success of the Downtown. The LUCE implements the community’s vision recognizing the importance of sustainable transportation for a successful future. LUCE policies link land use and circulation for a no net new trip community, optimizing functionality by balancing vehicle, pedestrian, cyclists and transit riders. The Light Rail will bring many additional pedestrians to the City, and particularly the Downtown, who will work, ride, shop and enjoy themselves. City staff is already preparing for ways to accommodate these additional pedestrians, while providing for more effective cycling opportunities and continuing to support the best possible vehicle and transit function. Considering the integrated circulation vision with each transportation and development decision, now and in the future, will allow for the continued success of the Downtown.

Downtown Santa Monica is the location of multiple immediate, ongoing and longer term transportation initiatives. This report inventories the integrated transportation improvements anticipated both before service begins and once service begins on Expo Light Rail service, and discusses comprehensive strategies to be explored as part of the Downtown Specific Plan.
Background

This study session will focus on transportation both before and after the opening of Expo Light Rail service, anticipated in 2015. The Council has indicated the following circulation priorities in their decisions to date:

- Pedestrian orientation and comfort
- Complete streets
- Improved parking accessibility
- Completing a full bicycle network
- Supporting multi modal choices for travel
- No net new trips in the PM peak hour
- Connections to the Civic Center
- Supporting the sustainability, economic and environmental for the Downtown into the future
- Balancing modes of transport to maintain sustainability

This report is a continuation of discussions regarding Downtown including the review of an integrated framework to coordinate the planning, urban design and circulation improvements for the Downtown Expo Light Rail Station and Civic Center CIP projects that was provided to City Council on March 24, 2009. This preceded the July 6, 2010 adoption of the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element which solidified the policy of linking and integrating land use and transportation decisions in order to achieve congestion management, sustainable transportation and substantially increase pedestrian, bicycle and transit usage. Staff returned to the Council on February 1, 2011 to present the coordinated planning, management, construction phasing and communications for approved and proposed projects in both the Civic Center and the Downtown Area. That session affirmed the City’s approach to continually communicate the most current information to the public and coordinate the phasing plans for construction with continuous refinement as project schedules become final.

Significant progress has been underway to integrate multiple city decisions into a cohesive vision for transportation in Downtown. Those efforts include:
• Interim parking plan implementation
• Civic Center/Downtown shared use parking study
• Draft Bike Action Plan
• Expo Station Linkages and Betterments
• Colorado Esplanade
• Integration of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) with development projects
• Initiating specific and area planning surrounding Expo stations
• Zoning Ordinance and Interim Zoning updates

Council held a study session addressing circulation connections between Downtown and the Civic Center on April 12, 2011. That session identified the importance of the Colorado Esplanade to create a strong gateway knitting together the Downtown, Pier and Civic Center, with pedestrian and bicycle connections to Expo Light Rail while supporting critical vehicle access. The Council also discussed longer term priorities, including realigning the 4th Street off-ramp for improved vehicle movements, and widening the 4th Street bridge sidewalk to provide better pedestrian and bike connections across the freeway.

It is helpful to analyze Downtown as the center of a network that connects Santa Monica and surrounding communities to the Expo Terminal station on 4th Street. The Big Blue Bus presented its line-by-line analysis to the City Council on May 10, 2011, which included Preliminary Alternatives Analysis for High Capacity, Short Distance Transit Connections featuring options for new feeder transit service to all three of the Santa Monica Expo stations. This approach will ensure that service to the light rail stations will be addressed through a network approach rather than focusing on each station individually.

This report describes the significant progress on implementing Council’s direction by outlining how City staff is coordinating immediate, ongoing and longer-term Downtown transportation initiatives.
Discussion

Downtown Santa Monica, bordered by Ocean Avenue, Wilshire Boulevard, Lincoln Boulevard and the Santa Monica Freeway, has long been a major destination for Santa Monica residents, visitors and employees. Past plans yielded lasting changes in the landscape such as the creation of the Third Street Promenade, the construction of the Downtown parking structure system, the creation of the Downtown transit mall and the recent reconfiguration of Santa Monica Place. Other features were implemented, but were revised based on updated planning, including the 1979 redesign of Broadway and 5th Street as one-way streets, and their restoration as two-way streets in 1998. Downtown continues to be the daily destination for the employees who work there, a weekly destination for 80% of City residents, a draw for regional visitors, and a top choice for international travellers, as well as home for over 4500 Downtown residents.

The 2010 Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) envisions Downtown as a:

“…thriving, mixed-use environment for people to live, work, be entertained and be culturally enriched. The area has the greatest concentration of activity in the City, anchored by the core commercial district, including the Third Street Promenade and a revitalized Santa Monica Place open-air mall. Downtown continues to expand as a residential area, with a diversity of residential types, forms and sizes…”

The LUCE specifies the following goals related to transportation and the long term well-being of Downtown:

- Maintain Downtown’s competitive advantage as a premier local and regional shopping, dining and entertainment destination, and support its evolution in order to respond to changing market conditions
- Maximize place-making opportunities associated with the Expo Light Rail station to create a vibrant Downtown gateway
- Ensure high-quality implementation of transit-oriented development adjacent to the station
- Prioritize transit connections to the Expo Light Rail station
- Create convenient pedestrian linkages to the Expo Light Rail station
- Create convenient and comfortable bicycle linkages to the Expo Light Rail station
- Enhance the quality and character of the streetscape and urban pattern in the Downtown
- Integrate and interconnect the Downtown, the Civic Center, and the Oceanfront with open space linkages and opportunities for shared parking and circulation improvements
- Address parking needs comprehensively, identifying shared parking opportunities
- Ensure circulation for the Downtown, Civic Center and Beach and Oceanfront Districts is interconnected
- Provide flexible and functional event strategies to capitalize on related pedestrian shopping and dining opportunities as well as maximizing shared parking
- Prepare a Downtown Specific Plan that replaces the existing Bayside District Specific Plan and incorporates the relevant goals and policies of the LUCE, addresses ongoing issues in the Downtown and encompasses the expanded boundaries of the Downtown.

A fundamental construct of the LUCE was to integrate the land use and circulation decisions made on specific private property entitlements, city investments and specific policies to achieve no net new trips. This is a coordinated citywide effort to reduce existing automobile trips and minimize new automobile trips by increasing the amount of trips made by walking, cycling and transit.

**Achieving Goals and Coordinating Investments**

The City of Santa Monica, other public agencies and private property owners are currently developing a broad variety of investments in and around the Downtown. Some of these projects are currently underway, while others are still in the planning stages. This staff report summarizes the circulation initiatives to accommodate all of these projects, while achieving the goals of the LUCE and Downtown stakeholders.

Although the circulation projects described in the next section are organized by transportation mode, each of them works together in order to achieve an integrated system. They are being coordinated with the following principles:
Focus on the Customer
All of the investments discussed below are being designed with the customer in mind, whether that customer is a Downtown shopper, visitor, resident, or employee. Access to and around the Downtown by all modes of transportation should be convenient, easy and fun. For example, the City is currently investing in better way-finding for the Downtown parking structures, providing motorists with real-time information about parking availability not only at the garages themselves, but also at all the main arrival points Downtown, so that if one parking facility is full, the motorist will know where to find the nearest available parking. Similarly, bikeway investments and bicycle programs will also focus on the quality of user experiences, creating a more comfortable, delightful experience for cyclists.

Make Efficient Use of Existing Resources
Over the past decades, the City has invested heavily in Downtown parking, roadway, sidewalk, transit, and bikeway investments. Strategic use and maintenance of resources maximizes the efficiency of these resources. The parking way-finding program is intended not only to make it easier for customers to find parking but also to take better advantage of underutilized parking supply, such as the spaces at the Library garage. Speed, reliability and quality improvements for Big Blue Bus will make the City's major investment in transit more productive.

Capitalize on Others’ Investments
Expo Light Rail will provide new regional access to Santa Monica’s Downtown, delivering hundreds of passengers to the corner of 4th Street and Colorado Avenue with the arrival of each train. Possibilities abound as to how Santa Monica can best capture the value of Metro’s investment in Expo. Parking on private property is not being used to its full capacity and with a coordinated effort can meet needs of other properties in the area. Parking resources on the beach and the rebuilding of the Pier bridge can be evaluated in coordination with the goal to create a bike connection between Downtown and the Beach Bike Path. The City is currently looking at a broad array of opportunities
to shape others’ investments for the good of all citizens, as well as leverage small amounts of public funds to achieve outside funding for a larger benefit that would not be possible were the City acting alone.

**Make it More Uniquely Santa Monica**

Most Santa Monicans visit Downtown at least once a week, making it a frequent destination for useful goods and services for all residents in addition to regional shopping and tourist destination. The Downtown’s unique character that capitalizes on its ocean-side location of extraordinary natural beauty contributes to its retail success in the competitive marketplace. The City’s investments seek to build upon Downtown’s unique character.

**Recognize Limits**

The overall street grid in the Downtown is highly adaptable and efficient, yet the network as a whole has a fixed bandwidth, which regulates vehicle capacity. While there are some opportunities to expand vehicle capacity, some of these measures – like on-street parking removal – require finding a balance with other important goals such as pedestrian comfort or customer convenience. Accommodating future planned development in the Downtown without an increase in vehicle trips requires a fairly small shift in modes – about 10%. Since the majority of trips to the Downtown are short – less than two miles – it is reasonable that some of these trips could be accommodated with the walking, bicycling and Big Blue Bus improvements being planned, as well as from the two other Expo Rail line stations in Santa Monica. More of the longer trips may be accommodated through Big Blue Bus, Expo Light Rail and by carpools, vanpools and express bus service. Some drivers may adapt their travel behavior to take advantage of the substantial improvements made to alternative modes and resulting ease of use, freeing up roadway and parking capacity for new visitors. The large majority of people currently driving to Downtown will continue to be accommodated even as the Downtown grows and adapts to change.
Anticipate the Future

To continue to build upon its success, the Downtown must continually adapt to changing demographics, retail demands, economic trends, and other forces outside its control. Through the Downtown Specific Plan process, these current trends will be investigated, and the planned circulation investments will be designed for resiliency and adaptability. The following section discusses Downtown circulation initiatives that are:

1. Underway and planned to be implemented before operation of Expo Light Rail in 2015
2. Planned to be implemented once Light Rail operations begin
3. Anticipated for future phasing in response to future conditions.


Achieving the access and circulation to support the future vision for vitality, economic health and mixed uses in the Downtown involves a series of projects and initiatives to serve the motorist, cyclist, pedestrian and transit rider. The initial period will focus on construction of the Expo Light Rail starting in Fall 2011. Some additional construction during this period will also include the development of Palisades Garden Walk, Parking Structure 6, Colorado Esplanade and private property development. Wherever possible, these projects will be phased and organized so that impacts to traffic are minimized; however, the Light Rail construction will be the dominant activity affecting transportation in Downtown and beyond.

Parking

*Interim Parking Plan: Parking Structure 6 Construction*

In keeping with the Downtown parking plan recommendations, Parking Structure 6, on Second Street between Broadway and Santa Monica Boulevard, will be rebuilt, with demolition anticipated in February or March of 2012 and completion by the end of 2013. During this time, replacement parking for automobiles will be accommodated with implementation of the Interim Parking Plan. The Interim Parking plan, presented to Council on March 8, 2011, focuses on relocating long-term monthly parkers to the Civic
Center, reducing the number of day-time reserved spaces in Parking Structures 2 and 4, technology improvements, and the use of a temporary 130 space lot at a parcel on the corner of Arizona Avenue and Fifth Street. Updates to the plan were highlighted in an Information Item on August 24, 2011; 100 monthly permit holders have been relocated to the Civic Structure to date. The Downtown Ride has been in service since August 29, 2011 and provides transit service to those who park their vehicles in the Civic Center and are destined for Downtown, with built-in incentives for holders of monthly parking passes. Long term parking needs are discussed below in New Parking Resources.

Parking Pricing
Staff’s focus is on managing the City’s parking resources as a complete system, using pricing and other incentives to encourage use of underutilized perimeter parking facilities in the Civic Center and South Beach locations. Parking pricing will need to be evaluated on a frequent basis, calibrating demand and supply for this resource and adjusting prices accordingly. Following a request for proposals process, staff is in the process of selecting a consultant to complete a citywide parking rate analysis building on the previous efforts that were focused on the Downtown. Staff is also working towards amending Municipal Code sections related to parking. These two strategies will result in the ability to better manage the City’s parking resources.

In-Lieu Fee Parking Program
City staff is initiating the review of the Downtown’s parking in-lieu fee program. Its longtime formula of $1.50 per square foot per year (initiated in 1986) is below the cost of providing structured parking. New recommendations for establishing an in-lieu fee structure and assessment formula for new development in relation to the LUCE-established boundaries are expected in early 2012. The goal is to provide a parking fund which is commensurate with the current cost of constructing new shared parking to serve the area; funding for other transportation services, such as transportation demand
management services, pedestrian improvements, bicycling encouragement and transit, is being explored as part of this effort as well.

Finding Parking
Dynamic way-finding and updated parking availability signage in the Downtown will also be implemented during this time period. Signage displaying the number of available parking spaces and directions to the next available facility, when full, is anticipated to be relocated from the sidewalks to signs similar to those located on Parking Structures 7 and 8 in FY 2011-12. Dynamic message signs, located at freeway exits to direct vehicles to available beach and Downtown parking, therefore maximizing the existing automobile infrastructure, anticipated to be installed in summer 2012.

The City has encouraged private parking lots to be open to the public at market rates during evenings and weekends. Thus far, seven Downtown garages participate by displaying City-issued signs when they offer public parking. The City is exploring how to address concerns about sharing parking, maintenance, liability and staffing the parking facilities to improve this opportunity. The Downtown Specific Plan will evaluate options such as universal valet parking, recently implemented in West Hollywood, to address opportunities to better utilize private parking.

Curb Space
There are many multiple and competing demands for curb space in Downtown.

- Bus Stops and Layover Zones: There is a need to designate curbside space for Big Blue Bus and Metro stops, and in certain locations, for bus layover zones; if transit services increase in downtown more space for these needs may be required. Conceivably, space on streets not used by transit may also be affected.
- Taxis: Ongoing challenges include the appropriate locations for taxis to queue for passengers. Taxi loading zones are currently distributed throughout Downtown on Arizona Avenue, Wilshire Boulevard, and Ocean Avenue. Staff is evaluating the need for more taxi zones throughout Downtown, and is balancing the needs for designated taxi loading zones with the need for public on-street parking.
- Tour buses: Tour buses currently load and unload passengers at locations generally surrounding the Third Street Promenade, on Ocean Avenue, Broadway, and Wilshire Boulevard; this important activity will continue to be needed in the Downtown as valuable curb space is allocated.

- Passenger Loading: Staff has also observed that passenger loading occurs with individual automobiles blocking traffic or stopping at red curbs to drop off or pick up passengers; locations are being contemplated to provide designated locations for these activities at key locations with high demands for passenger loading.

- Valet Parking: Many Downtown businesses also offer curbside valet parking to their customers which need to be balanced with other needs for curb space.

The greatest challenge is balancing the desires of individual businesses and the needs of the greater Downtown community, particularly in the use of highly sought-after on-street curbside space.

**New Parking Resources**

The City continues to implement the Downtown Parking Program, adopted in 2006, which identified a long term approach to building City parking in response to anticipated demand. The program called for a series of upgrades and replacement of existing structures. The program also calls for an ongoing monitoring program, so demand can be evaluated and construction of new parking is matched to additional demand. The replacement of Parking Structure 6 with approximately 350 additional parking spaces is scheduled to be completed in 2013, and the visioning process for the 4th/5th and Arizona site calls for a minimum of 339 additional public spaces at this site as a community benefit to be included in the new development. Staff is engaged in the process of evaluating the appropriate number of potential additional public spaces for the 4th/5th and Arizona site based on economic feasibility, other desired community benefits, current and future demand assumptions, constructability and circulation analysis. The Downtown Specific Plan will identify other opportunity sites for additional shared parking should demand increase.
**Perimeter Parking: The Civic Center, Pier and Beach Parking**

Since 2010, the City has been managing the available parking in downtown, the Civic Center, Pier and beach facilities as one resource. On March 8, 2011, the Council discussed a Civic Center/Downtown Parking Assessment to determine the priority of building additional parking at the Civic Center. The discussion included the important role that the Civic Center parking structure serves as an interim resource for Downtown while Parking Structure 6 is under construction, and that current Civic Center demand can be met with the existing supply until demand increases due to future build-out of Civic Center uses that would replace the existing Civic Center surface parking lot. The study recommended:

- Decisions about future parking in the Civic Center area be evaluated as a comprehensive shared parking supply with coordinated event planning,
- Additional demand studies be conducted once the light rail and the re-purposed Civic Auditorium are operational.

In response to requests from the Pier tenants and Pier Restoration Corporation, the Civic Center/Downtown Parking Assessment is currently being expanded to include a specific analysis of current Pier parking demand. Nelson/Nygaard, working with the Pier community, is conducting an additional research effort to evaluate demand for parking at the Pier and recommend near term shared parking improvements that can address needs in advance of the Pier master planning process. Decisions arising from that research will continue to inform potential improvements to Pier and beach parking.

**Pedestrian Improvements**

The City is currently conducting a study of pedestrian issues throughout Downtown. The goal of this study will be to evaluate the effectiveness of existing pedestrian elements (e.g., crosswalk treatments, sidewalk widths), identify potential issues affecting pedestrian mobility, and provide recommendations for improving pedestrian mobility throughout the study area. The study will provide a range of potential recommendations with a variety of costs to address the identified concerns. Recommendations will also focus on non-capital solutions and the development of a
“toolkit” of solutions that could be implemented. This “toolkit” will be reviewed with stakeholders prior to identifying final recommendations.

Pedestrian improvements are an immediate priority. A number of initiatives are being pursued simultaneously, including wider sidewalks in new developments, requiring pedestrian oriented design at the ground floor and investigating connection improvements across the freeway and intersections with the greatest pedestrian volumes. The decision to invest in the Colorado Esplanade is a powerful statement of the important role pedestrians have in the area. Pedestrian circulation will be a key component of the Downtown Specific Plan.

As such, staff has gathered quantitative data about pedestrian patterns in the Downtown. A pedestrian-only traffic signal phasing, also known as a ‘ped scramble’, allowing time at a signalized intersections where pedestrians only can cross the street in any direction, was tested in November and December 2010. The test was inconclusive as to the benefit of an all-way pedestrian phase. Some pedestrians made use of the diagonal crossing component, and the test appeared beneficial to pedestrians in terms of providing more crossing opportunities. A review of intersection operations indicates that the all-way pedestrian phase degraded peak hour operations for vehicles. Furthermore, an analysis of the total throughput of vehicles and pedestrians indicates the all-way pedestrian phase resulted in slightly less throughput than normal intersection operations. For future consideration, the performance of all-way pedestrian phase intersections may be enhanced through the following measures:

- Increased signage
- Conversion of more intersections to all-way pedestrian phase intersections (to increase awareness for Downtown pedestrians)
- Implementation of permanent pedestrian phases on all Downtown traffic signals (to remove pedestrian push buttons and educate pedestrians to observe “Walk” and “Don’t Walk” indications)
- Increased markings on-street to indicate modifications to the intersection.
**Bicycles**

Bicycle use continues to grow in popularity for people traveling within and to Santa Monica. Immediate changes to the bicycling landscape include the opening this Fall of the Downtown Bike Center in Parking Structures 7 and 8. The Bike Center will provide 260 secure bike parking spaces, bike repair facilities, showers, lockers, and bike rentals. It will also offer programs including bike share for local employees, bicycle education, maintenance workshops, and supporting retail. New directional signage approaching the Center and some restriping of the intersections of Broadway/2nd Street will be installed to accommodate bicyclists arriving at these corners.

The draft Bicycle Action Plan, released on August 5, also calls for better accommodations for bicycles in the Downtown. Major Downtown recommendations include:

- Redesigning 2nd Street in the next five years to create green buffered bike lanes resulting in a configuration similar to Main Street
- Adding bike facilities to the Colorado Esplanade
- Enhancing Broadway with green lanes and buffer zones to provide space between cyclists and parked cars, from 6th Street eastwards on this primary east-west street
- Improving the existing Arizona Avenue and Broadway bike lanes with buffered bike lanes
- Improving the existing Ocean Avenue and Main Street bike lanes with buffered bike lanes
- Improving and extending the existing 6th and 7th Street bike lanes, and
- Creating a high quality bikeway in the 17th Street corridor, allowing for a better bike connection to Sunset Park, and improving the bicycle connection between Ocean Avenue and the regional bike path.

**Transit**

Most of the Big Blue Bus lines originate in or pass through Downtown and connect this core destination with virtually every part of Santa Monica as well as with surrounding communities that are the source of many of the most frequent visitors and commuters to Downtown. While the routes using the transit mall benefit from bus only lanes, buses
travelling north-south struggle with slow travel speeds and the need to bring riders as close to their destinations as possible. Challenges include the need for layover zones for bus service that ends and starts in Downtown Santa Monica and the multiple demands for space adjacent to Downtown’s curbs.

New bus stop amenities will be installed at Downtown bus stop locations, as part of the upgrade of 360 citywide bus stops, providing both shade units and seating for bus riders and increased visibility for bus service in general. Ninety-six of the stops with the highest boarding volumes will feature real time signage. The stops on Broadway and Santa Monica Boulevard that are within the Transit Mall and feature the long shelters and arbors will remain unchanged.

During the reconstruction of Parking Structure 6, anticipated through fall 2013, the temporary Downtown Ride will connect people parking in the Civic Center with Downtown destinations. The Downtown Ride supplements existing Big Blue Bus and Metro bus service during this time period. Connecting the concentration of employees on Wilshire Boulevard through shuttle service would also reinforce the concept of having people already in Downtown stay in Downtown for activities, such as lunch or shopping. A permanent future Tide Ride/hotel transit replacement is being considered, and could take the form of a Downtown circulator. Although the Tide Ride is no longer in operation, outreach has been conducted with the funding hotels, Downtown business interests, and other stakeholders on possible replacement services. Planning efforts for a replacement service will continue as Downtown circulation alternatives are developed in more detail.

**Coordination and Cooperation**

*Construction Coordination*

Circulation for all modes of travel will be carefully considered during the phasing and traffic control of pending construction projects on privately owned property as well as city projects. Staff from all City departments is closely coordinating to anticipate
potential construction impacts and make adjustments to schedules, mitigation requirements and traffic routing as necessary. In addition, a coordinated team is involved in the *Be Excited, Be Prepared* public information campaign to ensure that the community has the most up to date information at all times.

Construction of the Expo rail line will require detours for pedestrians, bicycles, buses, general traffic and deliveries that will have to be periodically modified as work proceeds along the right-of-way through various stages during the multi-year construction phase. During construction it is anticipated that transit services will be detoured for varying lengths of time and appropriate outreach and notification procedures will be followed to keep customers and the community at large informed. Line 5 which operates on Colorado Avenue will be the most susceptible to frequent or extended detours and, if necessary, the service can be re-routed using Broadway. A permanent solution for Metro Rapid buses that currently travel on Colorado between 4th and Streets to reach their layover location on 5th Street between Olympic and Colorado will have to be found early in the construction process.

**Communication**

Careful management and coordination with area partners and employers is of the utmost importance. Downtown Santa Monica Inc. continues to hold monthly Access/Parking/Circulation subcommittee meetings attended by staff. Working closely with the Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau, Santa Monica College, area hospitals and the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District will ensure the greatest possible success.

**Transportation Management Associations**

Trip reduction tools outlined in the LUCE included the formation of Transportation Management Associations (TMA). The Planning and Community Development Department, along with stakeholders in the Downtown are currently exploring the formation of a TMA in the Downtown. TMAs are organizations that include local
employers, public sector representatives, transportation providers, and others to employ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to mitigate congestion through the provision of services such as:

- Marketing the area’s mobility options to businesses and visitors to spur economic development
- Promoting strategies to reduce auto use by employees, residents and visitors
- Generating new resources for transportation in the area and leveraging City and Metro resources
- Coordinating TDM activities such as rideshare incentive and matching programs, vanpooling, bikesharing, and shuttle programs
- Organizing and participating in events to promote use of alternative modes
- Responding to residential and business concerns regarding transportation and parking issues
- Providing assistance to businesses and developers in complying with City trip reduction regulations
- Implementing special projects to address traffic and parking concerns, such as for special events.

TMAs aggregate these services creating efficiencies and economies of scale while also allowing smaller employers to provide commute trip-reduction services comparable with those offered by larger companies. The City has begun working with a consultant, Advisory Group, Downtown Santa Monica Inc. and stakeholders to determine the level feasibility of forming a TMA. The process will continue into the fall and if deemed feasible the city will work to support the formation of an Association per the recommendations of the Advisory Group.

**Future Projects: Expo Light Rail in Service**

The initiation of service on the Expo Light Rail, anticipated in 2015, will begin a new era of transportation in Santa Monica and will mark a new way of travelling to Downtown Santa Monica. New travel patterns will appear—some that are anticipated, and others that will emerge—as people choose how to access the stations. Planning for the people who will be driving, walking, bicycling and taking transit to Downtown Santa Monica in
this new era has begun and will be integrated into the greater Downtown vision in the anticipated Downtown Specific Plan.

Pedestrian traffic will be dramatically different with Expo Light Rail service. A great concentration of pedestrians will originate from the station as each train arrives while a more continuous flow will head to the station to depart.

**Colorado Esplanade**

The Colorado Esplanade process is underway with project completion scheduled to precede the opening of the Downtown Station. This streetscape improvement will create a clear pedestrian and bicycle experience from the station to the Pier along Colorado Avenue. The pedestrian connections will include improved pedestrian access to Palisades Garden Walk Park at Ocean Avenue and Main Street. In addition to the pedestrian amenities of wider sidewalks, landscaping, and street trees, the Esplanade will provide a bicycle facility leading to both the Pier and the new Bike Center in Parking Structure 7. The internationally renowned landscape firm, Peter Walker Partners (PWP) has been engaged to design the Esplanade, with the direction to create an exemplary and beautiful place that balances all modes of travel and links the Downtown and Civic Center with both vital infrastructure and a memorable arrival point. The PWP contract also includes concept and schematic design for the station plaza so that the arrival and dispersal of pedestrians throughout the Downtown can be seamlessly orchestrated to prevent conflicts with transit and vehicles. Outreach and initial design is underway. The Planning Commission received a report on the progress and stakeholder outreach at its September 14th meeting.

**Crossing the Freeway**

The [April 12, 2011](#) Council meeting included a discussion about the Phase One Connections and Linkages Study of freeway capping findings to better connect the civic center and Downtown. One of the recommendations from the report is to widen the sidewalks on the 4th Street bridge to allow for some permanent amenities that would
improve this critical pedestrian connection between the Civic Center uses and the Expo Light Rail Downtown terminus. Because this walk is not currently appealing it contributes to the perception that the Civic Center is a longer walk from the Station Terminus and Downtown than it really is. The Freeway Capping Feasibility Study may identify additional projects that would increase connectivity and could be accomplished with public-private partnerships and or/or significant funding from outside sources. As identified on April 12th, funding the design and construction of this connection will need to be a future priority.

Other improvements including previously mentioned projects and initiatives, such as the Downtown pedestrian study and tests of new traffic signal timing approaches regarding pedestrian mobility, will need to be considered in all future planning.

**Bicycling**

Bicycling will continue to be a growing component of accessing Downtown and the Expo Light Rail station. Many station riders are anticipated to access the station by bicycle. Pending final track alignment, access to the immediate station area will be encouraged via improved facilities on both 5th Street and 4th Court. Additional facilities suggested in the 20 year outlook of the draft Bike Action Plan that will aid in better access to Downtown include:

- Creating a new bike path alongside Olympic Drive, and a neighborhood greenway along Michigan Avenue, allowing for better bike connections between the Pico Neighborhood and Downtown
- Creating a neighborhood greenway along 6th Street, allowing for a better bike connection to the Ocean Park Neighborhood
- A high quality bikeway in the 17th Street corridor, along for a better bike connection to Sunset Park.

**Parking**

Many of the previously discussed measures, such as parking pricing, will need to be revisited strategically to reflect changes in the Downtown and best serve the objectives of the City. Similarly, as businesses change, change will occur adjacent to the curbs in
front of them, with valet, tour buses and taxi zones being reviewed and monitored over time. Centralized valet parking, either seasonally or year-round may also be appropriate to evaluate.

The amount of parking available at different times and for different users will be monitored and policy may change over time to reflect Downtown’s needs. Decisions regarding the retrofit of existing and construction of new parking structures will continue to be a priority. Other opportunities may present themselves, such as joint partnerships with private development. While the interim zoning ordinance creates a process for properties to share parking in the Downtown, the Downtown Specific Plan will analyze different shared parking requirements for this area, compared to other areas in the City, both in terms of amount of parking and access to parking.

The ongoing goal is to provide just the right amount of parking at just the right time. Providing too much parking can have as much of a negative impact as having too little, as construction of spaces that are under-utilized diverts financial and physical resources without achieving the required revenue to balance the outlay, thus delaying or preventing other important community benefit investments in the area.

Transit Connections to Downtown Expo Light Rail Station
The greatest systemic change to existing transportation will likely occur with the provision of enhanced transit connections to Santa Monica’s Light Rail stations. While seven Big Blue Bus lines already serve the future terminal location on 4th Street, the routing of other existing services such as Line 1 will need to be reconsidered to ensure that all communities in the catchment area of the station have a direct transit connection. Work is underway to not only connect the bus service to the Light Rail in a convenient and efficient manner but to also provide a gracious experience for bus passengers, pedestrians and bicyclists at the station.
Bus service to the Bergamot and 17th Street stations continues to be pursued with the Preliminary Alternatives Analysis. Reconfiguring of the existing Crosstown Ride is being contemplated to serve 17th Street and a detailed analysis is underway as to how best connect riders to the Bergamot station. For some residents, the Expo station at Bundy Drive just beyond the Santa Monica City limits will be the most convenient station and Big Blue Bus improvements are being planned in that area as well. Bus interface at each of the Expo stations is being carefully considered and pursued by the City with the Exposition Light Rail Construction Authority and Metro.

The Big Blue Bus has undertaken a Preliminary Alternatives Analysis, evaluating higher capacity transit access to Santa Monica’s three planned Expo Light Rail stations. A new service to the Downtown station is envisioned with:

- Simple, easy to understand alignment: serves a variety of different needs of residents, employees and visitors,
- Higher capacity than a standard Big Blue Bus
- High frequency: scheduled to meet each train arrival and departure
- Seamless fare structure or media to facilitate transfers to/from Big Blue Bus or Metro services
- Serve Downtown parking: facilitating ‘park once’ strategy, and
- Cost-effective service: any new service must support the financial sustainability of the Big Blue Bus network.

Options include extensions of the alignment for a Downtown and Civic Center circulator currently under study. This new service could operate with existing lines on a new north-south “Quality Bus Corridor” similar to the Transit Mall.

A transit service differentiated from standard bus service, such as a streetcar, could serve as a Downtown circulator, potentially knitting together Downtown, and perimeter parking resources, the Main Street and Montana Avenue commercial areas, hotels and the Pier. The service would provide predictability on a simple axis routing to visitors and infrequent transit riders, clearly indicating where stops can be found. Many communities use circulators as a tool to engage visitors who enjoy the activity of taking a ride once
arriving at a destination. The experience of other cities indicates that implementing a permanent circulator route can also be a viable economic development tool for many of the same reasons; development investors have more certainty when they are planning in conjunction with a permanent transit route.

**Next Steps in Downtown Circulation Coming to Council**

The City Council will receive regular updates on transportation projects that will impact the Downtown. Individual projects will come before the Council, including information regarding the development of the Downtown Specific Plan.

*Downtown Specific Plan*

Preparation of the Downtown Specific Plan is underway. Approval of a contract for a consultant team is on the September 27, 2011 Council Agenda. Initial outreach with stakeholders and community meetings is scheduled for the fall, with the intent that alternatives for discussion will be prepared in 2012. A critical component will be a circulation plan for the Downtown that presents phased options to anticipate change over time. The first phase of recommended circulation changes will be timed to anticipate the opening of the Expo Line, and expected development projects.

The transportation philosophy of the Specific Plan is anticipated to mirror the transportation concerns of Downtown, namely:

- Focusing on the customer: approaching the needs of all who travel in Downtown and that they have a choice about whether they choose to travel to Downtown Santa Monica or not, this will include a focus on creating a streetscape that encourages walking and bicycling and ensuring that development proposals include bike and pedestrian amenities and a smooth transit interface
- Making the most efficient use of existing resources: inventorying and utilizing the rich investments that have already been made in Downtown
- Capitalizing on others’ investments: incorporating decisions and interests of others to ensure more than coordination but mutual success
- Making it more uniquely Santa Monica: consciously pursuing ideas that reinforce the character of Santa Monica
• Recognizing limits: limits exist both physically and fiscally, reserving existing physical capacity for growth, and fiscal capacity by pursuing grant funding of public improvements and private funding opportunities.

• Anticipating the future: adapting to future change while recognizing the past decisions of Downtown Santa Monica.

The project will include multiple efforts to plan for future transportation in Downtown Santa Monica, both critical small efforts and possible major investments and decisions. Efforts will be focused on creating additional vehicle gateways to the district to disperse traffic during peak hours. Critical to this effort will be an improvement to the functioning of the Lincoln Boulevard off ramp and major intersections north of the freeway. The circulation component of the Downtown Specific Plan will identify appropriate options and phasing. The Downtown Specific Plan is an opportunity to unify all of these components for the entirety of Downtown.

Future anticipated discussion items for the Council include:

• Endorsement of initial design concepts of the Colorado Esplanade,
• Adoption of the Bike Action Plan, including changes to Downtown streets,
• Creation of north-south transit priority measures to support existing and novel transit services to the Expo Light Rail station,
• Supporting the creation of a Pier Bicycle Ramp, including direction on including a bicycle ramp connection from the Pier to Beach Bike Path as part of the Pier Bridge replacement,
• Widening the 4th Street Bridge by developing a concept and initiating a process to comply with Caltrans requirements,
• Forming a Transportation Management Association Downtown, and
• Continued implementation of the parking plan, with discussions on
  ▪ Parking Pricing
  ▪ Parking In Lieu fees
  ▪ Parking assessments

As Downtown Santa Monica evolves, so will its transportation needs. Strategies will need to be adaptable to changing conditions, with a framework that can be proactive
and nimble integrating the myriad of solutions necessary to achieve a vibrant Downtown that is both sustainable and economically healthy.
Financial Impacts and Budget Actions

There is no immediate budget/financial impact to the recommendation presented in this report. Funding for the proposed improvements to the Downtown transportation system will come from a variety of sources, including Redevelopment Agency funds.

Prepared by: Beth Rolandson, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner
Sarah Lejeune, Principal Planner
Sam Morrissey, PE, Principal Transportation Engineer
Paul Casey, Senior Transit Programs Analyst
Don Patterson, Assistant Director of Finance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved:</th>
<th>Forwarded to Council:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gigi Decavalles-Hughes</td>
<td>Rod Gould</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting Director, Finance</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

David Martin,
Director, Planning and Community Development