



*Maintaining the
character of
Santa Monica
while enhancing the
lifestyle of all
who live here.*

AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE LUCE STRATEGY
FRAMEWORK



City of
Santa Monica

PLANNING & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

JANUARY 2009



The LUCE Strategy Framework was developed to preserve our City's character, enhance transportation systems, expand healthcare services, maintain our quality of life, 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.

DEAR SANTA MONICA RESIDENT:

Looking forward to this New Year, I personally would like to invite you to participate as we evaluate the City's Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) proposals. This brochure is a summary of the comprehensive LUCE Strategy Framework, the first phase in defining the City's required General Plan, last updated in 1984. When adopted, the City of Santa Monica's LUCE will set the direction for the City's transportation and land use policies for the next 20 years.

The LUCE Framework document reflects an ongoing dialogue with the community that included more than a dozen well-attended workshops. This process was followed by eighteen public hearings with the Planning Commission and City Council with broad-based public participation. In July 2008, the City Council provided direction to ensure that the final plan will be a "balanced and living" document. In July 2008, Council requested staff to evaluate alternative land use and traffic scenarios, including economic and environmental assessments of the LUCE recommendations. This evaluation phase is currently underway, with completion anticipated in Fall 2009.

The City has listened intently to the community's concerns on issues of preserving neighborhoods; establishing stringent requirements (public benefits) for development, such as open space, affordable/ workforce housing and childcare facilities; and developing effective new tools for historic preservation and adaptive reuse. Particularly strong concerns have been expressed about transportation issues and traffic congestion. The proposed transportation recommendations represent a paradigm shift in the way traffic is addressed in Santa Monica. The City Council has whole-heartedly endorsed the innovative goal of "No Net New Trips" as the basis for traffic management in LUCE. With the approval of Measure R the City is working to facilitate the extension of the Exposition Light Rail Line to downtown Santa Monica from downtown Los Angeles.

In the coming months, there will be many opportunities and workshops for the community to continue to be involved in shaping the City's future. Several workshops, starting in early 2009 through this next summer, will include the following topics:

- Conservation of neighborhoods and historic preservation – tools to make it happen;
- Downtown area planning;
- New transportation opportunities and traffic reduction proposals; and
- Exposition Light Rail – presentation and recommendations for an alignment in Santa Monica.

Check the website for the specific dates. For your convenience, a postcard is enclosed for you to provide your contact information.

These are but a few highlights of the issues we look forward to discussing with you this year. We will be talking about your quality of life. Please join us in the on-going process of shaping the final form of the LUCE.

Eileen P. Fogarty

Director, Planning and Community Development



*LUCE Strategy Framework:
Maintaining the character of Santa Monica while
enhancing the lifestyle of all who live here.*

WHAT IS THE LUCE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK?

Santa Monica's Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) Strategy Framework is the first step in updating the City's General Plan. It is a **conservation plan** designed to:

- Preserve residential neighborhoods and maintain the City's character;
- Pro-actively manage traffic and reduce new vehicle trips;
- Integrate land use and transportation; focusing change in areas with transit;
- Establish stringent requirements (public benefits) for development, such as open space, parks, affordable and workforce housing;
- Involve citizens fully in development review through a public engagement process;
- Support a healthy and sustainable economy of visitor and local-serving uses, creative employment, cultural arts, small businesses, hospitals, schools and neighborhood retail;
- Phase in and monitor future development, with the ability to "apply brakes" when necessary;
- Employ new tools for historic preservation and adaptive reuse; and
- Ensure that future change contributes to the community.

It is a "balanced and living" document which responds to the needs and expectations of Santa Monica's diverse neighborhoods and residents. Required by state law to have a General Plan, the City is currently operating under a Plan adopted in 1984.



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 94% of the City.



WHAT MAKES THE LUCE FRAMEWORK DIFFERENT?

The LUCE Framework is different from the policy direction of the 1984 General Plan:

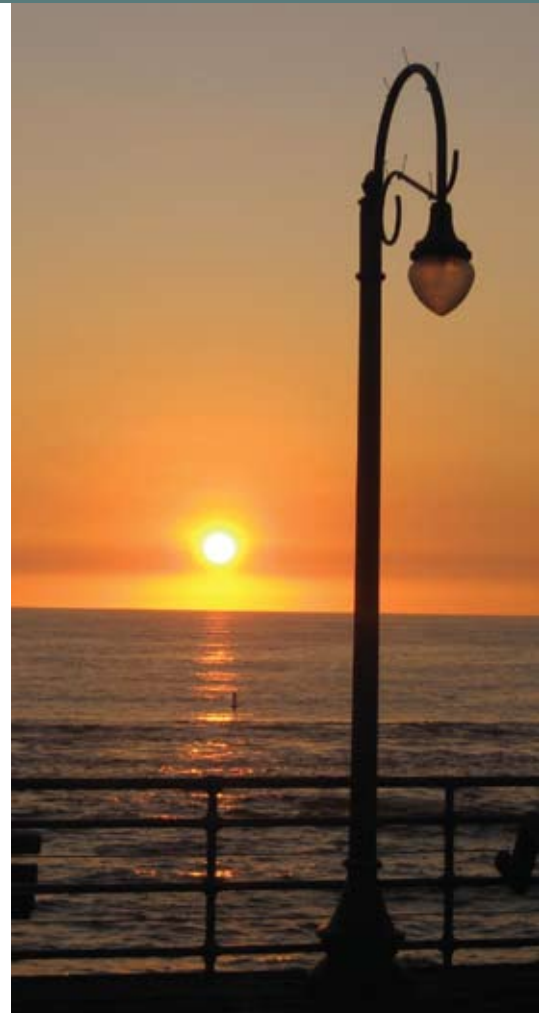
- It is a conservation plan that provides for a significant reduction in building height.
- It represents a paradigm shift in the way the City assesses traffic, providing aggressive transportation management tools to reduce congestion and new vehicle trips.
- It ensures that a sustainable city is the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



IT HELPS DEFINE WHO WE ARE

The result of the initiatives outlined in the Framework will be a future for Santa Monica which is firmly rooted in the past—preserving the diverse history, architecture, character and culture that define our community. Santa Monica is remarkable within the region for its unique and varied neighborhoods, each featuring its own mix of housing, shopping, dining and entertainment. The City as a whole combines a historic cultural and residential heritage with the vigor of a balanced economy. Professional and healthcare services along with education and the creative arts are leading economic sectors, as are hotels and tourism, food and retail and a variety of small businesses. Santa Monica is known for its arts and entertainment and has over 120 museums, galleries and public art installations. Santa Monica is also a walkable city with beautiful beaches and parks.

These distinctions make Santa Monica a very desirable place to live, work and play. But, along with that desirability is the need to plan for a future in which the character and vision of the City is maintained while simultaneously establishing a model for urban living that balances community preservation with the need to foster diversity and long term sustainability.



THE LUCE FRAMEWORK IS DIFFERENT FROM THE EXISTING GENERAL PLAN BECAUSE IT:

- Preserves all residential neighborhoods, the Beach District, and neighborhood commercial areas such as Main Street and Montana Avenue;
- Provides tools to preserve historic buildings;
- Integrates traffic management and land use through a target of “No Net New Trips.”
- Improves rapid transit, pedestrian and bike facilities to increase mobility;
- Limits change over the next twenty years to a small number of areas linked to transit;
- Requires “Public Benefit” such as open space, parks, and affordable and workforce housing;
- Encourages “complete neighborhoods” with housing, shopping and services within walking distance;
- Phases development over the twenty-year length of the plan, keeping change in sync with transportation improvements; and
- Provides for a greater community role in determining the physical nature of the City to ensure that Santa Monica maintains its unique “beach town” culture.

HOW IS THE LUCE FRAMEWORK A CONSERVATION PLAN?

IT PRESERVES THE NEIGHBORHOODS & MAINTAINS THE CITY'S CHARACTER

The LUCE recommendations call for all residential neighborhoods, the Beach District, and neighborhood commercial areas such as Main Street and Montana Avenue to remain at their current scale and character. To assure results, the Framework proposes new tools to maintain the distinguishing features of existing residential neighborhoods, to retain character-defining buildings and older smaller scale multi-family structures, and to expand open space, greenery and the large tree canopy throughout the City.

Proposed programs and initiatives in the Framework include:

- **Conservation Overlay Districts** designed to limit the demolition of older character defining buildings;
- **Infill Development Standards** to ensure new buildings are compatible with the existing neighborhood;
- **Design Guidelines & Maximum Building Envelopes** established for individual neighborhoods relating building size to the size of the site;
- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)** to encourage historic preservation and adaptive reuse;
- **Specific Design Criteria** to establish urban form and character to encourage superior design.



The community will be encouraged to play an active role in evaluating projects through a redesigned, transparent development review process.

Future buildings must meet multiple standards such as providing open space, greenery and maintaining a compatible scale. The goal is to enhance the neighborhood. Walking and biking options will be augmented with new streetscape improvements. Local retail and services will be encouraged to provide day-to-day shopping opportunities within walking distance of residential neighborhoods.

A fundamental aspect of this conservation approach is to significantly lower the height limits in the 1984 General Plan. In a departure from the older plan, the LUCE Framework specifically requires that future projects incorporate “public benefits” such as open space and affordable/ workforce housing. Anything over the established low base height would require a public process and need to meet a high bar of “extraordinary” benefits for the community. New development would also be required to be compatible in scale with the existing setting and provide a transition to residential neighborhoods.



Conservation Districts preserve ground level open space and trees.

HOW THE COMMUNITY IS SHAPING THE FUTURE:

In this first phase of an on-going process, thousands of residents took part in eleven interactive community workshops, surveys and other programs shaping the vision of the LUCE. This vision was further refined through

eighteen Planning Commission and City Council public hearings with input from many community organizations and their members. The community will continue to be actively involved in the next phase which will be the evaluation

of alternative land use and traffic scenarios and the analysis of economic/fiscal and environmental assessments during Spring/Summer 2009.



WHAT THE COMMUNITY IS SAYING IS IMPORTANT:

The community's vision, developed through an extensive participation process, centers around the core concept of maintaining the City's unique attributes while enhancing and enriching community livability. The community emphasized:

- **Traffic:** we recognize there's a compelling need to proactively manage congestion;
- **Community:** we want to retain and ensure complete healthy neighborhoods and provide housing for all income levels;
- **Sustainability:** we want assurance that from a social, economic and environmental perspective, the City we know and love will be here in the future;
- **"Sense of Place":** we want to encourage this through historic preservation and creation of usable public open space and vital community gathering spaces;
- **Connectivity:** we want to be able to get places in a safe, walkable and bike-friendly environment and through easy connective "green" paths and routes;
- **Ownership:** we want on-going involvement in shaping the City's future; and
- **Viability:** we want to protect small businesses and enhance the creative arts industry.

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

A PROACTIVE APPROACH

A centerpiece of the LUCE is a proactive role for the City in managing the transportation system to serve the community's goals and to limit growth in auto traffic. It does this in two ways:

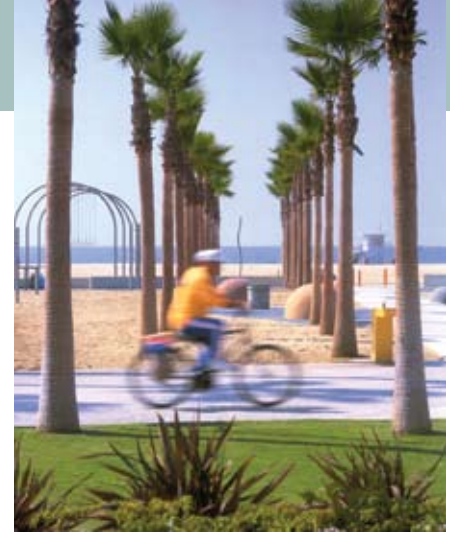
IT INTEGRATES LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

The most notable and innovative aspect of the new LUCE Framework is to solidly link land use to transportation, shifting investment pressures away from the neighborhoods toward a few specific areas served by transit including the Exposition Light Rail line. This Expo Line, designed to follow the alignment of the earlier Pacific Electric Railroad along Santa Monica's industrial spine, holds great promise addressing some of the City's most intractable transportation issues. Proposed new "transit villages" are to be centered around the Bergamot Arts and the Memorial Park Light Rail Train (LRT) stations.

This recommendation converts more commercial areas into residential housing opportunities, achieving one of the City's most fundamental values—the creation of a range of housing for all its residents. These transit villages are to be healthy neighborhoods, complete with affordable and workforce housing and all essential services such as local shopping, park land, gathering places, small business space, bike lanes and new transit options.



Creating complete neighborhoods minimizes auto trips and reduces the need for additional parking. The Downtown will be revitalized with the addition of a new LRT station, redevelopment of Santa Monica Place, new department stores, new connections to the Civic Center and the Pier and additional open space.



IT REDUCES VEHICLE TRIPS

The goal of the "No Net New Trips" requires multiple strategies, including:

- Location of future development near transit;
- Creation of Transportation Demand Management Districts (TDM) throughout the City to incentivize employers, schools, hospitals and others to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips and encourage shuttles, transit use, vanpools and shared parking;
- Traffic Impact Fees on new projects to fund a share of transit and bicycle facilities as well as traffic improvements;
- Complete neighborhoods, providing the needs of daily life within walking or biking distance of where people live; and
- New performance measures to assess changing traffic conditions and monitor progress toward vehicle trip reduction.

Such approaches, combined with location near transit, have been shown to reduce new vehicle trips by 50 percent.

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IS WORKING?

The City Council endorsed a comprehensive program to measure and monitor the effectiveness of this transportation approach. The new program will evaluate:

- The time it takes to travel from point A to point B;
- The shift from single occupancy vehicles to alternates such as carpools, van pools and buses;
- The investments and increases in walking, bicycling and enhanced shuttle services;
- The implementation of the Exposition Light Rail with transit amenities at Bergamot Station, Downtown and Memorial Park transit centers; and
- The improved connections from the neighborhoods to access transit.

The results of this evaluation will provide the community the tools for future land use decision making.

The City Council has made it very clear that development should be phased over the life of this twenty-year plan and must be jointly supported, and in sync with, transportation improvements.



TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY ACHIEVES ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The LUCE Framework recognizes that responsible land use and transportation policy is a key part of the solution to reducing greenhouse gas emission. In addition to requiring resource-conserving green building standards for new development, the plan designates land uses that maximize the benefits of transit, walking and biking, making it possible to reduce private auto trips.



WHY THE “PUBLIC BENEFIT” APPROACH IS IMPORTANT



The focus must be on the creation of “places” that benefit the community—promoting gathering places, open space and connectivity in a quality landscaped environment that promotes sociability and human interaction.



LUCE REQUIRES NEW DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY

The LUCE Framework approach for new development moves beyond mere regulatory analysis and introduces the requirement that “new development can and must contribute to, not detract from, the community.” It does this by requiring that new development preserve and enhance the identity, livability and sense of community in neighborhoods and commercial areas.

As change occurs the focus must be on the creation of “places” that benefit the community—promoting gathering places, open space and connectivity in a quality landscaped environment that promotes sociability and human interaction. This strategy also requires that new buildings not encroach into, or adversely impact existing neighborhoods. It recommends building envelopes that preserve access to light and air, requires graceful transitions and encourages superior design. Additionally, it places great importance on providing a range of housing options for all members of the community, including affordable and workforce housing.



The LUCE Framework introduces the requirement that new development can and must contribute to, not detract from, the community.

LUCE ESTABLISHES A HIGH BAR FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS

The LUCE Framework establishes a low base height above which all projects must participate in a community review process. Each project must exhibit extraordinary public benefits as well as compatibility in scale, setting and transitions to residential neighborhoods.

Examples of a high standard of future public benefits include:

- Historic preservation and adaptive reuse of buildings;
- Significant amounts of ground-level open space/community plaza;
- Child care, community facilities and space for the arts; and
- Affordable and workforce housing.

This approach responds directly to Santa Monicans' deeply-held commitment, expressed throughout the planning workshops, that the greatest benefits of urban life must be accessible now and in the future to all the residents of the City.



Each future project must exhibit extraordinary public benefits as well as compatibility in scale, setting and transitions to residential neighborhoods.

Preserving historic buildings is a key component of the LUCE.



MAPPING THE FUTURE:

The community vision for LUCE shifts pressure away from the neighborhoods, linking land use to transportation, ensuring that as change occurs existing neighborhoods are protected and new neighborhoods are thriving and sustainable.



1 BERGAMOT STATION VILLAGE

SUSTAINABLE & BEAUTIFUL

New village neighborhoods envisioned along the Exposition Light Rail Line:

Bergamot Station Village

An existing creative arts center with expanded arts, entertainment and cultural presence. A mix of uses and active gathering spaces, community facilities and services, open space, and affordable housing, linked by bike lanes, tree-lined sidewalks and new transit options.



2 MEMORIAL PARK ACTIVITY CENTER

Memorial Park Activity Center

Expanded parkland and new affordable/workforce housing, serving our hospitals, college and neighborhoods, providing local business opportunities in a quality setting with a well planned network of pedestrian, bicycle and a new Light Rail Station at 17th Street.



3 DOWNTOWN SANTA MONICA

Downtown Santa Monica

The heart of the City and the center of commerce, entertainment, shopping/dining and a new Light Rail Station. Enhanced beach connections and greater walking and biking opportunities to unite the Civic Center and Downtown core.



4 WILSHIRE AT 14TH NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



5 LINCOLN TRANSIT CROSSROADS



6 LINCOLN NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



7 PICO AT SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

THRIVING & WALKABLE

Linked to transit, making our auto-oriented Boulevards walkable, diverse and attractive— providing handsome public spaces and local services for the neighborhoods.

Wilshire at 14th Street Neighborhood Center

Encouraging reduced driving and increased walking with new green gathering space focused around a grocery store, neighborhood shops and a mix of housing.

Lincoln Transit Crossroads

Encouraging transit usage through creation of green and welcoming public space ringed with shops, restaurants and new housing.

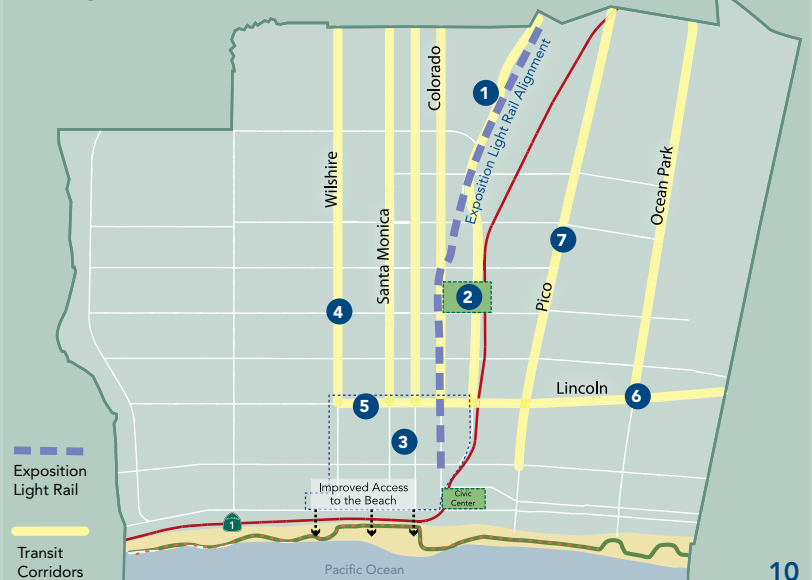
Lincoln Neighborhood Center

An attractive neighborhood-scale mixed use center, anchored by a grocery store and local retail with housing and transit.

Pico at Santa Monica College

Diverse and thriving new retail amenities and residential units serving the college and neighborhood. Opportunity for a new partnership of City and College working together.

The City of Santa Monica



AN INVITATION TO EVERY RESIDENT – GET INVOLVED!

Join us as we begin the evaluation of the LUCE Framework. We will be analyzing potential land use and traffic impacts as well as reviewing economic and environmental assessments. It is your community involvement that will help shape the final form of the LUCE.

MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

LUCE REFINEMENT AND FINAL PLAN

During the next several months, the LUCE Framework will undergo intensive economic, environmental and transportation evaluation which will be presented in community workshops. This evaluation process will provide the basis for community, Planning Commission and Council direction. The final LUCE will reflect this input as it proceeds through the public hearings leading to adoption later next year.

DETAILED AREA PLANS

The Framework also ensures on-going community participation in the development of detailed area plans that will guide the implementation of the LUCE. The LUCE Framework calls for detailed area plans for Downtown, the health care area, and transit stations at Memorial Park and Bergamot. These plans will provide opportunities to create public open space and amenities, identify expectations for private



development, and propose specific transportation and parking strategies. These planning efforts will involve neighborhoods in the surrounding areas.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

Additionally, there will be workshops in the community to discuss neighborhood preservation recommendations such as Conservation Overlay Districts, Infill Development Standards, Design Guidelines and Maximum Building Envelopes and the Transfer of Development Rights for historic preservation.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Lastly, Santa Monicans will now play an active role in evaluating projects requiring public benefits. The City is putting in place a redesigned public development review process to ensure that future projects are evaluated on their ability to meet the City and community's identified objectives and expectations.

The Community Vision...

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.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As Santa Monica looks to the future, the test of our progress will be in how well we have cared for and managed the magnificent resources we have inherited: our beach, Downtown, neighborhoods and our economy.

The LUCE Framework focuses on preserving our City's character, enhancing transportation systems, expanding healthcare services, maintaining our quality of life, encouraging creative arts and small businesses, increasing mobility for all who live, work and visit here and ensuring the long-term social, economic and environmental sustainability. With that in mind, the plan provides for the careful conservation of our neighborhoods and commercial areas, public amenities to increase livability and sociability for all our citizens.

It includes cautious phasing over time and an innovative approach to managing our difficult transportation problems. The decisions the community makes now on these broad issues will determine to a large extent how those who live and work in Santa Monica will flourish during the next two decades.



Join us as we begin the evaluation of the LUCE Framework. Your involvement will help to shape the Plan for the next twenty years.



**WE'RE TALKING ABOUT YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE.
JOIN US!**

**THE CITY IS HOLDING A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS
STARTING IN EARLY 2009.**

The most immediate topics include:

- Exposition Light Rail – discussion and recommendations for the light rail alignment in Santa Monica – Jan. & Feb. 2009;
- Conservation of neighborhoods and historic preservation;
- Downtown and transit station area planning; and
- New transportation approaches and traffic reduction measures.

To learn about future community meetings and workshops, please visit:

WWW.SHAPETHEFUTURE2025.NET



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