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May 8, 2009

Los Angeles City Council  
Planning and Land Use Management Committee  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Report on Assembly Bill 1358, "The Complete Streets Act of 2007" in response to Motion 08-3349

Honorable Members of the Planning and Land Use Management Committee:

This report responds to Council Motion 08-3349 which instructs the City Planning and Transportation Departments to prepare a report that delineates the City's plans to implement AB 1358 (Leno), "The Complete Streets Act of 2007."

**Summary of AB 1358**

AB 1358 requires the City, upon revision of its Transportation Element of the General Plan, to "identify means for the routine accommodation of all users of the roadway including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and users of public transportation." The bill became effective on January 1, 2009. The bill intends "to encourage good planning for all modes of travel and therefore render our roads safer and more convenient places to walk, ride a bike, or take transit. Safer roads enable more people to gain the health benefits of choosing an active form of transportation and benefit everyone by reducing traffic congestion, auto-related air pollution, and the production of climate-changing greenhouse gases."

While no funding has been allocated to update the existing Transportation Element, a number of actions have already occurred and additional activities are underway that will facilitate the transformation of our roadways into "Complete Streets." The following describes these plans, strategies, and activities.

**Framework Element of the General Plan**

The City's Framework Element which was adopted by the City Council in 2001 establishes citywide goals and policies that guide the development of all General Plan Elements, including the Transportation Element and the 35 Community Plans. It is a smart growth plan to strategically accommodate future growth and includes policies in the Land Use, Housing, Urban Form and Neighborhood Design, and Transportation

chapters which reflect the objectives of AB 1358. The Land Use Chapter (Chapter) in particular notes the objective "to accommodate land uses, locate and design buildings, and implement streetscape amenities that enhance pedestrian activity." The Chapter further supports the enhancement of pedestrian activity by encouraging the development of public streetscape improvements and establishing *Urban Form and Neighborhood Design* criteria for the design and siting of structures within the sidewalk area.

### **Transportation Element of the General Plan**

The Transportation Element itself, although adopted by City Council almost ten years ago, includes many of the goals and objectives that are identified in AB 1358. In particular the Transportation Element establishes an objective "to mitigate the impacts of traffic growth, reduce congestion, and improve air quality by implementing a comprehensive program of multi-modal strategies that encompass physical and operational improvements as well as demand management." The Transportation Element further states an objective of "making the street system accessible, safe, and convenient for bicycle, pedestrian, and school child travel" and further reinforces this objective through a number of policies including one that places school child safety as a priority over vehicular movement on all streets regardless of highway classifications."

### **Bicycle Plan Update**

City staff is currently preparing an update and comprehensive modernization of the existing 2002 Bicycle Plan. The new Bicycle Plan will reflect new city planning trends, local and global environmental challenges, state legislation, and significant public interest in elevating Los Angeles into one of the most bicycle-friendly cities in the country. The purpose of the Bicycle Plan is to guide the development and implementation of bicycle transportation policies, programs, and infrastructure citywide. With an increase in bikeway facilities, bicycling has the potential to become an important alternative mode of transportation for both commuting and non-commuting purposes. The update of the Bicycle Plan has included citywide community workshops and public participation from a variety of stakeholders. The draft Plan is nearing completion and is expected to be presented to the City Planning Commission in August 2009 and City Council in September 2009.

### **Land Use Element of the General Plan-Community Plan Updates**

The Department is currently updating a number of its 35 Community Plans. The Community Plans comprise the City's Land Use Element and each Plan, as it is updated, will incorporate area specific land use and transportation strategies that implement the goals and objectives of the Framework and Transportation Elements. They will strengthen access and connectivity to existing or planned transit stops and/or stations, enhance multi-modal opportunities through the reclassification of streets, modify street sections when appropriate, and establish transportation demand management strategies particular to the needs of each community. The first of the updated plans is expected to be presented to the City Planning Commission by the end of 2009.

### **Street Standards Committee and Downtown Streets Standards**

On April 24, 2009, the City Council adopted amendments to the Central City Community Plan and the Transportation Element to reflect new Street Standards (Standards) over

an approximately 1,800 acre area in Downtown. The new Standards are context-sensitive and provide accommodation for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, resulting in the strategic implementation of Complete Streets. In addition, the environmental clearance for the new Standards includes a Transportation Toolbox that will enable the Department of Transportation to use tools and techniques that embrace new technology, and reward direct connections to rail station stops. On January 8, 2009, the City Planning Commission approved the recommendations of the Street Standards Committee to create new cross-sections for these streets and amend the City Engineer's Standards. These Standards became final upon adoption of the Plan Amendments above.

### **Green Streets and Green Alleys**

In collaboration with the Board of Public Works, the Department of Environmental Affairs, and the Community Redevelopment Agency, the Planning Department has been participating in the review, consideration and preparation of new design guidelines to optimize storm water infiltration and urban runoff bio-remediation wherever possible within the sidewalk portion of the public right-of-way. In October 2008, the City Council adopted a report evaluating the use of porous paving and the possibility of adaptively re-using alleys. A subcommittee of Green Streets was formed to address Green Alleys (CRA, Public Works, Planning) which has partnered with the USC Center for Sustainable Studies to develop pilot alley programs. Both of these Committees meet monthly and include staff from multiple agencies.

### **Los Angeles River Improvement Overlay**

The Los Angeles River Improvement Overlay District (LA-RIO) was recently approved by the City Planning Commission and a joint meeting of the Ad Hoc River and Planning and Land Use Management Committees. It is expected that the LA-RIO will be acted upon by City Council late this Spring. The LA-RIO establishes development and design guidelines for all new projects (except single family homes) within approximately one mile of the LA River for its entire thirty two mile length (from the headwaters in Canoga Park to the city's boundary just south of Downtown). The LA-RIO incorporates new standards for the street network within its boundaries in order to enhance and support pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular mobility as a means of connecting the City to the Greenway and vice versa. The Plan promotes pedestrian and other multi-modal connections to the River and thereby extends the City to and across the River, and encourages multiple means of transportation to reach the River. The LA-RIO requires that all new projects, with the exception of single family homes, install pedestrian street lights, bicycle racks, street trees, and native and/or drought tolerant landscaping within the parkway areas. It further establishes guidelines to serve as options to mitigate the environmental impact of a project as well as guide the design of street improvements undertaken as a result of publicly financed projects. These could include improvements to promote pedestrian access across the street through pedestrian street crossings, the installation of traffic circles, on-street parking, the installation of bicycle lanes, and the installation of bus stops and bus stop garden.

### **Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan**

A Specific Plan is being developed for the 650 acre Cornfield Arroyo Seco area, located ½ mile north of Union Station. One of the purposes of the Specific Plan is to create a safe, efficient and accessible circulation network that embraces pedestrians, bicyclists,

transit, trucks, and automobiles. The Specific Plan will implement the Complete Streets Act by establishing four new street classifications for the various districts within the Plan area. The new street typologies will include wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, transportation amenities, street trees and pedestrian lighting along with a way finding system to facilitate access to local amenities and provide information about transportation routes and timetables.

### **Transit Oriented District (TOD) Plans**

The City Planning and Transportation Departments have engaged consultant teams to develop plans for the neighborhoods surrounding five rail station stops along the Expo Line and three stations along the Gold Line Eastside Extension. Among the purposes of these plans, is to identify strategies that will facilitate multi modal access to the stations and to assure that streets serve all types of users.

### **Urban Design Principles**

On May 14, the City Planning Commission will conclude discussions on outreach with City stakeholders on the development of citywide Urban Design Principles. At a broad policy level, these Principles have been developed using information gained from workshops and discussions with stakeholders, individual project review and the work of Community Planners on the New Community Plan program. The Principles include "Produce Great Green Streets."

### **Placemaking Academy**

Supported by a grant from the Community Redevelopment Agency, the Project for Public Spaces from New York City has begun an interagency training on "Streets and Placemaking." Staffs from the CRA, City Planning Department, Department of Transportation and Bureau of Engineering are participating in 2 major workshops. The first workshop – a focus on Streets – was a combination of field work and group review, took place April 28. The second workshop is scheduled for June 3 and will focus on Placemaking in three areas in the City. The overall objective is to collaborate more effectively for meaningful results. The concept of the Placemaking Academy grew out of the interagency success exhibited by the Ad Hoc Downtown Street Standards Committee.

### **Maximizing Mobility Options Study**

The Departments received a grant to analyze various alternative transportation options that could be implemented in Los Angeles to facilitate the use of the existing regional transit network, and to create connections that are currently missing in the existing land use and transportation network. The consultant team is particularly focusing on the many potential transit riders that find it difficult to make the first and last legs of their trip because it is inconvenient or too far to walk, bike, or use means other than a car, to connect to the transit system. They are looking at programs, incentives, and new mechanisms to bridge the "first-mile/last-mile" gap which will also reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The study will be completed by Fall, 2009.

### **Traffic Study Guidelines**

LADOT is in the process of finalizing revisions to the City's traffic study guidelines in order to incorporate transportation demand management strategies and other trip

reduction measures as options that can be utilized instead of physical infrastructure measures such as street widening and traffic signal upgrades. This revision recognizes the diminished availability of such physical improvements as mitigation measures in many parts of the City. The final draft of the revised Guidelines includes an enhanced credit for transit friendly / pedestrian friendly development (with a graduated scale depending upon proximity to high capacity transit) as well as greater emphasis on parking management and other TDM measures for traffic impact mitigation.

### **Westside Transportation Study**

The Westside Transportation Study is a comprehensive analysis of traffic, congestion, and parking issues on the City's Westside. A consultant will be selected in June and work is expected to begin by September, 2009. The study area is bounded by La Cienega Boulevard on the east, Sunset Boulevard on the north, the Pacific Ocean on the west, and Imperial Highway on the south. The results and implementation of the strategies resulting from the WTS will assist the City to better serve the needs of multiple users including pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of public transportation while also contributing to the overall benefit of reducing traffic congestion, auto-related air pollution, and the production of climate-changing greenhouse gases. The WTS will include the development of a Westside Transportation Model, a Westside Mobility and Rail Connectivity Study, a Future Conditions Report, a Comprehensive Mobility Improvement Plan, and an update to the Coastal Transportation Corridor Specific Plan.

The transportation model will be developed to incorporate sensitivities and capabilities beyond a traditional highway traffic model so that the city can quantify transportation benefits related to non-traditional mobility strategies. These include, but are not limited to, land use strategies (mixed-use, urban design, accessibility, density, destinations, etc.), alternative mode strategies (mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle, etc.) and pricing schemes (tolling, parking charges, etc.). The main purpose of the WTS is to develop a Comprehensive Mobility Improvement Plan that identifies candidate corridors and potential alignments for the installation of commuter rail or busway infrastructure that can link existing and planned rail lines in the Westside and can provide transit service for currently under-served areas. The improvement plan will also recommend a mix of short, medium, and long-term improvements that include multi-modal transportation improvements, enhanced streetscape elements, urban design improvements, enhanced pedestrian and bicycle amenities, freeway system upgrades, highway improvements, trip and VMT reduction strategies, and intersection/signal improvements.

### **SCAG Grants**

Funding for the three projects described below was provided by SCAG. Consultants have been identified through SCAG's competitive bid process and it is expected that work will begin by the end of May 2009.

### **Street Classification and Benchmarking System Study**

The Street Classification and Benchmarking System (SCBS) will identify the various functions the city's streets are expected to perform and an objective way to measure their effectiveness relative to vehicle miles traveled and related environmental and accessibility goals. The classification component of the SCBS will build on the street classifications already established in the City's Transportation Element, and will identify additional street functions that occur in the City that require a priority for that function

(such as goods movement, retail activity, commuting, etc.). The benchmarking component of the SCBS will create new type(s) of measurement tools so that we can measure the primary function as well as the other modes of transportation on each type of street, including personal motor vehicle, transit vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, truck and emergency vehicles.

The City intends to use the SCBS to develop more effective mitigations for traffic impacts generated by development projects, to designate street functions and land uses in the new Community Plans program that best facilitate increased use of transit, to comply with the Complete Streets Act (AB 1358), and to provide the documentation for making more effective transportation investment decisions. With the benchmarking measurement methodology developed through the SCBS, land use and transportation planners will be able to objectively assess what kinds of projects are best for which locations and to quantify how such projects contribute to a reduction in vehicle miles traveled and improvement in the environment.

#### Transportation Strategic Plan Study

The Transportation Strategic Plan Study will result in a list of prioritized transportation projects and programs for the period 2010 through 2035 and will refine the regional travel demand forecast model to create a City of Los Angeles-specific model. Once fully operational, the new model will allow the City to calculate potential reductions in vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) due to the application of smart growth land use pattern/density changes; to calculate and compare the impact of various multi-modal options; and to develop new model modules and tools beyond the traditional travel demand model that will be sensitive to urban design, accessibility, density, destinations, pricing, and mode shift parameters, with appropriate sensitivities to address policy issues related to Smart Growth, transit oriented development (TOD), and multi-modalism (bicycles / transit/ pedestrians, etc.).

#### Transportation Demand Management Strategies Study

The Transportation Demand Management Strategies Study will identify ways that the City can enhance current trip reduction policies and strategies already in place and recommend new trip reduction programs and implementation strategies. The goal is to develop a set of programs that help shift the paradigm of traditional travel behavior such that drivers of single occupant vehicles will be incentivized to use alternative modes of transportation during the most congested hours.

#### **Transportation Demand Management Ordinance**

Following the completion of the Transportation Demand Management Strategies Study described above, the City's Transportation Demand Management Ordinance (LAMC 12.26-J) that was adopted in 1993, may be updated to reflect the newly recommended strategies. It may also be appropriate to revise the applicability of the current TDM ordinance, which applies only to new non-residential development which exceeds 25,000 square feet of floor area.

The efforts described above reflect coordinated efforts of the Department of City Planning Department, and the Department of Transportation.

**Recommendation**

Recommend that the Departments of City Planning and Transportation provide periodic updates.

Sincerely,



**S. GAIL GOLDBERG, AICP**  
Planning Director



**RITA L. ROBINSON**  
General Manager, Department of Transportation