

3.0 public engagement

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3.0 public engagement

3.1 Overview of Public Engagement Approach and Process

Community outreach has played an important role in the development of the Long Beach Downtown TOD Pedestrian Master Plan and will help to determine how to most effectively improve the quality of the pedestrian environment for Long Beach residents and visitors.

The community engagement process for the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) consisted of three (3) Community events and monthly Stakeholder meetings that that occurred throughout the process. During the preliminary investigation, the team conducted a walking tour of the main corridors with the project limits of the Downtown area.

The team held the first community event “Walk Forth” in September 2014 and gathered many different stakeholders and community members to create a street installation with temporary urban

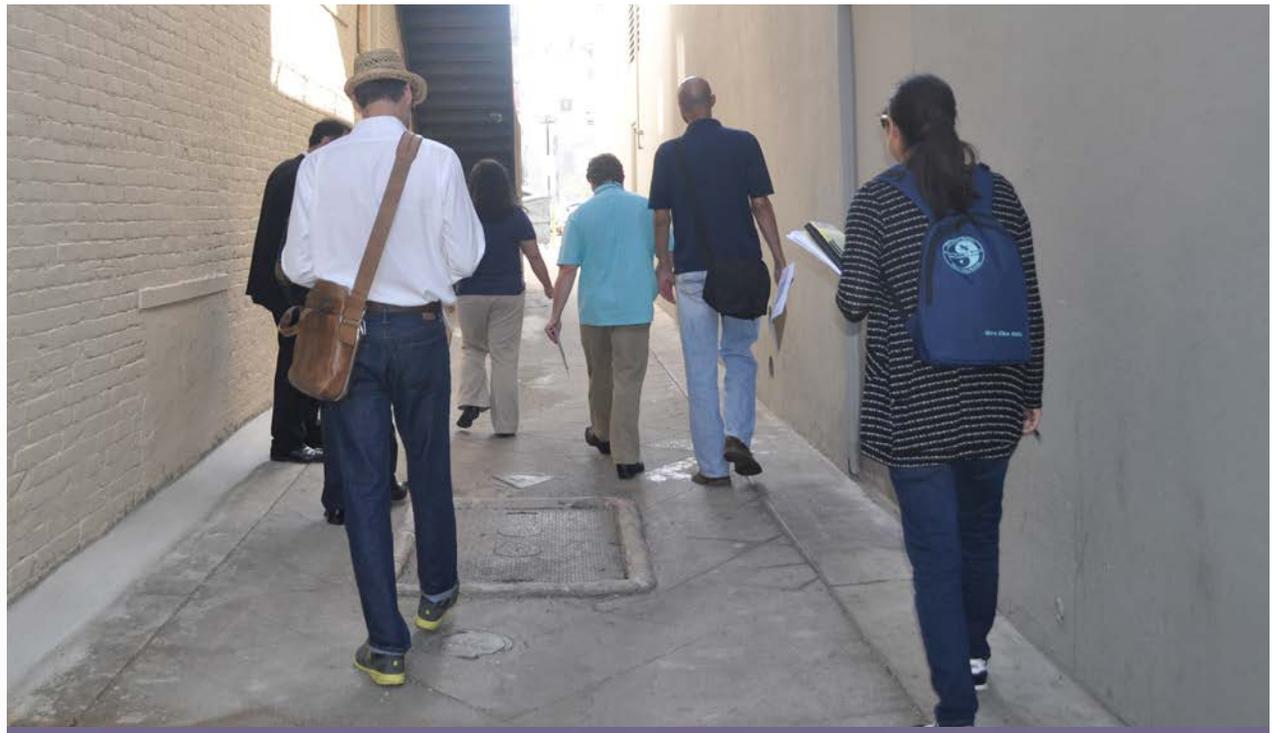


Figure 3.1 Kick-off meeting and Downtown walking tour

interventions or “pop-up” installations on 4th Street, between Alamitos Ave. and Long Beach Blvd. This event was created in an effort to demonstrate the benefits of pedestrian improvements and generate activity along the Metro Blue Line access corridor. The event encouraged the community to envision proposed improvement concepts for a more walkable city. The event attracted over 150 members of the public and the participants were able to experience the temporary mid-block crossing, landscaped medians, and curb extensions along the street and gave the project team input on areas in the city that they felt needed attention.

The team conducted stakeholder and focus group meetings throughout the process to engage the public in the identification of issues and potential solutions, and encourage stewardship of the plan. Through the public outreach, participants could give their input in multiple ways, including facilitated small group stakeholder meetings, online surveys, questions and answer sessions, comment sheets, and informal discussion and correspondence.



Figure 3.2 Community members indicate pedestrian barriers and opportunities on the interactive WalkForth Map.

Figure 3.3: Public and Stakeholder Engagement Process



3.2 Community Meeting #1

WalkForth

WalkForth was an outdoor festival and event timed to take place on the same day as the original pop-up urban intervention, Park(ing) Day. PARK(ing) Day is an annual global event where community members, artists and activists work together to temporarily convert metered parking spaces along the street into spaces for people instead of cars.

WalkForth and PARK(ing) Day have the same aspirations: to increase and enhance the usable space for the pedestrian and provoke conversations about the lack of gathering spaces in our cities and the dominance of cars over people. During the WalkForth event, community members had the opportunity to see a temporary pedestrian improvement such as a midblock crossing and participate in the process and design.

WalkForth partnered with Stakeholders to create an activated street along 4th street with food trucks, retail installations, pedestrian improvement demonstrations, and local businesses having a presence “on the street.” The Long Beach Office of

Sustainability, Health Department “Active Living/Healthy Living,” Downtown Long Beach Associates (DBLA) and California State University Long Beach (CSULB) participated and engaged the public with various booths and interactive programming. A large, interactive aerial map was mounted in the pedestrianized alley and the WalkForth team was available to answer questions about the PMP and gather information from the community members about potential pedestrian barriers and opportunities that only a resident can provide.

WalkForth created the temporary installations with donated items and recycled materials. Long Beach Public Works provided trees and various plants to create the “landscaped” medians and curb extensions. Erosion wattles and safety cones marked the edges and created the temporary curbs of the project. Local artists collaborated to create an original chalk artwork that marked the midblock crossing and reflected the east village art district’s roots. Temporary spray chalk signage gave playful directions to local destinations such as Pine Ave and the Blue Line Metro stop that is a few blocks away.

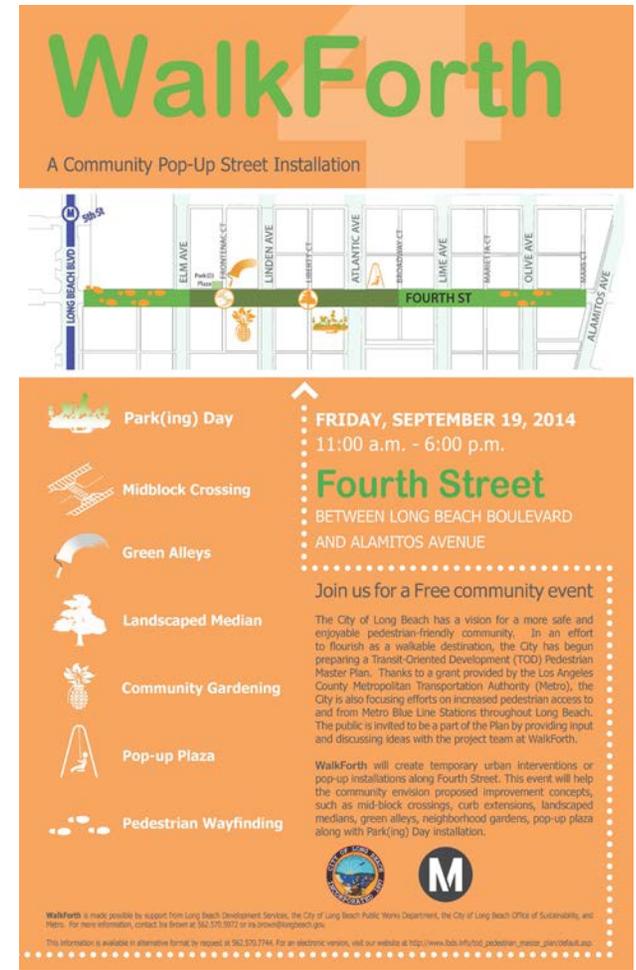


Figure 3.4 WalkForth Event Flyer and Map.

WalkForth Community Event >>

Temporary Wayfinding

Lightweight, playful signs that were attached to telephone or street lamp poles with zip ties provided a temporary “guerilla wayfinding” network.

**Mid block Crosswalk at Frontenac Ct.**

A temporary midblock crosswalk was created with cooperation from the City Public Works department and local East Village artists.

**Parking Day Installations**

Health Department: Active Living/Healthy Living, DLBA, Office of Sustainability Community Gardening and members of the community participated in “taking over” parking spaces for usable space during the event.

**Temporary Wayfinding**

Chalk paint on the sidewalk created additional directional signage for the Blue Line Station.

**Curb Extension**

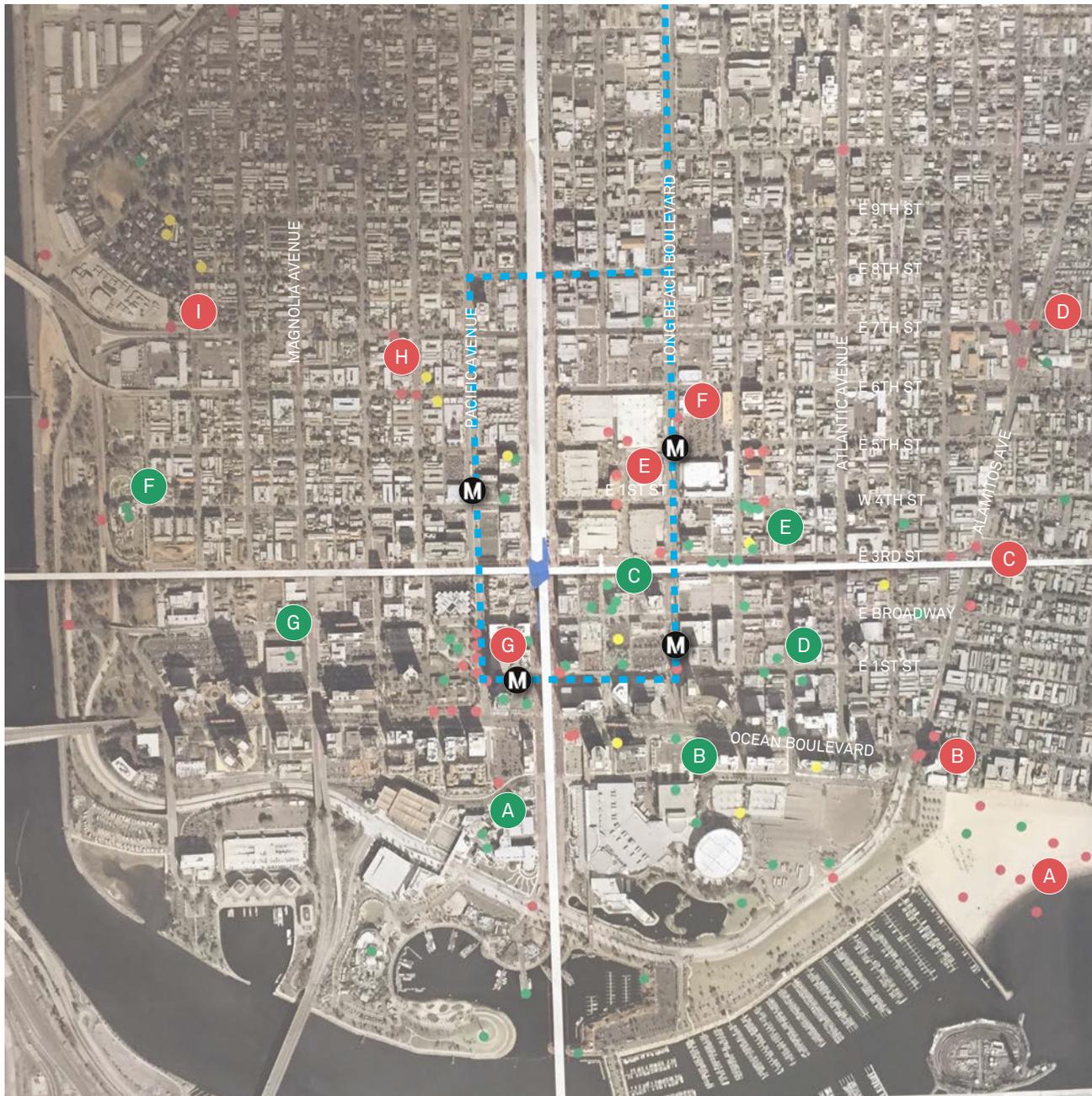
Temporary curb extensions extend the sidewalk into the street and take back needed space for the pedestrians.

**Pop-up Retail**

Temporary retail installations helped stimulate and generate pedestrian activity along the street.



Figure 3.5: Barriers and Opportunities Map - Input from the Community



Barriers

- A** Limited access to Alamos Beach
- B** Ocean Boulevard/Alamos Avenue: long distance to cross, fast-moving traffic
- C** 3rd Street/Alamos: disorienting for pedestrians
- D** MLK/Alamos Avenue: narrow sidewalks, dangerous for pedestrians south of 7th Street and Alamos due to intersecting streets
- E** Waite Court/5th Street: limited street life in spite of commercial activity
- F** Long Beach Boulevard/5th Street: weak connection to neighborhood through parking lot
- G** Civic Center/1st Street: few trees, poorly marked connection between station and Civic Center
- H** Cedar/7th: crosswalk striping barely visible, sidewalks in poor condition
- I** Maine/7th: fast-moving traffic, narrow sidewalks, unsafe to cross street

Opportunities

- A** Pike feels safe, friendly for pedestrians; extend this character along Pine
- B** Performing Arts Center is a key destination; create safer connections across Ocean Boulevard
- C** Promenade/3rd Street: Harvey Milk park is an important asset
- D** 1st Street between Elm and Linden: extend retail, pedestrian friendly sidewalks along corridor
- E** 4th/Elm: enhance retail and parklet through wider sidewalks, vegetation, lighting
- F** 4th/Golden: create better connections from downtown to Cesar Chavez Park, LA River

- M** Metro Blue Line Station
- Metro Blue Line Tracks

3.3 Community Meeting #2

Sidewalk Stories

The second community meeting was conducted in May 2015 during the East Village Art Walk. The event was held in Hellada Art Gallery and nearby Alta Way Alley, inviting visitors to participate in a community conversation about walking and livability, and comment on proposed priority projects identified by the project team. The Pecha Kucha format allowed the project team to discuss key issues and opportunities in a fast-paced, engaging format. The “Sidewalk Stories” event also invited members of the community, local stakeholders, residents, employees, business and property owners, and Art Walk visitors to participate and to tell their personal stories of walking on the streets, sidewalks and alleys of Long Beach.

In addition, a supporting exhibition of potential projects was displayed in the Alta Way Alley for community members to study and provide feedback. A survey was available to respond to each project board to gather feedback on the conceptual priority projects.

This meeting served as a forum for the community to be updated on the most recent project developments, voice their concerns, and ask questions.



Figure 3.6 Sidewalk Stories Presentation Boards.

SIDEWALK STORIES @
EAST VILLAGE ART WALK
MAY 9, 2015

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

THE CITY OF LONG BEACH HAS A VISION FOR A MORE SAFE AND ENJOYABLE PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY. IN AN EFFORT TO FLOURISH AS A WALKABLE DESTINATION, THE CITY HAS BEGUN PREPARING A TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN. THE CITY WILL ALSO BE FOCUSING EFFORTS ON ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO AND FROM TRANSIT AND METRO BLUE LINE STATIONS, THANKS TO A GRANT PROVIDED BY THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (METRO).

COME TO OUR SECOND COMMUNITY WORKSHOP AND SHARE YOUR PERSONAL STORY ABOUT WALKING ON THE STREETS OF LONG BEACH, AND PROVIDE INPUT ON PROPOSED CONCEPTS TO SHAPE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO TRANSIT AND METRO BLUE LINE STATIONS IN THE CITY.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT AT THIS EVENT, PLEASE CONTACT IRA BROWN AT 562.570.5972 OR IRA.BROWN@LONGBEACH.GOV.

PEDESTRIAN GALLERY
4:00PM-8:00PM
SEE POTENTIAL PROJECT EXHIBITION AND PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS

SIDEWALK STORIES
20 IMAGES: 20 SECONDS EACH
4:00PM-6:00PM
HEAR FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND ADD YOUR VOICE

ALTA WAY
HELLADA ART CENTER
177 LINDEN AVE
LONG BEACH, CA
FIRST ST.
LINDEN AVE.
FRONTENAC CT.

Metro
LONG BEACH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BUILDING A BETTER LONG BEACH

SIDEWALK STORIES @ EAST VILLAGE ART WALK
SHARE YOUR STORY ABOUT WALKING ON THE STREETS OF LONG BEACH AND HELP SHAPE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO TRANSIT AND METRO BLUE LINE STATIONS
SATURDAY 4:00PM-6:00PM
MAY 9, 2015
HELLADA ART CENTER
177 LINDEN AVE
LONG BEACH, CA

Figure 3.7 Sidewalk Stories marketing materials.



Figure 3.8



Sidewalk Stories Pecha Kucha presentation and exhibition in alley during Art Walk.



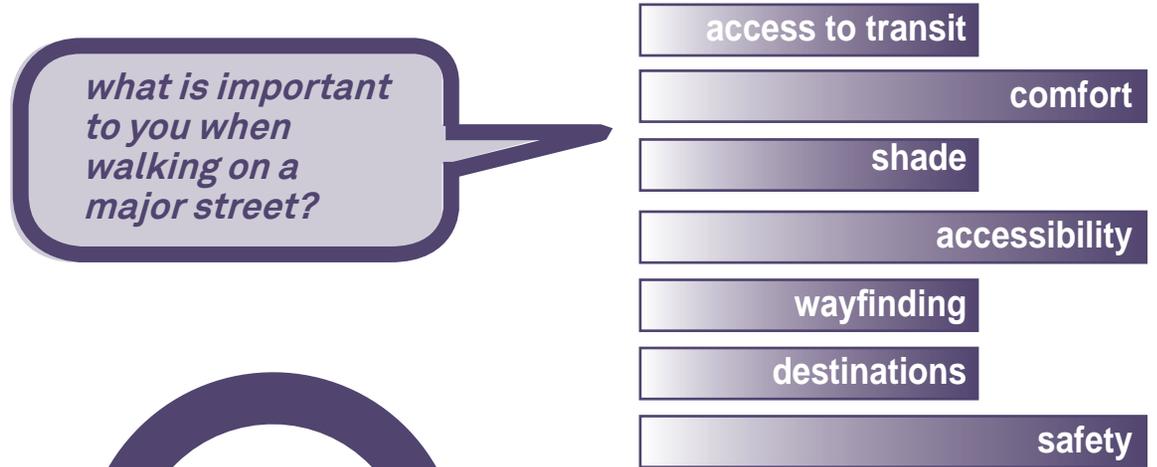
Community Survey

Participants in the Sidewalk Stories event were also encouraged to comment on proposed priority projects through a survey. The survey was used to gauge the primary concerns of Long Beach residents in regards to pedestrian safety, wayfinding, accessibility, and key destinations. The vast majority of survey participants live within the study area, with over 85% of participants living within walking distance of Downtown Long Beach. Most visitors to Art Walk and Sidewalk Stories walked, took public transit, or biked.

Many residents were in favor of the pedestrian friendly elements that were proposed and in general were very supportive. Accessibility, safety and comfort were the driving factors linked to walkability with the most preferred streetscape amenities being sufficient seating, wayfinding, pedestrian lighting, and enhanced crosswalks. Interestingly, art in the public realm was very important to many residents and felt it was vital to a healthy and stimulating walking environment.

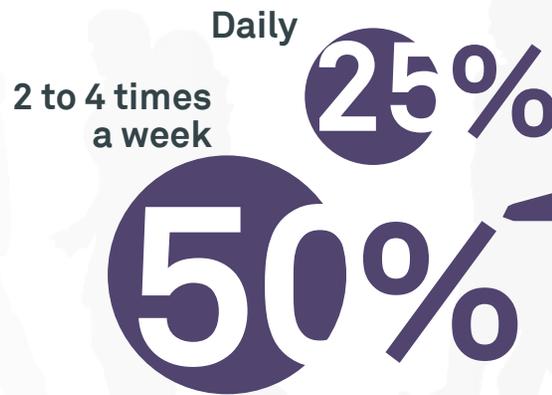
Alleys

Over 50% of survey respondents have safety concerns about using alleys and ways in Long Beach. To address this concern, participants suggested creating more activated, people-friendly alleys through better lighting, seating, trees and other vegetation, and murals. Alleys should also be accessible and safe for the disabled. One participant suggested a strategic approach to improving the alley system by focusing on smaller clusters of alleys near major activity centers.



98%

of respondents think there is not enough wayfinding to access the Blue Line.



How often do you use alleys to get around town?

Neighborhood Greenways

These north-south avenues in Downtown Long Beach currently provide important connections for survey participants. Over 25% of respondents use these corridors when commuting to work. Forty percent reported regularly using avenues to walk to restaurants and shops. Respondents identified enhanced crosswalks, lighting, seating, wayfinding, and bike facilities as key improvements for proposed neighborhood greenways.

Pedestrian Gallery

Most participants were unfamiliar with the pedestrian gallery/shared street concepts and voiced concerns about a curbsless environment. The shared street concept has proven to be successful in many European cities, by reclaiming the streets as public spaces for people’s use. Since this is a relatively newer concept in the United States, the City of Long Beach and its partners will need to provide more information about the function and benefits of shared streets. Respondents reported that public art, space for farmers markets and other vendors, seating and gathering areas, bike facilities, and enhanced transit stops are important elements to include in shared streets.

Streetlets

Streetlets are pedestrianized corridors less than a block in length. This project type was first proposed in Long Beach as part of the Midtown Specific Plan.

Streetlets can be 100% pedestrianized or closed to pedestrians only during community events. They are viewed as destinations for neighborhood residents and workers that promote social interaction and provide safer pedestrian connections to the Blue Line. To reinforce the neighborhood orientation of streetlets, survey respondents favored community gardens, farmers markets, public art, outdoor movie screens, food trucks, and bike facilities.

Wardlow Parkway

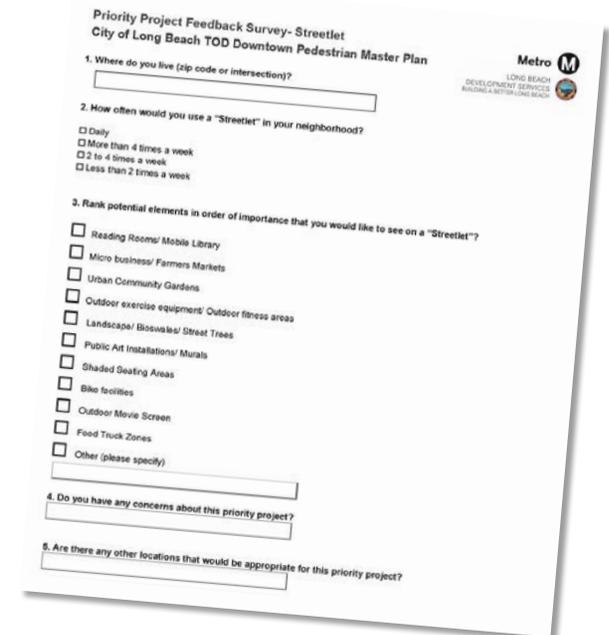
The project team proposed a parkway along the underutilized Metro Blue Line right of way that could provide better connections to Wardlow and Willow stations. Over 70% of respondents reported taking transit, walking, or biking to these stations, reinforcing the importance of improving pedestrian conditions near the Blue Line. Key elements suggested by participants include wayfinding, a multi-use path, bridges or tunnels for better east-west connections, bioswales, and seating.

Wayfinding

Survey respondents appreciated recent wayfinding improvements in Long Beach, particularly around the Pike, Promenade, and Pine Street, but 98% reported that wayfinding infrastructure is insufficient outside of these areas. Seventy-five percent of respondents would use wayfinding infrastructure primarily to assist with their daily commute.

key elements

- lighting
- seating
- wayfinding
- trees and vegetation
- space for vendors, food trucks, farmers markets
- bike facilities
- public art
- enhanced crosswalks



3.4 Stakeholder Outreach

External Stakeholders

The project team met with stakeholders representing a variety of interests in Long Beach. The goal was to identify key issues and opportunities for partnerships and funding, and review preliminary priority project concepts with City staff. Key stakeholders included:

- Long Beach Senior Center**
- DLBA**
- Metro**
- Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific**
- The Pike**
- Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau**

These stakeholders identified the following issues and opportunities:

- Emphasize key corridors with wayfinding signage and art, existing signage should be more oriented to pedestrians
- Create uniform approaches for street trees and street furniture
- Consider scramble and table crosswalks along Ocean Boulevard
- Adjust timing of existing signals to allow pedestrians more time to cross street
- Enhance alley connections between Pacific Station and Pine Avenue, Promenade
- DLBA plans to launch a wayfinding initiative in Downtown to enhance pedestrian connectivity and promote unique districts
- Consider relaunching 2% for public art program
- Identify prime redevelopment sites and use plan to leverage pedestrian improvements

Technical Advisory Committee

Throughout the process, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of representatives from the Development Services and Public Works Departments, provided input on the selection and conceptual design of priority projects.



Figure 3.9 Exploring opportunities for enhanced alley connections Downtown as part of a design charrette with City staff.



Figure 3.10 Meeting with DLBA's Public Realm Committee.



Figure 3.11 Meeting with DLBA's Public Realm Committee.

