

# executive summary

*The Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) encompasses the community's vision for Santa Monica's future. The Plan is designed to maintain our City's character, protect our neighborhoods, manage our transportation systems, and encourage additional housing in a sustainable manner that ensures a high quality of life for all Santa Monicans now and in the future.*

How should Santa Monica look, feel and function 20 years from now? This update of the City's Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) of the General Plan addresses this crucial question. Based on the goals and values of the community, the LUCE provides a long-term framework for good decision making far into the future. It provides flexibility for changes in the City's economy and land use, and establishes criteria and measurements for periodically assessing how well the community's goals are being met and if adjustments to the policies are necessary.

Cities fundamentally define themselves by creating housing and social connectivity, ensuring mobility, assuring open space and public services, and facilitating a vibrant economy celebrating arts and culture. How a city addresses these factors reflects its attitude toward the dignity of its residents and the importance it assigns to creating social equity. This Plan is about enhancing our already fantastic and unique City, and creating



a Santa Monica that is sustainable in social, environmental and economic terms—a community that is equitable, and offers opportunities to everyone.

## CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The LUCE places Santa Monica at the forefront of sustainable planning practices. It translates the community's desire to preserve the City's unique character into programs which carefully limit and control growth, engage the natural beauty of the beach and surrounding environment, and re-create the City's historic settlement patterns along the boulevards.

The LUCE conserves the City's neighborhoods and historic resources, expands open space, and creates new opportunities for housing where few or none currently exist. It reduces the amount of regional commercial growth and encourages smaller-scale local-serving uses and housing. It encourages new development connected directly to transit, creating a multi-modal transportation system that incentivizes walking, biking and transit. It also encourages local-serving retail within walking distance of existing and new neighborhoods, serving to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The LUCE transforms the City's auto-oriented boulevards into inviting avenues with improved transit, wider sidewalks, distinctive architecture, landscaping and neighborhood-friendly services. It requires new development to respect Santa Monica's heritage with compatible and quality design, ensuring a



*The LUCE emphasizes a sustainable future and reshapes traditional planning approaches to focus on neighborhood conservation, increased housing opportunities, transit and stewardship of our precious natural, social and cultural resources.*

sense of "place" where local residents will be attracted to shop, work and live. It seeks to eliminate net new evening peak period vehicle trips in order to achieve the City's overarching goal of reducing congestion and carbon emissions. The Plan celebrates the beach and the creative arts, recognizing their contribution to the recreational and cultural experience in Santa Monica. It also provides a monitoring program and measures for controlling growth, allowing the community to adjust the Plan over the years.

In endorsing this approach, the community addresses the most challenging aspect of

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achieving the aims of the Sustainable City Plan and State of California climate change legislation—embracing the challenges of today as an opportunity to forge a better tomorrow.

## COMMUNITY VALUES ARE THE BASIS OF THE LUCE

### The Planning Process

The process of engaging the community started in 2004 and was extensive, far-reaching and inclusive. The public involvement intensified starting in the spring of 2007. It involved thousands of residents in constructive dialogue through dozens of community workshops, reports, Internet and phone surveys, walking tours, PowerPoint

presentations, and televised discussions at the Planning Commission and before the City Council. Community meetings and events were held across the City in classrooms, club rooms, civic associations, schools, libraries, parks, farmer's markets, the Santa Monica Pier and City Hall. In total, it is estimated that over 4,000 residents of all ages participated in the LUCE planning process.

The energy the community has shown to preserve, enhance and sustain Santa Monica was matched by the dedication of the City's Boards, Commissions and Council which, at each stage of the planning process, reviewed the findings, comments and suggestions offered by the public. During countless evening sessions, the Planning Commission and the City Council engaged in vigorous debate over the proposals of the LUCE, balancing the passions of single-interest speakers with the broad, encompassing values of the community at large. During more than 25 public hearings, these official bodies played a critical and consistent role in the development of the LUCE, steering the Plan toward completion.

## WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID IS IMPORTANT

During this process, the community expressed its vision for a City in which the best of the past is not only preserved but enhanced for current and future generations. The community's core values form the basis of the LUCE. The community identified the following core values:



- **Preserve Existing Neighborhoods.** The highest priority of the community was the preservation of the existing character and scale of Santa Monica's neighborhoods.
- **Manage Traffic and Congestion.** There is a compelling need to proactively manage congestion, reduce automobile dependence and enhance alternative modes of transportation.
- **Preserve the City's Unique Character.** The community identified the necessity of maintaining and enhancing the City's unique attributes, ensuring the creation of a "sense of place" and preserving the City's historic resources.
- **Create Housing Choices for All.** The City must continue to ensure that residents have a range of housing choices to meet the needs of people of all ages and income levels.
- **Increase Open Space and Connectivity.** Additional usable open space and vital community gathering places are necessary, as are safe, walkable and bike-friendly environments and easy connective "green" paths and routes.
- **Provide Community Benefits.** Change must result in a better Santa Monica for everyone—contributing directly to the community's core needs, particularly the creation of new affordable and workforce housing opportunities and healthy, complete neighborhoods.
- **Ensure a Sustainable Santa Monica.** Planning must ensure that the community of today thrives without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The LUCE translates these community values and the City's commitment to think, act and plan sustainably into specific policies and programs.

## THE NEED TO UPDATE THE 1984 GENERAL PLAN

The last quarter of a century—since 1984, when Santa Monica last updated the Land Use and Circulation Element of its General Plan—has brought substantial change to the City and the region. Such rapidly changing circumstances require that the City look again at the land use and circulation policies and programs proposed in the 1980s for their relevance to the major challenges the City faces today. Additionally, periodic updating of the General Plan is a State of California legal requirement.

### A Regulatory Approach

The 1984 Land Use and Circulation Element of the General Plan reflects the techniques and land use approaches considered state-of-the-art in the 1980s. It relies on conventional regulatory analysis and zoning initiatives of its time, which focus on individual buildings, and treats them as solitary structures rather than as important contributors to the City's identity. This approach largely overlooks the critical importance of ensuring that quality development contributes to the character of Santa Monica—giving physical form and functional reality to the community ideals of creating a sense of place, ensuring social interaction, and responding to the City's historical development patterns.



Photo courtesy of R. Landau

Regional growth over the last 30 years has placed increasing pressure on the City's transportation system—its corridors and its streets—leading to congestion and a lack of mobility. While the City cannot solve the region's traffic and circulation problems, it can directly address its own. Simply put, the number of motorists exceeds the roadway capacity to accommodate them. As a result, the City has experienced congestion, development with limited community benefit and little incentive for good design, and a transportation system that was planned and operated separately from land use.

Along with these challenges is the fact that Santa Monica's desirability as a place to live, work and play has resulted in increasing market pressures on the City's neighborhoods, boulevards and streets.

### Current Challenges

Over the last 25 years, since the adoption of the 1984 LUCE, unanticipated issues have resulted, including:

- Increased traffic congestion
- Commercial buildings that do not transition well to adjacent residential neighborhoods

- The loss of existing affordable and workforce housing in multi-family neighborhoods
- Infill residential buildings which are out of scale with their existing neighborhoods
- Architectural design that does not contribute to the City's rich urban character
- The lack of green space, open space and landscaped boulevards

Taken together, these factors demonstrate the urgent need to reshape traditional planning practices to ensure a future in which the character of the City is not only maintained, but enhanced.

## THE 2009 LUCE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

### A Comprehensive, Integrated Strategy

The LUCE differs from the previous General Plan in significant ways. It makes profound changes in the way the City addresses its critical land use and transportation policy. It provides a platform where the community's most fundamental values, the City's official land use and transportation policies and the tools necessary to implement them interact in an exciting and innovative way. It incorporates the City's existing sustainability policies and provides the means to implement them.

The strategy proposed by the LUCE is a comprehensive, proactive one. It breaks with past planning practice, by linking land use

and transportation policies and programs. It carefully focuses and manages change by specifying clear criteria for where and how new development should be located along the City's transit-rich corridors and in the districts served by the Expo Light Rail line. The LUCE proposes aggressive trip reduction measures and enhancements to alternative modes of travel. It actively seeks desired local-serving uses and for the first time requires new measures to monitor and ensure that transportation improvements and land use changes progress in tandem. It conserves the scale and character of the City's neighborhoods and provides incentives for historic preservation. It weighs the long-term benefits of its integrated recommendations, requiring that any changes make the City better. In essence, it is a holistic approach to create a truly sustainable community.

## MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE LUCE

The following summary provides the major LUCE goals and policies at a glance.

### Conserve Existing Neighborhoods

The LUCE protects the character of the City's residential neighborhoods and their local-serving commercial areas such as Main Street and Montana Avenue, as well as the City's institutions and parks, the beach and oceanfront, and the light industrial areas.

## WHAT MAKES THE LUCE DIFFERENT?

The LUCE is different from the policy direction of the 1984 LUCE:

- It is a conservation plan that provides for an overall reduction in building height.
- It represents a paradigm shift in the way the City assesses traffic, providing aggressive transportation management tools to reduce congestion and new vehicle trips.
- It ensures that a sustainable city is the overarching principle.

The community's greatest concerns are the loss of neighborhood character and existing affordable units, and the construction of larger-scale, insensitive infill buildings. Intense investment pressure on the City's single family and multi-family areas is the result of two forces: (1) the attractiveness of the neighborhoods which invites investment, and (2) the lack of alternative locations for residential investment due to scarce undeveloped land within the City.

The LUCE addresses these issues by combining incentives and disincentives. The Plan redirects residential market pressure away from existing

neighborhoods by transforming existing commercial investment potential, at specific locations along transit corridors and districts, into incentives for new housing opportunities. These new opportunities play a highly important strategic role in the preservation of existing neighborhoods by acting as a pressure-release valve for the extraordinary residential market forces.

As a disincentive, the LUCE proposes policies and programs to control the rate and type of change occurring within existing neighborhoods. It does this through a series of conservation programs designed to act as a restraint on inappropriate investment. These programs include:

- Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts
- Measures for the Retention of Courtyard Housing
- Modification of Demolition Regulations
- Modification of Development Standards
- Neighborhood Coordinated Parking Management Programs

(See chapter 2.2 Neighborhood Conservation for further information.)



Ocean Park & Lincoln Boulevards Neighborhood Center

*The LUCE is an integrated land use and transportation plan that unites new housing and job opportunities with expanded transportation options. A key component is the Expo Light Rail, which connects Santa Monica to the greater Los Angeles region.*

### Transition Regional-Serving Commercial Growth into Local-Serving Uses and Housing

Most significantly, the LUCE reduces the amount of regional-serving commercial growth permitted under the 1984 General Plan and encourages in its place smaller-scale, local-serving uses and the creation of complete neighborhoods with new housing opportunities located within walking distance of public gathering places and local services.

The LUCE shifts the City's land use policy from the strong commercial emphasis of the earlier

1984 General Plan to a balanced policy of requirements and incentives for constructing a significant number of additional housing units (particularly affordable housing units) to accompany new investment. It also offers incentives for employee housing. It transforms some of the City's existing industrial and regional commercial land along the Expo Light Rail line into new transit-oriented neighborhoods at Bergamot Station (26th Street and Olympic Boulevard), Memorial Park (17th Street and Colorado Avenue) and Downtown (4th Street and Colorado Avenue).

## HOW THE LUCE IMPLEMENTS THE COMMUNITY'S CORE VALUES

- Preserves the scale and character of all residential neighborhoods, the Beach and Oceanfront District, and neighborhood commercial areas such as Main Street and Montana Avenue.
- Incentivizes the production of new housing opportunities and local-serving uses, in place of regional-serving commercial growth, in a small number of areas linked to transit.
- Encourages complete neighborhoods with shopping, services, and gathering places within walking distance of new and existing housing.
- Integrates traffic management and land use through a target of No Net New Evening Peak Period Vehicle Trips.
- Seeks new opportunities to enhance and create green spaces including: improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connections, freeway capping, beach greening, and ground floor open spaces as parts of new development.
- Creates a diverse economic base that supports the fiscal health of the City, ensuring a high-quality of public services.
- Requires community benefits such as open space, historic preservation, arts, and affordable and workforce housing for development above the ministerial base height.
- Provides for a greater community role in determining the physical nature and urban form of the City to ensure that Santa Monica maintains its unique “beach town” culture.
- Provides tools, including financial incentives, to preserve historic buildings.
- Phases development over the twenty-year length of the plan, keeping change in sync with transportation improvements.
- Ties long-term programs and policies to the *Sustainable City Plan* to reduce GHG emissions, per capita carbon footprint, and overall impact on the environment.



*Preserving Santa Monica's distinctive residential neighborhoods is important to the health of the community. The LUCE seeks to provide additional benefits to the neighborhoods for current and future generations to enjoy.*



*Locating neighborhood services and amenities within walking distance of housing increases the vitality and overall sustainability of a city. The LUCE encourages new housing opportunities near existing and planned neighborhood centers.*

Image courtesy of Metro©2009



Expo Light Rail

These new transit villages will be complete neighborhoods that provide a balance of jobs and housing, exemplifying sustainable living practices with open spaces, green connections, quality pedestrian environments and enhanced bicycle facilities. New residential development will be designed to reflect the community's values of appropriate scale and height, well-designed buildings and landscaping and a range of circulation and transportation improvements.

(See chapters 2.4 Boulevards, 2.5 Activity Centers and 2.6 Districts for further information.)

### Create Livable Places with Housing Choices for All

The City has long been committed to ensuring a range of housing choices for all ages and income levels. The goal of the LUCE housing policies is to preserve existing housing



Olympic Boulevard

*Shifting away from the commercial emphasis of the 1984 General Plan, the LUCE focuses on relieving development pressure in the residential neighborhoods and directing it to areas served by transit, particularly along the Expo Light Rail line.*

units and create new housing opportunities throughout the City in a way that enhances sustainability, and creates complete neighborhoods and offers easy connections to transit.

The LUCE incorporates a dual approach for preserving existing housing and creating new housing opportunities. The first is accomplished through conservation programs for existing housing within neighborhoods, especially character-defining multi-family housing, such as courtyard housing. These programs include Neighborhood Conservation

Overlay Districts with stronger, more transparent demolition requirements as well as incentives such as the Transfer of Development Rights and Conservation Easements.

The second approach, the creation of new housing opportunities, is accomplished by designating additional land along the City's commercial transit corridors, in the creative arts districts and along the Expo Light Rail line for mixed-use residential development. This creates significant new affordable housing opportunities where few or none currently exist, locating housing within walking distance



*The highest priority of the LUCE Framework is to preserve the character and scale of Santa Monica's neighborhoods. It maintains the scale and character of 96% of the City.*

of jobs, services and transit. The LUCE encourages the private sector to produce more housing through new land use designations that offer incentives for providing housing in concert with lively and attractive open spaces, green pedestrian paths, bicycle facilities and local-serving uses within walking distance of amenities such as cafes, restaurants and retail.

(See chapter 2.1 Land Use Policy and Designations for further information.)

### Manage Transportation/Reduce Congestion

To reduce congestion, the LUCE treats the entire City as an integrated transportation management sphere with aggressive requirements for trip reduction, transit enhancements, pedestrian and bike improvements, shared parking and appropriate impact fees, designed to reduce GHG emissions.

The Plan directly addresses the challenging issue of future congestion. It is one of the



Pico & Lincoln Boulevards Transit Crossroads

*Weaving land use and transportation strategies into a single framework is a key concept put forward by the LUCE, as is creating new housing opportunities on commercial transit corridors and along the Expo Light Rail line.*

most urgent and difficult issues for the City to address. Some of this difficulty is due to expanding growth throughout the region where land use and travel pattern decisions are beyond the City's control. Even if Santa Monica were to entirely stop all new development over the next 20 years, the local transportation system would continue to deteriorate at a steady rate. This is due to growth outside the City's borders, which generates trips to and through the City. The community identified the compelling need to make major changes in how the City manages traffic and transportation.

The LUCE proposes the creation of a complete multi-modal transportation system which builds upon the City's major investment in transit and the extraordinary opportunity offered by the coming of the Expo Light Rail line. A significant innovation of the Plan is the requirement that land use policy and transportation policy be linked. It recommends strategically focusing new development at a few specific locations along the boulevards as well as in the districts to be served by the Expo Light Rail line in order to substantially reduce future work, shopping and residential vehicle trips. It provides for enhancement of pedestrian and bicycle

## EXPANDED OPEN SPACE TIED TO TRANSIT

The LUCE builds on the opportunity of Expo Light Rail to expand green and open space at its three station area sites.

- At Bergamot Station, there is an opportunity to create new parkland/green corridors throughout the Bergamot Transit Village.
- At Memorial Park, there is an opportunity to create a central park with additional passive and active recreation space for large City events and celebrations, with transit access for the community. There is also the potential for decking over the I-10 Freeway to create significant new park open space and reconnect the Pico neighborhood with central City.
- At Downtown, there is an opportunity to create a pedestrian concourse/green street between the light rail station, the Civic Center, the Pier and the Beach. The potential for decking over the I-10 Freeway provides for expansion of the Palisades Garden Walk.

(See chapters 2.1 Land Use Policy, 1.3 Urban Form and 3.5 Community Enrichment for further information.)



*Linking open spaces to enhanced transit systems has the potential to yield major benefits. The LUCE proposes decking over the I-10 Freeway at the nexus of Downtown and the Civic Center to create additional usable open space (pictured above).*

facilities and improved connectivity among neighborhoods.

The Plan establishes the goal of achieving No Net New Evening Peak Period Vehicle Trips, which addresses the major contributing factor of transportation emissions in climate change. The LUCE requires implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs that reduce automobile travel demand and incentivize shared parking and alternative modes of travel, such as carpools, vanpools, shuttles, walking and

bicycling. Proactive demand management for new employee trips will be implemented in concert with large employers such as schools, hospitals and Santa Monica College to incentivize the reduction in vehicle trips. (See chapter 4.0 Circulation for further information.)

### Increase Open Space

Future buildings will be required to provide ground level open space and landscaping, trees and green connections. Auto-dominated boulevards will be reconfigured into more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly routes with

wider sidewalks, trees and landscaping.

In the LUCE approach, the City's streets are regarded as green corridors that contribute not only to mobility and accessibility, but to the public health of Santa Monicans. Outdoor spaces such as streets, parks, plazas and pathways will provide opportunities for physical, social and cultural interaction—a shared public environment available to everyone. Future development will be required to enhance the City's inventory of open space and green connections. The Plan encourages improved connections and

pedestrian and bicycle pathways to local services and community amenities such as cafes and shops. It endorses the creation of additional parks, connecting civic spaces to the beach, and “beach greening” projects for the beachfront. It endorses the *Community Forest Management Plan*, which is designed to optimize tree canopy coverage throughout the City.

### Create a Sustainable Economy

The City recognizes that its residents’ sense of well-being comes from the quality of its municipal services, its beautiful environment, and its ideal location. The City acknowledges the importance of a fiscally healthy city with a strong economy.

The LUCE’s principal land use and transportation recommendations are designed to support economically sound and sustainable growth into the future. They specifically encourage the economic sectors which support community services, healthcare, visitor-serving and creative arts industries, and local-serving businesses that contribute to the City’s identity and to its uniqueness as a beach and retail destination.

The continued support and expansion of these uses at key locations adjacent to transit will serve to ensure accessibility, maximize efficiency of urban infrastructure and services,



*Santa Monica contains a high concentration of creative industries, from film and music production, to art galleries, studios and complexes. Remaining a center of creativity is a community value.*

decrease reliance on automobile use and reduce GHG emissions. The LUCE goals and policies are designed in concert with the principles for a sustainable economy identified in the City’s Strategy for a Sustainable Local Economy, particularly encouraging sectors that generate high revenues relative to their use of land, such as information, professional, accommodation and food services, arts, entertainment, recreation, health, social and education services and neighborhood-serving retail.

The City’s employment expansion and increasing land values over the years have provided and will continue to provide the City with additional revenue that give it a significant amount of fiscal flexibility relative



*The LUCE emphasizes local-serving, small business opportunities. The LUCE recommends small floor plate design, which caters to local enterprises, as well as having neighborhood-serving uses.*

to other cities. Reflecting these trends, a feasibility analysis found that there is sufficient site value within the City to require community benefits for projects that rise above a base height on the boulevards and in the districts.

*(See chapter 3.4 Diversified and Sustainable Economy for further information.)*

### Require Community Benefits

Traditional planning has long required development to meet minimum community benefit standards. The LUCE proposes a comprehensive approach to benefits designed to serve the community’s core needs—new affordable housing opportunities, cultural and social facilities, employee housing, preservation of historic resources, and the creation of quality “places.”

## URBAN FORM

The LUCE addresses the following questions about development projects:

- Does the project protect and enhance the neighborhoods?
- Is the project in the right location to reduce automobile dependence?
- Does the project contribute to the City's overall traffic reduction and management strategy?
- Is the project consistent with City design standards and principles?
- Does the project contribute to the City's long-term sustainability?



*The Third Street Promenade, one of Santa Monica's main attractions, is a model of quality urban form. Pedestrian in nature, the Promenade caters to human-scaled development and high-quality design and architecture. As an open space, the Promenade is a favorite among locals and visitors alike.*

The LUCE establishes a review process which conditions new development above a base height to provide community benefits. This approach provides the City and the community with the capability to shape how individual projects contribute to the City as a whole. This will ensure that new buildings will be rich additions to the urban fabric while creating special places in the City that enhance its unique character and quality of life.

To accomplish this, the Plan establishes a by-right base height of 32 feet for new

development, initiating a Conditional Use Permit or Development Agreement process for development beyond this height. This approach incentivizes certain major projects to create benefits for the City, such as affordable and employee housing, historic preservation, quality pedestrian and biking connections, new gathering places, neighborhood-oriented retail, shared parking solutions, or space for social services such as child or senior care. Future projects must also exhibit compatibility in scale, setting and transitions to residential neighborhoods.

### Ensure Quality Design and Urban Form

The urban character and form of Santa Monica is shaped by a combination of geographic features, historic development patterns, economic forces, and community values. The defining physical features of the Beach and the Santa Monica Canyon ensured that the early settlement patterns evolved along the bay and edged gradually eastward over the years. The City's form and character are derived from its physical and cultural relationship with the Pacific Ocean. The original town site,



*The preservation of historic structures is not only sustainable, but vital to retaining Santa Monica's identity and character. The adaptive reuse of the Marion Davies estate into the Annenberg Community Beach House is a sterling example of the City's ongoing commitment to historic preservation.*

laid out in a uniform large-scale rectangular grid, identified the area's major boulevards of today and made provision for early rail and transit lines. Early investors created a famed resort with flamboyant visitor attractions and buildings of elegance and style.

The LUCE enhances the Beach and the Downtown by recommending new green connections between the Downtown Light Rail Station and the Beach with a new plaza to celebrate the sense of arrival, and new paths and walkways to the Civic Center. It directs

the location of new development above the base to be focused on the City's major transit corridors and on the new rail line which follows the historic Pacific Electric Railroad alignment. For the development of the new transit villages, the LUCE requires the replication of the City's original grid system, providing connectivity among neighborhoods as well as the creation of wide, welcoming sidewalks and pedestrian amenities. Finally, the LUCE requires that through good urban design and architecture, new buildings and development will be rich additions to the urban fabric,

reflecting the community values while creating new special places within the City. New buildings will respect their settings through step backs which ensure the play of light and air along the boulevards, as well as step downs to adjacent residential neighborhoods. (See chapter 1.3 Urban Form for further information.)

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*The LUCE ensures that as the community grows and evolves over time, it will continue the rich heritage of its founding.*

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### Preserve Historic Resources

Santa Monica is one of California's most architecturally, culturally and historically significant communities. The City has been a careful conservator of this rich historic heritage. It has designated 89 individual City Landmarks, four Structures of Merit and two Historic Districts. While these structures are major contributors to the City's character, their maintenance and preservation often present challenges. In addition to these architecturally or historically significant structures and neighborhoods, other character-defining structures and neighborhoods also merit careful conservation. The benefits of historic preservation are widely recognized in terms of aesthetic, cultural and social results, but

the inherent sustainability aspects of the conservation approach are not always fully appreciated.

The LUCE embraces historic preservation not only for its important role in preserving the features that make Santa Monica unique, but also for the critical contribution it makes in helping the community achieve its sustainability goals. The LUCE proposes a program of economic incentives to assist in the preservation of historic resources. It identifies historic preservation as a core value of the community and a key community benefit—making Landmark structures eligible for the Transfer of Development Rights Program. It also recommends the establishment of a “conservation easement” program for owners of historic properties to earn a one-time income tax deduction through the donation of a property easement to a qualified preservation organization.

Additionally, through a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District program, the LUCE provides new protections for character-defining structures which may not meet the landmark designation threshold. For example, it recommends a program of special protections for the conservation and retention of the City’s inventory of courtyard housing—a southern California architectural type. It also proposes that a new definition

of “demolition” be developed along with a process for implementation that allows for consideration of the full range of issues that define a neighborhood’s character.

(See chapters 2.3 Historic Preservation and 2.2 Neighborhood Conservation for further information.)

### Manage Change

One of the most powerful new tools provided in the LUCE is its comprehensive adaptive management of growth. Designed to implement many of the *Sustainable City Plan’s* central components, the LUCE incorporates five key strategies which allow the City to control and direct future conditions to achieve community goals:

**1. The Location of Uses.** The LUCE directs new development to transit corridors and around future light rail stations to capitalize on existing and future infrastructure and services. Coupled with TDM and new housing, these areas will be complete neighborhoods where residents can walk and bike to nearby locations to meet their daily needs.

**2. The Type of Uses.** The LUCE reduces regional office as well as regional-serving commercial uses, encouraging local-serving businesses, offices with small floor plates and neighborhood retail within walking distance of surrounding neighborhoods.

**3. The Amount of Change.** The LUCE sets the framework for sustainable change paced with community facilities. It establishes a base height above which projects must include community benefits, and also carefully reduces pressures for

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*The LUCE Framework introduces the requirement that new development must contribute to, not detract from, the community. Each future project must exhibit extraordinary community benefits as well as compatibility in scale, setting and transitions to residential neighborhoods.*

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extensive change in existing neighborhoods.

**4. The Rate of Change.** The LUCE provides for monitoring through regular review of performance measures to ensure that change is occurring in concert with improvements to schools, roadways, transit and open space and is fiscally sound.

**5. The Quality of the Built Environment.** The LUCE establishes design policies and guidelines to shape new projects so that they enhance the City’s character. The LUCE establishes an urban design vision and policies for each district and boulevard that include identifying a building envelope that is compatible with its residential neighbors in scale, mass, step backs and step downs.

The LUCE, in addition to addressing the amount, rate, type, location and quality of change, also outlines a concept for periodic monitoring through review of a range of trends and indicators tied to crucial LUCE goals. This approach recognizes that solutions to the

evolution of an organic city require oversight and fluidity to respond to changing conditions. This approach also allows the City to “put on the brakes” as appropriate.

After the Plan’s adoption, the community will have a central role in the Plan’s implementation. Residents will be actively engaged in the:

- Development of a series of area plans and specific plans
- Development of neighborhood conservation programs
- Review of proposed activity center development
- Review of proposed community benefits for new development
- Development of historic preservation programs
- Early review of development applications
- Monitoring of the Plan’s progress

## THE LUCE’S APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The essence of the LUCE is to unite environmental, land use, economic, transportation and social concerns into a single, flexible, long-term plan for the City. The LUCE is the tool necessary to implement the goals outlined in the *Sustainable City Plan*. More specifically, the LUCE enables the City to achieve climate change goals through its

land use and transportation decisions, such as focusing development near transit, creating complete neighborhoods and supporting transit and nonmotorized travel. The Plan includes the social aspects of sustainable development by addressing affordable housing and access to jobs. It provides guidance to reduce the consumption of natural resources like water and energy. And it helps to create a long-term sustainable economy with a focus on green jobs and technology. The LUCE expands Santa Monica’s role as a leader in sustainability in the region and the nation.

*(See chapter 3.1 Sustainability and Climate Change for further information.)*

The LUCE links land use to transportation, directing development toward specific areas served by transit, including the Expo Light Rail stations at Bergamot Station, Memorial Park and the Downtown, and Metro Rapid Bus transit corridors such as Wilshire and Lincoln Boulevards. Focusing development near transit reduces reliance on the automobile, reduces per-capita vehicle miles traveled in the City and reduces energy use and GHG emissions. This approach addresses overall traffic congestion in the City and the region, and promotes a more walkable, healthy and physically active community.

The LUCE provides the City its greatest opportunity for implementing long-term



***Santa Monica is a national leader in environmental, economic and social sustainability.*** *The LUCE promotes community values associated with neighborhood preservation, affordable and workforce housing, transportation, open space, creative arts, and green building, among others.*

programs to reduce its per capita carbon footprint and its overall impact on the environment. State legislation addressing the need to reduce GHG emissions (AB 32, SB 375) requires local jurisdictions to take an active role in meeting the goals of regional sustainability plans based on land use and transportation. Guidance<sup>1</sup> has been provided for the ways in which a jurisdiction can plan and work toward reducing the growth in vehicle travel. These ways include:

<sup>1</sup> California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA), Model Policies for Greenhouse Gases in General Plans, June, 2009

## CLIMATE CHANGE

The LUCE integrates land use and transportation to create sustainability and enables the community to:

- Reduce automobile reliance – clustering housing and employment on transit corridors
- Reduce vehicle trips – implementing TDM programs and enhancing alternative modes of arrival
- Reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled – locating local services within walking distance, creating complete neighborhoods
- Reduce heat gain and increase carbon dioxide capture – encouraging green streets, parkways, parks, and building practices
- Reduce water and energy use and solid waste generation – preserving existing neighborhoods, controlling demolition, and encouraging LEED construction standards

- Instituting aggressive land use and transportation planning policies, including more compact, mixed-use development with residential and employment densities served by transit
- Increasing opportunities for more affordable and workforce housing strategically located in mixed-use sites near employment or public transportation
- Instituting programs to reduce vehicle trips, like employee transit incentives, car-sharing, vanpooling, parking policies and public education programs
- Creating complete neighborhoods with local services within walking distance

The LUCE embraces these strategies, and tailors them to Santa Monica’s community vision and local opportunities, through:

- Establishing the goal of No Net New Trips through aggressive trip reduction measures and incentivizing alternative modes of travel, such as carpools, shuttles, walking, bicycling and shared parking
- Clustering housing and employment near transit to reduce trips
- Creating changes in travel and land development likely to result from passenger rail expansion
- Supporting a sustainable economy with an emphasis on local-serving businesses, healthcare, creative arts and other services that support the community



*The goals, policies and programs included in the LUCE reflect the values and aspirations of the Santa Monica community. It unites preservation with evolution, sustainability with accountability and seeks to ensure that the quality and character of everyday life is perpetuated for future generations to enjoy.*

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*The Framework encompasses the community’s vision for the City’s future. It is a way to actively manage the City and all of its components—housing, transportation, cultural elements, economics, natural environments—in an integrative and holistic manner that ensures a great quality of life for all Santa Monicans.*

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- Increasing open space and expanding the urban forest by “greening” the boulevards, capping the I-10 Freeway, creating new park-land and increasing ground-level open space
- Developing a Climate Action Plan with implementation strategies for reducing GHG emissions and mechanisms for monitoring emissions

The LUCE incorporates land use, transportation, economic and environmental issues into a flexible, long-term plan for the City. It focuses development near transit, guides the location of local-serving land uses to create complete neighborhoods and encourages alternatives to the automobile. The Plan addresses the social aspects of sustainable development with goals and policies to significantly increase the amount of affordable and workforce housing that is accessible to local jobs, improving the jobs to housing ratio and supporting the creation of complete neighborhoods. It endorses a long-term sustainable economy with a focus on green jobs and technology, and encourages the expansion of its creative arts industry. It focuses on creating expanded bicycle and pedestrian networks throughout the City, seeking to make walking and biking safe and pleasurable for everyone at all times of the day. It requires congestion management programs for new development and establishes the goal of No Net New Trips. Finally, the LUCE provides the



Photo courtesy of R. Friday

community with measures to ensure that the goals of the Plan are being met, and with the ability to adjust to changing conditions.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As we look to the future, the test of our progress on this comprehensive set of goals and initiatives will be how well we have cared for and managed the magnificent resources we have inherited: the Beach, the Downtown, our neighborhoods and our place within the global environment. The LUCE was developed to preserve our City’s character; enhance transportation systems; maintain our quality of life; support a sustainable economy; expand healthcare services; encourage creative arts

and small businesses; increase mobility for all who live, work and visit here; and ensure the long-term social, economic and environmental sustainability of our community. The Plan provides for the careful conservation of our neighborhoods and commercial areas, and calls for public amenities to increase livability and sociability for all community members.

The LUCE includes cautious phasing over time, establishes monitoring programs, and incorporates an innovative approach to manage our challenging transportation problems. The decisions the community has made on these broad issues will help determine how those who live and work in Santa Monica will flourish.

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