



Chapter 4: Transportation and Circulation

Chapter IV

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Central City is bordered by a "freeway ring" formed by the Harbor Freeway (Interstate 110) to the west, the Hollywood Freeway (US 101) to the north, the Santa Ana Freeway (Interstate 5) to the east, and the Santa Monica Freeway (Interstate 10) to the south. In addition to the freeway ring, five other freeway corridors provide regional access to the downtown area: the Golden State Freeway (Interstate 5), the Glendale Freeway (State Route 2), the Pasadena Freeway (State Route 110), the San Bernardino Freeway (Interstate 10) and the Pomona Freeway (State Route 60).

The Downtown roadway system is basically a grid network of streets which has remained unchanged for decades. The majority of the changes that have occurred on these streets have been to convert some segments into one-way operation. Several streets also serve a regional function by providing access to the adjacent freeway system. These include Hope Street, Grand Avenue, Broadway, and Spring Street in the north-south direction and Third Street, Fourth Street, Fifth Street, Sixth Street, Eighth Street, and Ninth Street in the east west direction.

Significant congestion occurs on the regional transportation network due to the combined impacts of trip demands within Central City as well as regional trips that pass through Central City. In fact, more than half of downtown freeway traffic is through traffic.

Pedestrian circulation in downtown Los Angeles takes place for the most part during the weekday business hours with the heaviest volumes during the lunch hours. Most of the pedestrian movement occurs between Bunker Hill, the Financial Core, and the Historic Core where daytime employment centers are located. The areas bounded by Broadway on the east, Figueroa Street on the west, Fourth Street on the north and Seventh Street to the south are the most active at this time. To a lesser degree some pedestrian movement occurs between the Civic Center and Little Tokyo along Temple Street, First Street, and Second Street. Broadway between Second Street and Seventh Street is lively all day due to its popularity with the local Hispanic community and the location of the Jewelry district along its southern end. The South Market areas are busy with shoppers in the Garment District. Broadway and the South Markets are also popular with shoppers during the weekends. Seventh Street between Seventh Market Place and Macy's Plaza is also popular with shoppers and pedestrians and guests at the Omni Hotel and the Hyatt Regency. An elevated pedway system on Bunker Hill connects many of the large hotels and office buildings including the World Trade Center, Arco Center, Arco Plaza, Union Bank Plaza, the Marriott Hotel, and the Westin Bonaventure Hotel.

Downtown transportation decisions and funding choices must be made in the context of multiple-regional plans and policies under the Regional Mobility Element (RME), Air Quality Management District (AQMD), State

Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and Congestion Management Plan (CMP).

The Final Transportation Report prepared for the Downtown Strategic Plan establishes a program of specific measures which are recommended to be undertaken during the life of the community plan.

**PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION -
REGIONAL ACCESS**

Central City is the hub of the public transportation systems in Southern California. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) the largest of the public transit bus systems operates an extensive system of bus lines to and from downtown Los Angeles to other areas of Southern California. Other major public transit agencies that offer bus service include Orange County Transit, Foothill Transit, and Santa Monica Municipal Transit.

In addition to buses, the MTA operates the Red Line subway from Union Station through Central City to the neighboring communities of Westlake, Mid-Wilshire, Hollywood and eventually terminating in North Hollywood. The MTA also operates the Blue Line light rail trains between Los Angeles and Long Beach and the intercepting Green Line between El Segundo and Norwalk, with stops in many communities in between. Metrolink operates several light rail trains from northern Los Angeles County, Orange County, and Riverside County into downtown Los Angeles at Union Station.

Objective 11-1

To keep downtown as the focal point of the regional mobility system accommodating internal access and mobility needs as well.

Policies

11-1.1 Encourage rail connections and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes that will serve the downtown traveler.

Programs

Expedite the continued development and implementation of the regional rail transit system components serving Downtown. This includes the MTA light rail Blue Line, Metrolink, and the Redline Subway system.

Support development of connection between the El Monte Busway and the Harbor Freeway Transitway to serve both HOV's and buses with on-line stations and appropriate connections to Downtown.

Objective 11-2

To Improve freeway movement and capacity adjacent to the Downtown area.

Policies

11-2.1 Provide a regional bypass ("through-way") facility for through traffic around the congested sections of the freeway system, especially the Harbor Freeway Corridor through Downtown.

- 11-2.2** Evaluate the freeway system around Downtown and develop a program of improvements to eliminate choke points that cause traffic congestion.
- 11-2.3** Segregate Downtown and regional through traffic by providing access-egress routes from outside of the freeway-to-freeway interchanges to a system of collector-distributor roads serving local Downtown ramps.
- 11-2.4** Improve freeway ramps and access corridors to Downtown, particularly from the east (Golden State and Santa Ana Freeways) and the south (Santa Monica Freeway), in order to better distribute access to Downtown from the freeway ring and relieve the Harbor and Hollywood Freeways.
- 11-2.5** Improve arterial connections to Downtown from the east, to provide for improved access to the CBD from the Santa Ana, Pomona and Golden State Freeway corridors.
- 11-2.6** Develop a plan for reducing truck traffic on the freeways in the Downtown area during peak periods. This should include physical measures such as providing newly constructed and dedicated truck route facilities, as well as temporary measures such as optimizing delivery times.
- 11-2.7** Continue to monitor the capability and feasibility of new traffic control technologies to enhance the efficiency of traffic operations.
- 11-2.8** Continue to monitor and evaluate automated highway technology and intelligent highway and vehicle systems development and evaluate the feasibility and applicability of this technology to the freeway, arterial truck, and transit systems.
- 11-2.9** Improve traffic flow on arterial street systems by:
- Designating key arterial routes into Downtown.
 - Connecting critical gaps that currently exist on key arterials at certain locations.
 - Improving arterial connections to Downtown from the east, to provide for improved access to the CBD from the Santa Ana, Pomona, and Golden State Freeways.
 - Improving north-south arterial routes to improve access connections to the Santa Monica Freeway.
 - Continuing implementation of traffic operations and control procedures to help manage traffic flows effectively.
- 11-2.10** Extend light rail transit northerly from the existing Seventh Street Metrocenter terminal to serve Bunker Hill and Little Tokyo connecting to Union Station.

- 11-2.11** Develop Seventh Street Corridor along Seventh Street from the East Los Angeles Interchange to the Harbor Freeway for shuttle, local and express buses.
- 11-2.12** Encourage use of the existing and planned bus and rail service within downtown from internal circulation through a uniform, reduced or free fare system.
- 11-2.13** Reinforce the integration and accessibility of the neighborhoods surrounding Downtown with the Downtown core through enhanced levels of service (“shortline,” additional trains, buses, etc.).

Programs

Freeway capacity improvements include the following:

- Add one lane in each direction on the Pasadena Freeway between Sunset Boulevard and Bernard Street.
- Improve the transition between the Golden State Freeway and Pasadena Freeway.
- Widen and restripe the Pasadena Freeway for one additional lane southbound from the Golden State Freeway to the Hollywood Freeway.
- Add capacity to the Hollywood Freeway (one-lane in each direction) between the Harbor Freeway and Vermont Avenue.
- Add capacity to the Harbor Freeway (one southbound lane) between Seventh Street and Pico Boulevard and to the southbound Harbor Freeway connector (one southbound lane) from Eighth Street to the Santa Monica Freeway.

Freeway ramp and access improvements for the Downtown transportation system include:

- Braid the northbound 101 and southbound 101 connectors to the southbound 110 and the Second Street southbound off-ramp from the SR-110, at the four-level interchange.
- Add a frontage road on the US-101 eastbound connector between Alameda Street and Mission Road, continue the Aliso Street frontage road to provide access for the Mission Road on-ramps to the US-101 and I-10; and reconfigure the Alameda Street, Vignes Street and Mission Road eastbound ramps.
- Realign the 101 Freeway between Alameda Street and Vignes/Center Street through acquisition of property on south side of freeway.
- When the 101 Freeway is realigned, and the El Monte Busway is extended to SR-110, develop modified ramp connections from the I-10

westbound and US-101 northbound to the westbound frontage road as to connect west of Mission Road to Arcadia Street, while retaining HOV/bus access to Union Station.

- Add direct ramp connections from the I-5/SR-110 interchange to North Spring Street and the Alameda Corridor (Alameda Bypass Connector).
- Develop an east-west corridor employing First and Fourth Streets for direct access to the I-5, I-10 and US-101 from the CBD, and improve First and Fourth Street ramps.
- Develop collector-distributor road system on the I-10 between the East L.A. Interchange and Alameda Street, and reconfigure ramp connections to Santa Fe/Mateo Street, Olympic Boulevard, and Alameda Street. Provide linkages south to Alameda Consolidated Transportation Corridor.
- Improve the I-10 ramps at San Pedro Street to provide westbound on-ramp and eastbound off-ramp, instead of ramps to Maple Street.
- Improve existing CBD access/egress signing from/to the freeway system, particularly from corridors to the east and southeast.
- Add new access/egress signing from/to the freeway system for alternate routes between the freeways and the CBD.
- Utilize SMART Corridor technology to improve the efficiency of ramp access/egress system between the freeway system and the CBD, and facilitate CBD access. Develop interface between the City of Los Angeles' ATSAC system and the Caltrans TOC.

Key Arterial Corridor Improvements include:

- Improve Alameda Street to major highway standards (100-foot right-of-way) between Washington Boulevard and the I-5/State Route 110 interchange. This is intended for local circulation/access to and within Downtown, and not as an extension to/from the Alameda Consolidated Transportation Corridor (ACTC) to the south.
- Improve Olympic Boulevard to major highway standards and conduct a study to improve Olympic Boulevard as an arterial to the east to intercept traffic from the East Los Angeles interchange.
- Improve capacity of key arterial streets between the Hollywood Freeway and the Santa Monica Freeway, with compatible traffic management techniques.

Arterial connection projects for the Downtown transportation system include:

- Eliminate Olympic Boulevard jog at San Pedro Street by providing direct east-west connection between Wall street and San Pedro Street and creating a major east-west link between downtown and East Los Angeles.

Traffic operations improvements include the following:

- Implement electronically controlled reversible lanes on First and Fourth Streets between Alameda Street and the I-5.
- Implement transportation management measures such as parking restrictions and spot-widening to improve traffic flow on Third and Fourth Streets between Olive Street and Alameda Street.
- Improve access from the East L.A. interchange to the CBD by implementing traffic operations improvements on Soto Street, Olympic Boulevard, Whittier Boulevard/Sixth Street and Fourth Street corridors.
- Add HOV lanes on arterial access corridors to the CBD and on arterials within the CBD. Potential candidates include Eight/Ninth Streets, Spring/Main Streets, and Olive Street/Grand Avenue.
- Extend ATSAC from the CBD east and north to the Golden State Freeway to provide for improved access corridors to Downtown and traffic flow management in the Central City East area and through Chinatown.

**INTERNAL
CIRCULATION SYSTEM**

The Los Angeles City Department of Transportation (LADOT) operates six shuttle lines within the Central City area. The system known as DASH serves as a transit mode between the many neighborhoods in Central City and is extremely popular with downtown workers, visitors, and shoppers. For a nominal fee, riders can travel to such diverse areas as Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Civic Center, Music Center, Bunker Hill, the Garment District, the Convention Center, and Exposition Park. The buses run continuously between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the weekdays, and operate on a restricted schedule on the weekends. In addition to the DASH buses, many of the private downtown office buildings operate shuttle services for the tenants of their buildings to off-site parking lots, Union Station, Metrolink/subway stations and to various other locations. These are free shuttles that operate during business hours.

Objective 11-3

To provide an internal circulation system with a focus of connecting specific pairs of activity centers to a system that provides greater geographic coverage of Downtown, thus giving the Downtown traveler more choices and more flexibility.

Objective 11-4

To take advantage of the district's easy access to two mass transit rail lines, the freeway system, and major boulevards that connect Downtown to the region.

Objective 11-5

To link easy parking and mass transit to a pedestrian network so that the Lower Center City becomes accessible and safe.

Policies

- Provide additional bus routes to link businesses and housing districts with existing and planned cultural/entertainment districts. Coordinate additional routes with extended hours of operation.
- Provide for the efficient circulation into and within Downtown.
- Develop and implement programs to reduce auto demand through comprehensive transportation demand management programs.
- Develop the regional rail system to also provide for efficient internal circulation within Downtown.
- Increase pedestrian orientation in the district. Re-detail highway-standard streets, retrofit existing buildings with pedestrian oriented uses along the sidewalks and continue to develop Grand Avenue as a major cultural/commercial corridor.
- Improve access to and through the area by extending the Blue Line along San Pedro street, connecting Olympic Boulevard through the Markets district and detailing the Alameda Consolidated Corridor as a pedestrian friendly boulevard.
- Provide a low-cost local fare zone for taxis in the Central Business District.
- Provide improved information and signage for passengers.

Programs

- The Central City Plan recommends two specific light rail transit alignments which also aid internal circulation - one through Bunker Hill on the Flower Street alignment and the other on the San Pedro Street Corridor.
- A second layer of the internal circulator system would include a special Downtown circulator bus which would operate in an outer loop configuration using Figueroa, Olympic, San Pedro and 1st.
- Connect Bunker Hill, The Center City, the 4th Street Metro Rail station and the Bixel transit way along 4th and 5th Streets, and
- Traverse 7th Street linking the Seventh Market Place and the Omni Hotel area to the Financial Core and the Markets.
- Connect Bunker Hill on the east and west sides to the rest of Downtown through a multiple Angel's Flight System. Develop an extended network of pedestrian linkages.
- Improve pedestrian and shuttle connections within the Fashion District and between the district and other downtown activity centers such as the Broadway retail and theater district.

- Taxis in Downtown Los Angeles can also be an important part of the internal circulation system. A zone system of taxi fares would enable more downtown travelers to take advantage of the point-to-point flexibility offered by taxis. Allocation of space within the pick-up/drop-off areas of new buildings together with the establishment of a zone fare structure, would allow taxi service to play a more important role in the internal circulation system.
- Build and extend Second Street and realign Flower Street in order to encourage the integration of local pedestrian and vehicular movement. Construct the first phase of the Avenida and Boulevard networks on Olive and Hill Streets and First Street respectively. Construct additional "Angel Flights" at Second Street between Olive and Hill and at Third Street between Hope and Flower.
- Support plans for a downtown circulator or trolley that connects downtown districts and activity centers, improving internal circulation and enhancing the character and identity of the downtown by harkening to the hallmarks of the City's mass transit history, such as the "Red Car".

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Central City has a distinct urban character that is unique when compared to the rest of Los Angeles and Southern California. Historically streets such as Broadway, Spring Street, and Hill Street were teeming with pedestrian activity at the turn of the century. Trolley cars also ran down many of the Downtown streets adding to the variety of pedestrian, train and automobile traffic. The sheer density of buildings and the variety of uses developed on relatively small blocks along a grid pattern encourage a mix of pedestrians and vehicles. During the weekday business hours, the street and sidewalks are shared by the many people who work, live, and visit Downtown. An extensive, well maintained, and attractively designed pedestrian network is essential to the success of Central City. The proper combination of Transportation policies and open space can make for a more memorable and understandable Downtown experience. Public streets and sidewalks contribute to a unique sense of space and history in the communities of Central City. Figueroa Street, Grand Avenue, or Hope Street give an entirely different urban experience compared to the Hispanic influence of Broadway, or the Japanese American influence along First Street in Little Tokyo. Streets improved with pedestrian-priority plantings, paving, lighting, signage, and furnishings can create a memorable pedestrian environment that connects the different neighborhoods that form Central City.

Objective 11-6

To accommodate pedestrian open space and usage in Central City.

Policies

- 11-6.1** Preserve and enhance Central City's primary pedestrian-oriented streets and sidewalks and create a framework for the provision of additional pedestrian friendly streets and sidewalks which complement the unique qualities and character of the communities in Central City.

- 11-6.2.** Enhance the street scape and provide pedestrian amenities within the Fashion District as a means to foster and cultivate the heavy pedestrian traffic in the area and its function as a worldwide center for buyers purchasing clothing, gifts and housewares in the district's showrooms.

Programs

- Implement the Metropolitan Transportation Agency's Angel's Walk
- Pedestrian Master Plan for Downtown Los Angeles.
- Implement the recommendations of the Downtown Strategic Plan.
- Implement the Civic Center Shared Facilities Enhancement Plan.
- Implement the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District Specific Plan and Streetscape Plan, with recommended streetscape improvements on Figueroa Street from Seventh Street to Venice Boulevard.
- Re-designate Grand Avenue from Temple Street to Fifth Street from a Major Highway to a Modified Major Highway Class II. Grand Avenue should at all times provide at minimum two full-time travel lanes in each direction and separate left and right turn lanes at signalized intersections along this reconfigured segment.
- Implement the Grand Avenue Cultural Corridor consisting of streetscape improvements and pedestrian amenities along Grand Avenue from Temple Street to Fifth Street, including an improved and expanded Performing Arts Campus public plaza.

PARKING/ TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Current Central City parking and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies were designed to provide sufficient parking for shoppers and visitors to Downtown while encouraging those who work and regularly commute to Downtown to use alternate modes of transit or remote parking. They also generally promote conservation of land for more active and productive uses. However, with recent development trends in the Downtown, particularly a growing residential community as a result of adaptive reuse projects which requires additional convenient parking, Downtown is experiencing a general intensification of land uses that may require a reassessment and restudy of current parking and TDM policies. Furthermore, new Downtown destinations, with newly built and planned cultural institutions and entertainment venues, and the prospective development of many surface parking lots with other uses necessitate an analysis and evaluation of parking and TDM policies that reflect these changing conditions.

Objective 11-7

To provide sufficient parking to satisfy short-term retail/business users and visitors but still find ways to encourage long-term office commuters to use alternate modes of access.

Policies

- 11-7.1** Encourage transportation strategies that include parking and TDM policies and actions that increase ridesharing and give priority to visitor/shopper parking.
- 11-7.2** Limit parking to 0.60 spaces per 1,000 square feet of office space. Existing development with a higher parking ratio should be permitted to lease this parking to new development in-lieu of these new projects providing the required parking.
- 11-7.3** Advocate the routing of a light rail transit connection link through the Bunker Hill District.
- 11-7.4** Encourage remote parking at outlying transit stations.
- 11-7.5** Recognize the role played by parking pricing policy in the support of TDM programs, and given the mix of public/private parking within Downtown, develop a unified pricing policy.
- 11-7.6** Integrate the existing peripheral parking program into a more broadly-based regional park-and-ride/intercept parking program.
- 11-7.7** Assess the feasibility of utilizing Downtown developer funds or changes in the parking code to implement off-site parking facilities.
- 11-7.8** Develop a comprehensive parking policy for Downtown that is closely coordinated with other elements of the transportation strategy. It should constrain on-site supply in the CBD, and provide a balanced program of peripheral, intercept, and park-and-ride facilities in transit corridors. This policy should focus increasing emphasis on intercepting automobile travel further and further from the CBD through peripheral and intercept parking strategies and through park-ride facilities in the communities where travel is originating.
- 11-7.9** Peripheral parking, park-and-ride and intercept parking supplies should be located in areas that can optimize the use of connections to shuttles, rail and/or HOV facilities.
- 11-7.10** Employers should be encouraged or mandated to participate in transit/rides share programs that match or exceed their automobile subsidies.
- 11-7.11** Transit system capacity must be increased to match increases in future demand for transit usage.
- 11-7.12** Encourage development of downtown transportation management associations and transportation management organizations; Encourage active participation and financial support.
- 11-7.13** The specific roles of both employers and developers in terms of ongoing support for TDM should be clearly specified.

- 11-7.14** Innovative strategies and policies in combination with appropriate legislation should be used to encourage existing businesses and buildings to participate in transportation demand management.

Programs

On-site parking in new office construction of over 100,000 leasable square feet should be limited to a maximum of 0.6 spaces per 1,000 square feet of built space within the Downtown Traffic Impact Zone, and 0.4 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet to be located at remote or intercept locations. The 0.4 spaces may be eliminated through alternative and effective Transportation Demand Management (TDM) proposals acceptable to the City. However, a mechanism would be set up through the Department of Transportation that with adequate TDM proposals, will allow .6 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet. In addition, only parking buildings that incorporate other uses, particularly active ground floor uses, will be permitted west of Hill Street.

Encourage the establishment of a TDM Program that would provide:

- Preferential treatment of carpools and vanpools in terms of parking allocation, location and pricing.
- Rideshare friendly building design requirements.
- The leveling out of auto parking and transit commuter subsidies.
- The provision of information resources for the Downtown traveler.
- Assessment of effectiveness and adjustment as necessary.

Use strategies related to parking that can be used to encourage transit use and a variety of issues to address such strategies such as:

- Parking subsidies
- Travel allowances
- Regulation of parking rates

Although each employer/tenant will be allowed to develop and implement its own TDM program for its employees, several potential options have been identified for consideration in the Downtown area:

- Parking cash out program in which the employer provides a cash allowance to its employees equivalent to the parking subsidy the employer would otherwise provide with encouragement to use the payment of transit fares.
- Implementation of alternative work schedules.
- A guaranteed-ride-home program for ridesharers that would provide taxi rides home in cases of emergencies during the day and when the

ridesharer needs to work late.

- Provision of transit information and discounted bus and rail passes as an encouragement to employees to use transit.

One or more secure 24-hour truck staging sites should be developed, where truckers can temporarily park their vehicles while waiting to deliver their goods. The sites would service drivers and their vehicles with a dispatch center, shower and toilet facilities, refueling station, restaurant, and small general supplies store, and could provide a secure container or trailer break-down area for smaller businesses within the industrial area that are not able to accommodate larger trucks on their own site.

Develop improved connections for trucks to the I-5 Freeway east of Downtown, and to the north end of the Alameda Consolidated Corridor at Washington Boulevard.

These should connect the north end of the Alameda Consolidated Transportation Corridor to the I-5 with connections to key truck destinations such as the rail container yards east of Downtown.

Develop a truck staging area in Central City East to enhance truck flow into/out of Downtown and provide a secure waiting area and convenient facilities for trucks.

Define a network of streets for truck routes in Downtown and particularly in Central City East, to improve access for trucks and minimize conflicts with other transportation modes.

Where at all possible, preserve freight-railroad rights-of-way, situate rail lines out of the street travel lanes and configure lines to allow for future grade separations. Evaluate and preserve where necessary the existing rail freight connections/facilities in the Alameda Street Corridor.

Establish a public-private partnership with industries in Central City East (CCE) and their shippers to improve trucking and rail goods movement logistics (such as truck staging areas, dispatch centers, information systems, etc). An integral part of this strategy should be the enhanced port accessibility provided by the Alameda Consolidated Transportation Corridor Project.

Make the Convention Center highly accessible to the rest of downtown through the DASH Broadway Circulator and the rail transit system.

Objective 11-8

To evaluate, study and monitor current parking policies to assess parking demand as a result of changes in development trends, the growing downtown residential community and the general intensification of land use in the Central City area as surface parking lots become developed with other uses.

Policies

11-8.1 The Department of City Planning, working with DOT, the CRA and other community stakeholders, will initiate a study to reassess parking requirements for the Central City area, including: parking ratios; parking space caps and their affect on new commercial development and adaptive reuse projects; and visitor parking needs as a result of new cultural institutions.

Program: Update the Central City Community Plan based on the findings of the study.

Program: Review and update Central City parking policies and ordinances.