

LIGHTHOUSE AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN – PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND WORK PLAN

OVERVIEW

Under California law, local governments can use Specific Plans as tools to plan for needed revitalization and change, both in existing neighborhoods and new development areas. Specific Plans provide greater planning and design guidance than can be included in a General Plan, and they allow local governments the ability to address complex land ownership patterns and infrastructure needs. Specific Plans can jump-start new development in depressed areas, and can ensure that the public gets the quality it desires in any new development.

The goal of the Lighthouse Avenue Specific Plan (LSP) is to create a livable community and a revitalized destination point on Lighthouse Avenue for residents and visitors. It will further the General Plan goals to focus transit-oriented, mixed-use development within the Lighthouse Avenue corridor. This project will be accomplished through creative and direct community engagement.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The LSP will consist of form-based policies, development standards, and design guidelines for a General Plan-designated mixed-use development corridor and complete street infrastructure. The LSP will likely replace the 1987 Lighthouse Area Plan with a more comprehensive strategy for the enhancement of this commercial corridor as a mixed-use neighborhood. The LSP will provide tools beyond the capabilities of an Area Plan in that the LSP will provide specific development standards and design guidelines, an inventory of existing and proposed improvements to the neighborhood's infrastructure, and an implementation strategy that addresses cost, financing, and fiscal impacts.

Development of the LSP will be based on the City of Monterey General Plan goals to coordinate land use and transportation, and improve options for alternative transit modes. The General Plan directs future population growth into three mixed-use neighborhoods, one of which is the Lighthouse Avenue corridor. The General Plan Land Use Element Goal b is to "create and nurture mixed-use neighborhoods that, reduce automobile trips, improve the quality of the pedestrian experience, create walkable neighborhoods, provide more ownership opportunities, increase the stock of housing affordable to Monterey's workforce, require high-quality design to complement Monterey's image; and improve neighborhood oriented services."

The LSP will include development of policies, programs, design guidelines, and concept plans for the continued development of Lighthouse Avenue as a mixed-use, multi-modal corridor that serves the Lighthouse Avenue and Cannery Row businesses and New Monterey residential neighborhood. The coordinated transportation land/use mobility objective will create affordable in-fill housing that is in close proximity to rapid transit and conducive to alternative forms of transportation.

The application of form-based policies, design standards and design guidelines will also encourage the preservation of Monterey's history and identity and encourage revitalization of the neighborhood through infill opportunities and the redevelopment of underutilized sites that provide housing and business opportunities and that are physically oriented towards and inviting to the pedestrian.

Project Area

The project area includes the Lighthouse Avenue corridor, which extends from David Avenue to the Lighthouse Tunnel. The project area divides Cannery Row and New Monterey, borders the Presidio of Monterey military base, and connects Monterey and Pacific Grove. It is an eight block stretch that supports an eclectic mix of over 50 businesses, including: furniture stores,

restaurants, tattoo shops, book shops, antique stores, and other personal service businesses, as well as a senior center and park. The Lighthouse Avenue corridor has a small town-urban setting, but also provides one of two access points to the peninsula, connecting Pacific Grove to Del Monte Avenue and Downtown Monterey.

The Lighthouse Corridor is used to capacity with over 68,000 vehicles per day (more than the Hwy 68 corridor between Monterey and Salinas) at a level of service (LOS) F, with limited options for alternative forms of transportation.

Complete Streets Concept

The mobility objective of the LSP is to develop multi-modal transit options. Lighthouse Avenue's current infrastructure does not adequately support alternative transportation and pedestrian safety. As transportation demand continues to increase, improving one of two key access points to the Peninsula is essential to maintain connectivity to neighboring communities.

Lighthouse Avenue is currently a two-way, four lane arterial with parking and sidewalks on both sides of the street and serves as a main transit corridor to western Monterey and the City of Pacific Grove. The four travel lanes provide service for motor vehicles and buses in both directions. Buses and cars must share travel lanes, which forces busses to pull into and out of traffic.



The Lighthouse Avenue corridor supports a business district as well as a connecting point to Monterey's Downtown Business District and to Pacific Grove. The Lighthouse Avenue corridor supports the trucks and vans that service these businesses. Therefore, the free-flow of trucks and delivery vehicles is essential to business development. As one of only two routes onto the Monterey Peninsula, the other being Hwy 68, improving the traffic flow of delivery trucks and customer traffic will be the first step in renewing economic vitality in the Lighthouse Avenue Business District.

The objective of the complete street concept for Lighthouse Avenue is to create a one-way eastbound street that directs traffic flow into downtown Monterey. Westbound traffic bound for Pacific Grove would be routed onto Foam Street, an existing one-way street for west-bound traffic, located adjacent to Cannery Row. Lighthouse Avenue as a one-way street would include a dedicated mass transit lane that would be shared by bus rapid transit, bikes and emergency vehicles. Pedestrian safety will also be addressed at intersection crossings.

The new design would raise the level of service and decrease vehicle congestion by improving the access and mobility for a variety of transit options. Well-designed access is a key component of enticing residents and visitors to switch from a car as the primary mode of transit to a bicycle, bus or walking.

Public Participation

The success of the LSP as a livable/sustainable community strategy is largely dependent on the support of the community it impacts. By creating opportunities for public involvement and community study, the stakeholders become the key factor in the project's successful development and implementation. Therefore, the LSP work plan includes a public participation component that includes community workshops, team charrettes, and innovative online and outreach tools.

Local stakeholders include local businesses, adjacent neighborhood residents, and minority stakeholders (elderly citizens, tourists, and ethnic minority groups), who both live in the region and commute to the restaurants and businesses for work. These stakeholders may express conflicting visions for the Lighthouse District. Hosting community workshops, charettes and focus groups will offer a venue for both the expected participants (local business owners and residents), but it will also give special attention to additional minority stakeholders listed above. It will allow community members and City staff to work through potential conflicting interests.

The LSP stakeholders are varied and include representative groups from a wide range of economic, cultural and political backgrounds, including local business owners, adjacent residential area residents, and minority stakeholders (elderly citizens, tourists, and ethnic minority groups), who both live in the region and commute to the restaurants and businesses for work. The project is intended to make Lighthouse Avenue a destination for various user groups. In order to achieve this it is essential to include all interest groups early in the planning process.

The methods of outreach described below are designed to reach the project stakeholders in their everyday environment. Making them aware of the opportunity using different technologies and providing incentives to encourage attendance are also included.

Team Charettes – Intensive work sessions combining the talents of the project team, with residents and community members.

Community Workshops – Larger gatherings with diverse stakeholder groups present. These will provide an opportunity for various interest groups to come together to learn about, and participate in, developing the project.

Personal Interview / Focus Groups – Intimate meetings with various under-represented community groups, including the Latino population, the elderly population, tourists, youth and elderly.

On-line Component - An on-line comment/survey system designed specifically for this project. In addition, YouTube videos of focus groups and community workshops will be made available to on-line users.

These outreach components were determined through successful previous experience as well as through the inclusion of new, popular, effective media tools that society has responded to. The City has an existing YouTube account and a communications department that has used this tool in the past. This effective and efficient tool is quickly growing in popularity. An online survey will be available to complete after watching the video and/or attending meetings. A link will also be placed on the City of Monterey website.

Where possible, meetings will take place at venues on or near Lighthouse Avenue, such as the Senior Center, Bay View Elementary School, etc. This will help facilitate attendance as well as offer the opportunity to examine the situation in the field, if necessary.

Project Implementation

Implementation of the Lighthouse Area Plan policies and design guidelines will occur when new development is proposed. The intent of the policies and design guidelines is to provide clear direction for future development, thereby providing a property owner/developer with a certain confidence that designing a project consistent with the policies and guidelines will facilitate the approval process.

A component of the Area Plan will be a conceptual redesign of Lighthouse Avenue as a complete street. Implementation of the concept design (construction drawings, environmental review and construction) will occur as the next phases of its implementation. Once the LSP is adopted by the City Council, the City will continue its outreach efforts and advertise the new plan as a tool for economic development as well as development of affordable housing.

The LSP will include an implementation chapter that provides a cost estimate for proposed public rights-of-way improvements and identification of potential funding sources for such improvements. Funding may include grants, assessment districts, or a combination thereof. This chapter will also include a recommended strategy to obtain the necessary funding to meet the project recommendations.

As the Lighthouse corridor redevelops, the new mixed-use/transit-oriented vision will take shape. As more residential units are built, economic vitality will increase within the business district. Upon completion of Lighthouse Avenue as a complete street, movement of people and goods will be smoother. The public transit lines will be more efficient and convenient, therefore increasing its attractiveness to its ridership. The one-way flow with a high occupancy travel lane will facilitate movement of automobiles. A dedicated bicycle lane will facilitate and encourage bicycle travel. Finally, landscaping and bulb-out intersection crossings will increase pedestrian safety.

WORK PLAN

Task 1: Project Initiation

Conduct a kick-off meeting with relevant City Departments and other stakeholders to review scope of work, timeline, roles and responsibilities, and project needs/issues.

Task 2: Community Outreach

Task 2.1: Promote and advertise activities, (charettes and workshops) through local media venue (newspaper, radio, including Spanish news outlets).

Task 2.2: Develop on-line comment system for City of Monterey webpage. Review management needs and guidelines for monitoring site. Because this will be a trail system, special attention will be paid to the process of implementing this component within the legal purview of the City.

Task 2.3: Conduct 3-4 charrets with various stakeholders to identify issues, develop overall theme and architectural character, define vision, goals, and principles, frame and evaluate design alternatives, refine preferred alternative, and review draft LSP.

Task 2.4: Convene Technical Advisory Committee (consisting of City of Monterey staff, contractors and technical experts) and possibly a Community Advisory Committee (consisting of a volunteer representative of each stakeholder group) regularly to review the ongoing progress of the document and provide feedback on the deliverables as well as the community process, respectively.

Task 3: Develop LSP Components

Task 3.1: Develop Draft Policies, Form-Based Development Standards, and Design Guidelines

- Develop and analyze at least two alternative concept plans that address the objectives of the general plan and the needs/issues of the community as expressed through the outreach program - **MILESTONE**
- Address comments and feedback from public meetings, surveys, and advisory committee and technical advisory committee meetings.
- Analyze the effect of proposed changes to parking and businesses along Lighthouse corridor.
- Refine one preferred alternative concept plan and pursue acceptance by City Council - **MILESTONE**
- Develop policies, form-based development standards, and design guidelines that support preferred concept plan - **MILESTONE**

Task 3.2: Develop Complete Streets Plan

- Develop and analyze at least two alternative complete streets concept plans that address the objectives of the general plan and the needs/issues of the community as expressed through the outreach program while working with technical experts (City staff) to ensure feasibility - **MILESTONE**
- Equally weigh the needs of buses, cyclists, and automobiles, specifically at connection points to the Lighthouse tunnel and David Avenue.
- Address comments and feedback from public meetings, surveys, and advisory committee and technical advisory committee meetings.
- Refine one preferred alternative complete streets plan - **MILESTONE**

Task 3.3: Develop Implementation and Funding Strategy

- Develop a cost estimate for project improvements.
- Identify funding sources for proposed improvements.
- Develop a strategy to obtain the necessary funding to meet the project recommendations - **MILESTONE**

Task 4: Adoption of LSP

Task 4.1: Conduct Environmental Analysis

Task 4.2: Circulate Draft LSP and environmental documents for public review

Task 4.3: Present LSP to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.

