



EMERGING THEMES



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I. INTRODUCTION

LONG BEACH 2030: IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

The City of Long Beach has embarked on an exciting journey to envision the desired future city in the year 2030 and to establish a road map to get there. Long Beach 2030 is a community-based process for updating the General Plan, which guides the shape, form, and location of future improvements and development throughout the city. All cities are required by the State of California to have a General Plan that addresses land use, circulation and transportation, safety, and environmental quality. These are topics that affect both the daily lives of residents and the vitality of local commerce.

Long Beach's General Plan has not been comprehensively updated since 1975. Several elements such as the Land Use and Transportation were independently updated in the late 1980s. Much has changed since then. Long Beach 2030 is the community's opportunity to voice their concerns, ideas, and aspirations for specific neighborhoods and the entire city. The input from people involved in Long Beach 2030 will provide direction for new policies and programs in the new General Plan. Imagine the possibilities—it is all up to you!

VISIONING PROCESS

The first step in Long Beach 2030 has been Visioning, a process for the community to discuss the current state of the city, aspirations for the future, and the types of changes needed to achieve these aspirations.

To involve as many people as possible in the process, the City made extensive efforts to reach the entire Long Beach community. Appendix A contains a complete summary of the community outreach methods employed during the Visioning process. These methods included, but not were limited to, the following:

- Phone banks to contact community groups, neighborhood organizations, and businesses representing the diverse composition of Long Beach. A total of 185 were contacted.





- Attendance at community events such as farmers' markets, ethnic festivals, music concerts, car shows, and neighborhood movie nights.
- Invitations to participate distributed to the 558 subscribers to the Long Beach E-notify Website.
- Mass distribution of printed information, including the Long Beach 2030 Survey, Long Beach 2030 Fact Sheet (with schedule and location information for the Community Festivals), and Community Festival posters.
- Focused outreach to hard-to-reach community members by two separate and distinct minority outreach firms, Diverse Strategies for Organizing, and Diversity Research and Consulting Group, under contract to the City (included door-to-door canvassing and "man on the street" surveys at commercial centers and select street intersections).

The following table summarizes the various methods of outreach that were employed throughout the visioning process to reach a wide range of Long Beach citizens.



Long Beach 2030 Survey

The Long Beach 2030 Survey was made available in an on-line version and as hard copy to be completed by hand. The eight survey questions focused on:

- Identifying Long Beach qualities that people value,
- Moving around the city,
- Protecting and enhancing the environment, and
- Balancing new development with the historic assets from the past.



For each survey question, input was systematically analyzed for recurring topics. Frequency counts were then calculated for these topics. The tables in Appendix B summarize the top five answers to individual survey questions.

As a result of the outreach conducted by the City, approximately 1,000 surveys were completed. This number of completed surveys represents the voices of a significant number of community members. However, while statistical sampling techniques were not used, the survey results provide a starting place for identifying key community issues.

Please see Appendix B for the full survey.

Public Outreach Summary Table

OUTREACH METHOD	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Electronic communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet website at <i>www.longbeach2030.org</i>, which includes project summary, updates, event calendar, and major document depository • Phone hotline at 562-570-PLAN describing the current phase of the project, how to obtain and fill out a survey, and voicemail to leave a message for staff call-back
Direct contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail blasts • Mailing list • Use of existing City outreach lists
City media outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Planning & Building interview on public access channel • City Manager's weekly report • Community Planning monthly bulletin
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding to facilitate project identity and awareness • Multi-lingual fact sheet containing a project summary and description of how to get involved and be heard • Newspaper • Variable message freeway signs • Targeted delivery • Posters distributed to businesses, schools, and other public facilities • Kiosk in City Hall lobby • Mobile "plan van"
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared in three languages • Internet—over 350 received through July 2007 • Direct mail and hand-outs at events—over 600 received through July 2007 • Personal delivery • Month-long phone bank involving 15 City staff planners contacting 185 organizations, stakeholders, businesses, and individuals during March 2007 • Outreach consulting firms canvassed neighborhoods with predominately minority populations, using bilingual representatives in certain neighborhoods



Long Beach 2030 Community Festivals

The City's Planning and Building Department sponsored five Long Beach 2030 Community Festivals designed to present information on the purpose and importance of creating the Long Beach 2030 Plan, gather feedback from community members on issues and opportunities to improve the quality of life and character of Long Beach neighborhoods, and document this input to inform the framework for the 2030 Plan. Personnel from the City's Health Department, Public Works Transportation Bureau, Port of Long Beach, and Long Beach Transit helped to staff the events. To make attendance easy and convenient, the Long Beach 2030 Community Festivals were held in five locations on Saturday mornings over the course of 6 weeks:

- Hill Middle School – May 19, 2007
- Stephenson Elementary School – June 2, 2007
- Jordan High School – June 9, 2007
- El Dorado Park Senior Center – June 16, 2007
- Hughes Middle School – June 23, 2007



A combined total of 200 people participated. Materials were provided in English, Spanish, and Khmer. Spanish-speaking staff were available at all of events.

The Long Beach 2030 Community Festivals were designed to be family friendly, offering snacks and refreshments, a children's workshop play area, and a special bicycle raffle. The festivals had a "open house" format where people could drop in and circulate through sequential activities at their convenience. The first stop was a "timeline wall" depicting Long Beach's past growth, development milestones, evolving technologies for new transportation modes, and housing opportunities. The timeline's purpose was to put participants in a "where we've been and what's next by 2030?" mindset.

Participants then visited nine community livability stations: Live, Move, Work, Play, Shop, Healthy, Heritage, Arts & Culture, and Green. At each station participants were introduced to city planning themes, issues, and information. Each station also provided opportunities for participants to post notes on their perspectives regarding the different community livability factors as well as suggestions for future improvements. The last activity consisted of the chance to "Create Your Own City." In this mapping exercise, people made notes, drew pictures, and used stickers to identify the location and new ideas and directions for different parts of Long Beach and the whole city by 2030.



At each of these livability stations, participants were first asked to review introductory information to provide a common context. Next, participants engaged in an activity to obtain their visioning input before moving on to the next station. Ideas and comments received from participants were left at each station for all participants to review. All input collected during the Long Beach 2030 Community Festivals was transcribed and documented (see Appendix C). For each question posed at the stations, input was analyzed for recurring topics. Frequency counts of these topics were completed to identify trends and priorities.

EMERGING THEMES

The Long Beach 2030 Plan will reflect the contributions made by community members during the Visioning process. An essential step in creating a responsive plan is to identify the major themes that emerged during the Long Beach 2030 Survey and Community Festivals—that is, the ideas repeated by many people.

The emerging themes for Long Beach 2030 are documented in this working paper. This Introduction is followed by a section that presents the emerging themes. A third section documents the major ideas and issues focused on specific parts of the city that were supplied during the Long Beach 2030 Community Festivals. Three appendices, referenced earlier in the Introduction, follow these sections:

- Appendix A: Community Outreach Log for Long Beach 2030 Visioning
- Appendix B: Long Beach 2030 Survey Results (including a copy of the survey instrument and tables tabulating responses by question)
- Appendix C: Long Beach 2030 Community Festival Results (including summary tables and transcriptions of all input provided by participants).

NEXT STEPS

The emerging themes will be used to guide the creation of the Long Beach 2030 Framework. The Long Beach 2030 Framework will establish a citywide strategy for achieving the changes and improvements articulated in the emerging themes. More specifically, it will integrate citywide strategies for land use, mobility, urban design, economic development, historic preservation, and environmental sustainability. Future public outreach efforts will engage community members in the process of fine-tuning the Long Beach 2030 Framework. Following this process, the City will begin drafting the new Long Beach 2030 Plan.



2. EMERGING THEMES

The community raised an extensive range of issues, ideas, and opportunities during the Visioning process. From this input surfaced a set of emerging themes described below that encapsulate the desires of the community for Long Beach's future. The emerging themes will guide formulation of citywide planning strategies that will be incorporated into the Long Beach 2030 Plan. Each theme is accompanied by a listing of opportunities for further exploration in the Long Beach 2030 Plan.

The emerging themes represent a synthesis of a rich compilation of input by people from diverse perspectives and experiences, as illustrated by the quotes from participants of the Visioning process. For a comprehensive understanding of the Visioning results, the emerging themes should be reviewed in concert with the more detailed summaries in the appendices.



A CITY AT THE WATER'S EDGE



“I live in Long Beach because I was born and raised here. I love the diversity and the beach.”

“We came here for the diversity of the people and culture and the historic architecture and neighborhoods. Plus the coastal weather can’t be beat!”

“I moved here because it was close to work but stayed because Long Beach is the perfect size, has a real sense of community, and there’s lots to do!”

Long Beach is loved for its coastal location, proximity to water, temperate climate, and outdoor activities. The bay and beaches are an important part of Long Beach’s identity and distinguish it from other cities. The community also relishes the diversity of people, activity, culture, and historic neighborhoods and districts that are found in larger, established cities like Long Beach. Retaining this environment—and enhancing it—are important as Long Beach continues to evolve and change. While environmental concerns about port industries are growing, proactively addressing impacts helps maintain Long Beach’s special identity.

Opportunities for Consideration in Long Beach 2030 Plan

- Protecting and improving connections, both physical and visual, to the bay and beaches.
- Incorporating reminders of the city’s waterfront location in the design of public spaces and streetscape throughout Long Beach where appropriate.
- Protecting views of the water from streets, parks, and other public areas.
- Creating more usable public spaces in waterfront areas and beaches.
- Improving water quality and keeping beaches clean of debris.

A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT EVERYWHERE



“Clean it up! Remove the graffiti, get rid of litter and paint, paint everywhere! Show pride and inspire the community to do its part to make Long Beach a wonderful and clean environment.”

“Environmental concerns need to be taken into consideration when developing future housing, schools, and retail sites.”

“Cleaner air, beaches, and water!”

A clean environment tops the list of concerns for many community members. From the stratosphere to the sidewalk, the vision is for cleaner air and water, an abundance of green spaces and trees, and practical alternatives to driving. A cleaner environment for Long Beach, from the perspective of residents, also means cleaning up parks and beaches, removing trash and litter, properly maintaining street landscaping, and improving run-down areas. Some parts of the city are exposed to higher levels of pollutants than others, resulting in greater health and lifestyle impacts to some residents.

Opportunities for Consideration in Long Beach 2030 Plan

- Continuing coordination with the Port of Long Beach to reduce impacts associated with waterfront industry and related truck traffic.
- Implementing “green” technologies in new and existing buildings and development, drainage systems, and infrastructure systems.
- Creating and prioritizing primary walking streets and transit corridors improving the landscape and making streets more walkable.
- Improving air quality.
- Avoiding new housing in areas experiencing disproportionately higher levels of environmental impacts to avoid increasing health risks.

HEALTHY AND ACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS



“We need to exercise more and eat healthier food!”

“Children need more playgrounds so that they can be more active.”

“A healthy Long Beach in 2030 means encouraging people to get outdoors, whether walking or rolling – just being out.”

Closely tied to the vision of a clean environment are healthy and active neighborhoods where people thrive. Long Beach residents love the outdoors. In fact, among Long Beach 2030 Community Festival participants, outdoor recreational activities were reported as the first choice for having fun in Long Beach. Many participants stated that making the city a better place involves creating more spaces for outdoor physical activities such as parks, playgrounds, trails, and walking connections to favorite destinations. Community members also identified access to nutritious food as important in achieving a healthy population.

Opportunities for Consideration in Long Beach 2030 Plan

- Assessing underutilized lands and beaches for new parks and recreational activities.
- Expanding shared use of school district play fields.
- Supplying facilities in parks that match residents' interests and activity goals.
- Establishing nature parks with trails and interpretive programs in different parts of the city.
- Making grocery stores, healthy food markets, and farmers' markets convenient in all city neighborhoods.
- Exploring interest in community gardens.
- Designing neighborhoods that are friendly and inviting for pedestrians, and streets that safely accommodate bicyclists.

EXPANDED TRANSPORTATION CHOICES



“In the future, I would rather walk or bike to more places or take public transportation.”

“I would drive less if I had more things closer to walk to.”

One of Long Beach’s strengths is the mix of transportation choices, including walking, transit, bicycling, and driving. Long Beach residents utilize these various options for making trips for work, school, shopping, and leisure, although car use still dominates. The percentage of people that report walking as their primary travel form is higher than in many other Southern California cities. This reflects the combination of walkable environments in many of Long Beach’s neighborhoods—where many destinations are located close to where people live—and the number of lower-income households that cannot afford cars. For the future, the consensus points to expanded transportation choices where transit, walking, and bicycling become more convenient and enjoyable. Interestingly, many residents reliant on walking indicated that they hope to use cars for getting around in the future. This underscores the need to address challenges that currently make walking less desirable.

Opportunities for Consideration in Long Beach 2030 Plan

- Creating environments where people can enjoy walking to transit, shopping, school, and work, as well as open spaces such as parks, beaches, the bay, and natural areas.
- Encouraging new housing and employment centers near transit.
- Improving the citywide system of biking paths and routes.
- Accommodating vehicle use with an efficient city street system without compromising opportunities for safe transit use, walking, and bicycling.
- Providing transit, walking, and bicycling facilities that are safe, comfortable, and connected to the places where people want to go.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND CULTURE



“I know my neighbors and they know me. I feel safe and think the people in the neighborhood have good values.”

“Historic preservation is important because it gives local residents a chance to feel connected to their city. This leads to more people caring and local pride!”

“What makes a great city is togetherness and more involvement from all who live there.”

Strong ties to family, neighborhood, and community were voiced by many people as an important factor in their decision to live in Long Beach. The Long Beach of the future should build on these community connections, manifesting as a civic culture that celebrates diversity. Community connections take on many shapes and forms and include safe walking routes between activity centers and beautiful public spaces where people come together and culture flourishes. Protecting the characteristics that make individual neighborhoods special—such as historic buildings, the design and appearance of buildings, development patterns, and landscaping—is another way to support community connections. The cultural diversity in Long Beach also provides endless possibilities for artistic and cultural expression.

Opportunities for Consideration in Long Beach 2030 Plan

- Enhancing partnerships and connections with the city colleges, university, and medical facilities.
- Reinforcing physical connections between neighborhoods and activity centers to make sure that all places are accessible to all people.
- Preserving significant historic resources to remind people of their connections with past events and people.
- Developing and supporting a citywide public art program that could help to reinforce both neighborhood and city identity.
- Inventorying facilities for arts, culture, and work to bring these programs to underserved areas.
- Allowing new housing developments that are compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and have a positive influence on neighborhood vitality and safety.
- Supporting public libraries.
- Celebrating the diversity of the community through the design of public spaces, including streetscapes, parks, and the waterfront.

SHARED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



“Reducing income inequality and having better jobs will make Long Beach a better city in 2030.”

“We need more research and high-tech businesses – no more industry. We are overwhelmed with pollution from the port and airport.”

“Long Beach should be the nation’s enviro-biz hub.”

Economic prosperity also needs to play an important role in the future of Long Beach. Important considerations voiced by community members include the need for more well-paying jobs (in part to address the prevalence of poverty in Long Beach), addressing housing needs, and attracting cleaner industries such as research and development and high tech companies. Community dialogue on economic prosperity also included expanding local shopping options, which are perceived as substandard compared to other cities. This type of economic development can help to increase tax revenue, an important resource for improving local services and facilities.

Opportunities for Consideration in Long Beach 2030 Plan

- Promoting the establishment of newly emerging green technologies in industrial areas.
- Retaining employment lands, avoiding conversion to other uses, and minimizing potential land use incompatibilities (existing and future).
- Identifying suitable areas for high tech companies, research and development businesses, and other clean and green industries.
- Expanding job skills training to improve the qualifications of the local labor pool and attract new companies.
- Studying the locational needs of modern retailers and identifying appropriate opportunity sites for redevelopment.
- Providing strategic housing opportunities to accommodate the needs of the local workforce, serving a role in future economic development.

SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT



“In 2030, kids are our first priority. The city is economically healthy, clean, attractive, and free of gangs and blight.”

“We need to deal with the statistics on youth – asthma rate, teen pregnancy, and violence.”

Continued progress must be made towards improving Long Beach safety and security. When people envisioned the city’s future, many expressed concerns about crime and the safety of their families. A sense of safety and security is a primary need. Without addressing the conditions that contribute to these concerns, it will be difficult to achieve other goals for the future such as increasing walking, bicycling, and transit use; attracting new businesses and jobs; and nurturing community connections.

Opportunities for Consideration in Long Beach 2030 Plan:

- Ensuring that public facilities in all neighborhoods are regularly maintained and have sufficient capacity to meet local needs.
- Creating positive activities in street corridors, parks, and other public places to thwart crime.
- Prioritizing redevelopment of areas with blighted, underutilized properties in disrepair.
- Expanding public services—especially schools, fire protection, and law enforcement—to adequately meet existing and projected needs.
- Pursuing programs to alleviate environmental disparities between neighborhoods that affect residents’ ability to pursue educational and professional goals.
- Examining factors associated with Long Beach’s physical environment that contribute to local gang activity and integrate solutions into the Long Beach 2030 Plan.



3. COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR SPECIFIC AREAS

During the Long Beach 2030 Community Festivals, the citizens noted their ideas and concerns on a map of the city during the “Create Your Own City” activity. This allowed people to geographically locate their ideas, informing future policy on a place-by-place basis. This was done in two steps. First, participants were supplied with pictogram stickers, representing key activities and planning concepts, to place on the maps. Sticker locations demonstrated where these items currently exist or where citizens see room for intervention or improvement. Second, participants were encouraged to write on the maps, making more specific recommendations for strategic sites.

This activity resulted in a rich collection of responses and communicative maps. The map notations were categorized according to major geographic areas: North, Downtown, West, Central, Coast, Port, Northeast, and Southeast. The map on the following page depicts the most frequently identified ideas.





COMMUNITY IDEAS FOR SPECIFIC AREAS

