

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Bicycle Master Plan

Santa Barbara's Opportunity for Increased Bicycle Usage

What is the plan?

This Bicycle Master Plan for the City of Santa Barbara updates the 1974 Plan. It is a strategy to encourage and develop more bicycling as transportation in Santa Barbara. The time line for implementation of this plan is 20 years. It is not a capital improvement plan, nor is it a detailed bicycle program budget. Rather, this plan is intended to give guidance to the development of the physical bicycle system as well as education, promotion, enforcement, public policy, and information distribution. Further design and analysis will be needed before specific projects can begin. The bicycle master plan includes the following:

- A history of bicycle planning in Santa Barbara;
- The goals, policies and objectives that will guide bicycle planning in Santa Barbara;
- An assessment of current bicycling conditions in Santa Barbara through data collection and comprehensive public involvement;
- A list of recommendations for elements related to bicycling such as bikes on transit, traffic law enforcement, promotional events, education, and network improvements;
- A strategy and plan for the implementation of the needed bicycle improvements including preliminary estimates of funding sources;
- A strategy for statistically monitoring increases in cycling and improving communication between the City, bicyclists, and relevant staff at the County of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District, University of California at Santa Barbara, and Santa Barbara City College.

Who wrote it?

The Bicycle Master Plan was, in many ways, written by members of the community. Transportation professionals from the City of Santa Barbara gathered information and input from a myriad of resources. Of primary concern was how the community perceived bicycling in Santa Barbara. A bicycle workshop was held for participation by active cyclists, and various neighborhood and community groups were surveyed to research people's needs and concerns about existing and future conditions. City Staff and volunteers conducted bicycle counts and researched collision data. Public and private schools were surveyed to investigate the needs of students. The community also participated in extensive discussions about bicycle use in the development of the Circulation Element in 1997. A Bicycle Leadership Team was formed with members of the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition to provide guidance throughout the process.

The City is indebted to those who worked on the Bikeway Master Plan created in 1974. These pioneers, who envisioned and developed the bikeway system that the community enjoys today, created the vision and foundation for the current plan with which we continue to build the future.

What Does the Circulation Element Require?

The Circulation Element of the General Plan was approved by City Council in October of 1997. The element represents a major planning effort that lasted over five years with extensive involvement from the community. The comprehensive goal and vision statement of the element says, "Santa Barbara should be a city in which alternative forms of transportation and mobility are so available and so attractive that use of an automobile is a choice, not a necessity." Chapter 4 of the Element is devoted to bicycling. The overall goal of that chapter is to "increase bicycling as a transportation mode." The first policy, "The City shall update and implement the City's Bicycle Master Plan," is to be implemented using the following strategies:

1. Work with neighborhoods, interest groups, employers, the County, the University of California at Santa Barbara, and Santa Barbara County Association of Governments to identify current and future needs for bikeways.
2. Outline criteria for installing bike lanes on City streets.
3. Review bikeway routes and the Bicycle Master Plan periodically to address changing conditions and the needs of bicycle riders of various types and skill levels.
4. Incorporate Bicycle Master Plan projects into the City's Capital Improvements Program.
5. Monitor the use and effectiveness of bicycle parking facilities required by the Santa Barbara Municipal Code.

The Circulation Element instructs that the City's Bicycle Master Plan be updated and implemented. This Bicycle Master Plan, therefore, fulfills half that requirement, and needs only to be implemented, using the Circulation Element strategies and the ones introduced in this document. The other policies of the Circulation Element that are related to bicycling are discussed in Chapter 4, "Goals, Policies, and Coordination."

How Does This Plan Relate to Other Santa Barbara County Plans?

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) is the county's metropolitan planning organization. The Bicycle Master Plan complements SBCAG's Regional Transportation Plan and the County's Clean Air Plan. As such, it is consistent with these documents. The Regional Transportation Plan incorporates the Regional Bikeway Study and the Regional Bikeway Network, which are the primary tools for bike planning countywide. In addition to defining a regional network of corridor and feeder routes, the Regional Bikeway Study focuses on interjurisdictional issues, funding, and policy consistency. In coordination with County bicycling efforts, the City's Bicycle Master Plan will play an important role in improving the regional bikeway system and increasing bicycle usage.

What Are the State Requirements for the Plan?

The State legislature established a bicycle transportation plan to promote a transportation system that provides for commuting needs of the employee, businessperson, and shopper. The foremost considerations of the plan are route selection, physical safety of bicyclists, and capacity to accommodate bicyclists of all ages and skills (Streets and Highways Code, § 890). The Streets and Highways Code (SHC) of the State of California specifies that a local Bicycle Master Plan must describe current and future levels of bicycle commuting. It must also describe existing and proposed bikeways, land use patterns, intermodal connections, end-of-trip facilities, safety and education programs, and citizen involvement. Finally, the plan must describe proposed projects and funding needs as well as consistency with other programs in the region. The Santa Barbara Bicycle Master Plan meets or exceeds these requirements.

Format

Although this document is intended to be used as a planning reference guide, it was also written to be read cover to cover. The following chapter is a history of the bicycle in Santa Barbara. Chapter 3 describes the community input, field research, and findings regarding existing conditions. These findings form the basis for the Goals and Policies found in Chapter 4. When implemented, these goals will reach the Circulation Element Goal "to increase bicycling as a mode of transportation."

The goals are restated in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 as bold text introducing the purpose of each of these chapters. Specific policies and methods to achieve these goals are described in these three chapters. Policies are numbered with two digits (e.g. 1.1, 3.2) and Implementation Strategies are shown as normal text and numbered with three digits (e.g. 1.1.1, 3.2.3). The strategies are numbered in descending order of approximate priority and should be addressed as such. Possible funding sources are described in the Appendix.

Read On!

This plan represents an exciting opportunity to increase bicycling for local trips and recreation by both residents and visitors. It is also an opportunity to improve the bicycling environment for riders currently using the system, either out of necessity or by choice. It is an extensive analysis of local conditions and needs, resulting in policy and facility recommendations that will promote bicycling as a safe and convenient option for personal transportation.

Extensive input from the community was considered during the development of this plan. Furthermore, general public support was found during two public comment periods and a Planning Commission presentation. The Santa Barbara City Council adoption of the Bicycle master Plan (October 1998) reflects the City's commitment to increasing bicycling in Santa Barbara. Implementation of some strategies and projects in the document will call for more detailed comments from specific neighborhood and business interests as well as bicyclists and City staff. This input is an essential ingredient to achieving a balance of transportation solutions that emulate the heritage of Santa Barbara and its citizens.