

# CHAPTER 6

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## Goal 2 Improving the Bicycle Network

*"To create and maintain an extensive network of bikeways, which enhances access between residential, recreational, educational, institutional, and commercial areas within and outside the City."*

After making a decision to ride a bike, the cyclist needs a way to reach the destination. The availability of bikeways is the most important resource to increased ridership according to community input and field research gathered for this document. Santa Barbarans say that the number one and two obstacles to using the bicycle for transportation are "dangerous traffic conditions" and "not enough bike lanes on street." These statements are closely related because bike lanes become more desirable as traffic volume increases. A comparison of bicycle and traffic volume growth over the last 20 years shows that bicycle volumes have increased where bike lanes have been provided, but decreased, or stayed in line with population growth, where no bike lane was striped.

Therefore, to achieve the Circulation Element's goal of increasing bicycling as a mode of transportation, the City must expand and improve the bikeway network. Expansion of the network will be challenging. In many cases, on-street parking must be fully or partially removed to install bike lanes for peak hour or all day use. Bikeway design must also consider the needs of pedestrians and motorists. These, and other controversial issues, will need to be addressed before moving ahead with certain projects. Notwithstanding these concerns, the historical evidence demonstrates that the City can anticipate increases in bicycle travel with the extension of the bicycle network.

This chapter focuses on four ways to improve the bicycle network including expansion of the system, improved maintenance, enhancing the network with signage and other support, and collecting bicycle related statistics that will assist in the planning process.

### Policy 2.1 -- Construct New Bikeways

*The City shall expand the bikeway network to increase ridership for bicycle transportation and recreation.*

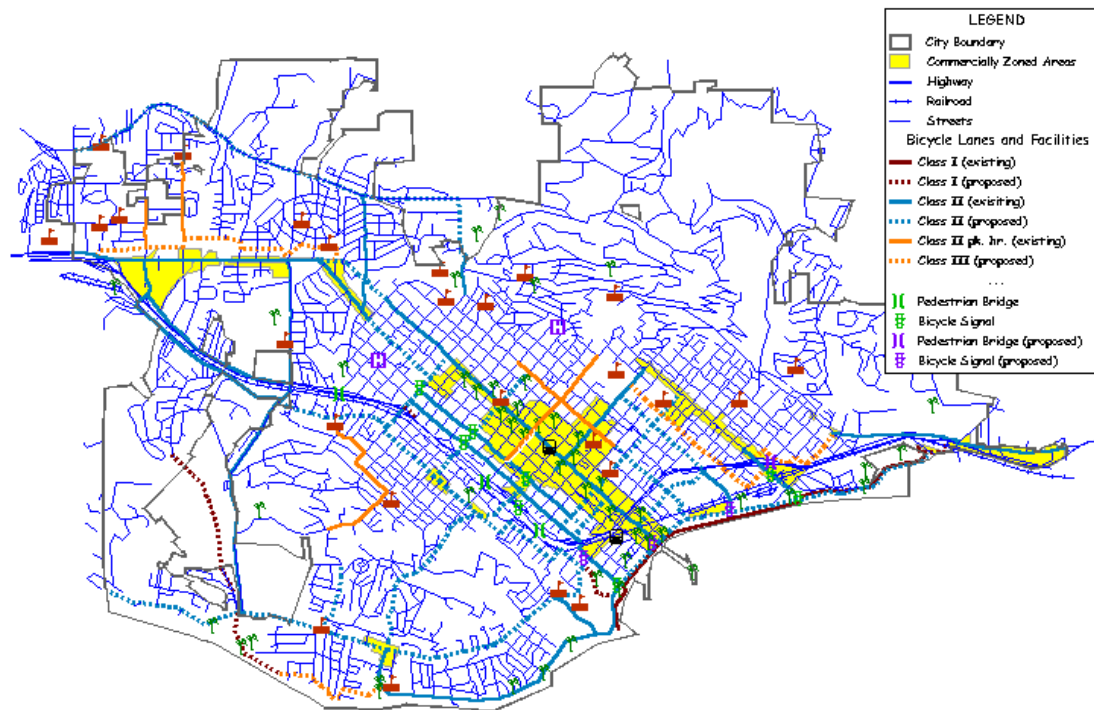
### Implementation

When asked what the most important bicycle improvements should be, community leaders said, "adding more bike lanes." In some cases, adding a bike lane is as easy as painting stripes,

especially following a street maintenance project. In many cases, however, bike lanes will conflict with on-street parking, vehicle lanes, or bus stops. Where these types of conflicts arise, decision-makers will need extensive input from the community and City staff to make balanced decisions that reflect the overall vision of the Circulation Element.

In addition to improvements proposed in this document, the City will plan facilities on an ongoing basis. The highest priority shall be given to projects upgrading existing facilities and mitigating high accident situations. The second priority shall be given to developing portions of the system that link local and regional gaps identified by community members and the SBCAG Regional Bikeway Study. The third priority shall be given to projects establishing new commuter bikeways between residential areas and schools or business areas. Fourth priority shall be given to projects that establish intermodal connectivity (i.e. between rail and transit stations and airports). These priorities should be used as a reference, not a mandate. Timing, community support, and funding options will also affect consideration. Map 6-1 illustrates locations of proposed bikeways.

Map 6-1 Existing and Proposed Bicycle Routes



## Strategies

- 2.1.1 Create a community process for expanding the bikeway network that encourages input into the scheduling of the on-street projects and flexibility with respect to the timing of the implementation.
- 2.1.2 Construct bike facilities proposed on Map 6-1, "Existing and Proposed Bicycle Routes."

- 2.1.3 Provide bike lanes on streets that are most heavily used by bicyclists, as well as establishing new connections and overpasses that enhance the use of the existing and future bikeway networks.
- 2.1.4 Consider providing bicycle facilities whenever there is a road resurfacing, major repair, new construction, or overpass reconstruction.
- 2.1.5 Provide bike lanes to serve major areas of attraction, such as shopping centers, public buildings, parks, places of employment, schools, and the Waterfront.
- 2.1.6 Work proactively with Union Pacific to install bike lanes on railroad right-of-ways.
- 2.1.7 Cooperate with SBCAG to fill in the gaps in the Regional Bikeway Network.
- 2.1.8 Incorporate Bicycle Master Plan and future bicycle projects into the City's Capital Improvement Program with a funding commitment policy to support the incorporation.
- 2.1.9 Encourage bicycle travel facilities during the review of new development and infrastructure improvements. Bicycle facilities can be achieved through such methods as:
- Purchase, dedication, and other means of property acquisition;
  - Conditions of approval;
  - Expanding the scope of maintenance projects, and
  - Enforcement of the Santa Barbara Municipal Code, Parking Section.
- 2.1.10 Consider motor vehicle volumes and speed, curb lane width and skill of potential riders when planning bicycle lanes.
- 2.1.11 Consider requiring developers to add bike lanes or contribute funding of right-of-way easements where a nexus for traffic mitigation can be established.
- 2.1.12 Apply for local, state, and federal grants for bicycle project funding.
- 2.1.13 Consider bike lanes on streets with more than 2000 cars or more than 200 bicycles per day, or where the potential for significant use exists.
- 2.1.14 Increase bicycle access between the Westside, Eastside, and Downtown through such methods as:
- Creating bicycle lanes between Rancheria Street and the Harbor area;
  - Improving existing bicycle lanes to connect Shoreline Park to Leadbetter Beach along Shoreline Drive;
  - Creating access to the Waterfront from a Cacique Street undercrossing at Highway 101;
  - Creating a crosstown bicycle route between Lower Westside and Lower Eastside.
- 2.1.15 Identify possible changes at freeway interchanges and over- and underpasses that will facilitate the movement of bicycles through the interchange.
- 2.1.16 Consider prohibiting peak commute period parking on major streets to create additional bicycle travel lanes, as appropriate, and upon consultation with adjacent property owners and a properly noticed public hearing.
- 2.1.17 Consider innovative engineering solutions to improve the bikeway system, including, but not limited to:
- Use concrete pads inside metal frames at railroad crossings;
  - Use curb inlet drains instead of surface grates on bike lanes;
  - Provide space for bike lane alongside on-street automobile parking;
  - Pave mail truck pullouts at mail boxes to keep gravel off road;
  - Pave back all gravel driveways 15 feet from paved road;

- Minimize allowable heights of curb cuts and driveway aprons;
- Establish sight distance minimums for bike paths;
- If reflectorized dots are needed, place on car side of bike lanes;
- Install bollards on bike paths only as a last resort;
- If bike lanes are on intersecting streets, curb radius can be reduced for pedestrian safety and traffic calming;
- Consider installing traffic circles and roundabouts (with islands) to eliminate four-way stop signs in order to make bicycling easier;
- Where bicycle lanes are not possible, due to width constraints or parking needs, consider traffic calming improvements or wide curb lanes;
- Consider nearby parallel routes where recommended bicycle projects are not possible.

- 2.1.18 Consider standards recommended by the Regional Bikeways Study (pp. 69-75), Caltrans (Chapter 1000 "Bikeway Planning and Design" of the Highway Design Manual), and The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials when planning bike facilities.
- 2.1.19 Connect the Douglas Family Preserve, Arroyo Burro County Beach, and Las Positas Park with a Class I bike path, and a link to the Atascadero Creek Bike Path.
- 2.1.20 As part of the City's master plan to improve parkland, consider City parks and open space areas for expansion of bike path opportunities.

## **Policy 2.2 - Maintaining the Network**

*The City shall maintain the bikeway network.*

### **Implementation**

Another bicycle improvement that community members identified as being important to increase bicycling in the City is improved maintenance of the existing system. Poor pavement conditions and debris affect the rider's ability to use the bicycle safely. What some motorists perceive as unpredictable riding behavior by a cyclist may actually be a rider's attempt to avoid obstacles unseen by automobile drivers. These obstacles can result in a flat tire or worse. All bike facilities and right-of-ways should be kept in good condition, well lit, and well maintained to minimize surface hazards such as grates, potholes, loose sand and gravel, and litter. Implementation of this policy will require a cooperative effort on the part of three Public Works Divisions: Engineering; Streets-Transportation Operations and Downtown Parking; and Transportation Planning.

### **Strategies**

- 2.2.1 Implement "bike safe" assessments as roads are maintained to check surface characteristics, weeds, and debris. Appropriate Maintenance actions include: filling potholes in a way that makes the surface smooth for bicycles; sweeping streets with bike lanes monthly; providing anti-skid treatment on exposed metal surfaces; improving drainage to reduce surface ponding; removing weeds from shoulders and

- bike lanes; and, maintaining a smooth roadway surface, including resurfacing and repairing pavement joints when needed.
- 2.2.2 Implement a public system to report maintenance needs to the Bicycle Coordinator. All requests shall become part of the City's bicycle program database. The improvements routinely requested by cyclists should be considered high priorities for maintenance.
  - 2.2.3 Maintain bicycle access or provide on-street detour information during construction affecting roadways.
  - 2.2.4 Incorporate a spot improvement program into the maintenance schedule.
  - 2.2.5 Install pavement overlays without leaving an edge in the bike lane.
  - 2.2.6 Catalogue all maintenance requests and route them to Civil Engineer. Follow up with person making the request when action has been taken.
  - 2.2.7 Consider maintenance requests outside the scope of the maintenance program for the Capital Improvement Program or other funding source.
  - 2.2.8 Provide a list of high-priority streets for street sweeping to Streets each year for use in planning resource allocations.
  - 2.2.9 Improve Cabrillo Beachway maintenance.
  - 2.2.10 Maintain bicycle lanes at railroad crossings.
  - 2.2.11 Maintain a level of service or Pavement Quality Index (PQI) on bicycle facilities comparable to that on roadways used by motor vehicles.
  - 2.2.12 Develop a mechanism for jurisdictional responsibility and accountability for maintaining bikeways.

## **Policy 2.3 - Signage and Intersection Controls**

*The City shall enhance the bikeway network.*

### **Implementation**

The bikeway network consists not only of paths and streets, but also of signs and signals. Presently, roads and traffic signals are predominantly designed for motorists. Streets that dead end to a pedestrian bridge are marked as "not through streets" even though the bridge is often a preferred alternative for bicyclists and pedestrians trying to get across Highway 101. Some signs guiding bicyclists are still small or faded. Finally, at many places around town where bicycle lanes approach intersections, the signals that control movement in bike lanes do not detect the arrival of bicycles. In some places bicyclists can reach a pedestrian push-button without having to dismount; however, unless they walk through the crosswalk, doing this constitutes a vehicle code violation. The strategies below identify methods to make the street network more equitable for bicyclists, and to underscore the presence of bicycles for the motorist.

### **Strategies**

- 2.3.1 Implement the Regional Bikeway Signage Program.

- 2.3.2 Install Caltrans type D bicycle-sensitive traffic signal detection with pavement markings identifying where to wait at bikeway intersections.
- 2.3.3 Add detector sensitivity levels to the traffic signal timing charts so that regular maintenance personnel can maintain the required sensitivity levels as a routine procedure.
- 2.3.4 Install appropriate signage on future bikeways for use by cyclists and to inform motorists of the presence of a bicycle route. Signage should include signs and pavement legends when appropriate.
- 2.3.5 Install push buttons for cyclists that can be reached from the bikeway, when practical, at intersections unable to detect the presence of bicycles.
- 2.3.6 Enforce codes that prohibit cars and trucks from parking and unloading in bike lanes.
- 2.3.7 Consider, on an ongoing basis, appropriate new signage to enhance the Regional Bikeway Signage Program and to improve bicycle way-finding.
- 2.3.8 Install advance loop detectors at intersections with bike lanes.
- 2.3.9 Install pavement markings at mixed flow intersections to indicate where bicyclists should stand in order to be identified by the loop and continue to improve the sensitivity of signals to bicyclists.
- 2.3.10 Consider increasing green or yellow minimums so that bicycles entering intersection on green or yellow light can clear before opposing traffic gets green signal.
- 2.3.11 Consider, on an ongoing basis, effective improvements and signage to separate pedestrians and bicyclists in designated public areas.

## **Policy 2.4 - Collect Data**

*The City shall collect data to assist in bicycle planning and evaluation of existing projects.*

### **Implementation**

Planning and implementing a comprehensive bicycle program requires identifying not only the deficiencies in the existing network, but also those elements of the system that are working well. Network data that describe existing bicycle volumes, collisions, and roadway dimensions are important resources for decision making. In addition, the development of a program to gather better data on bicycling will help to determine the success of the City's efforts to increase bicycling. The intent of this policy is to find ways to efficiently gather information to assess the effectiveness of Bicycle Master Plan strategies.

### **Strategies**

- 2.4.1 Develop a procedure for routine inspection and maintenance of bicycle parking and bikeway facilities.

- 2.4.2 Collect network data on an ongoing basis.
- 2.4.3 Implement an evaluation system to monitor bicycle usage, collision statistics, automobile volumes and speeds, bikeway mileage, and road surface conditions.
- 2.4.4 Conduct bike counts before and after new bike lanes are striped.
- 2.4.5 Conduct property owner surveys prior to implementation of new bikeway segments.

## **Other Opportunities for Bikeway Facilities**

### **The Airport**

The Santa Barbara Airport is an island of City property surrounded by the County. The bikeways proposed on City property were considered separately in the Bikeway Master Plan of 1974 because this property is geographically remote to the City. The bikeway on Fairview Avenue has existed since 1971. It is used heavily by bicyclists traveling to and from the University of California. Also heavily used is Hollister Avenue located on the north side of the Airport.

By approving the Circulation Element the City has also committed to improving bicycle transportation around the Airport. This commitment is described in Chapter 14.3 of the Circulation Element. The City has agreed to work with the County on constructing a bicycle path parallel to Hollister Avenue and the railroad, and extending the South Fairview bike path. Furthermore, additional bike paths and amenities will be developed to encourage bicycling to and from the Airport and businesses located on Airport property. The Airport Specific Plan also discusses improvements to the bikeway network in the area. Finally, the bicycle paths on Airport property have become part of the overall bicycle path network planned for the Goleta area by the County.

The recreational aspects of bicycling near the Airport are also important and should be promoted. The Goleta Slough and Airport flight operations offer inviting and interesting experiences for recreational riders. Opportunities to increase recreational cycling will be coordinated with the County.

### **Railroad Right-of-Way**

The railroad right-of-way is an exceptional opportunity for bikeway expansion. Because of its level grade, wide turns and uninterrupted travel way, a bicycle "freeway" could be constructed alongside the railroad tracks with multiple connection points to Downtown, the Las Positas Valley, Hope Ranch, the Atascadero Creek Bikeway, the Maria Ygnacia Bikeway, and other places in Goleta. Like the railroad tracks, the bikeway would be grade separated. It would be Class I, or off-street, attracting riders that may not be comfortable riding on the street.

Although attractive, there are many constraints to building a railside bikeway. Some people feel that trains and bicycles don't mix. Union Pacific, the agency that owns the railroad, is somewhat resistant to the idea. Other constraints, such as cost and Public Utility Commission concerns need to be addressed. In spite of these constraints, professionals have been discussing ways in which bicycles and trains can co-exist. The rails-to-trails movement is broadening to rails-with-trails, taking advantage of these invaluable urban linear corridors in areas where comparable land

purchases would be prohibitive. In addition to participating in these discussions, the City of Santa Barbara will look for opportunities to implement a safe Class I bikeway in the railroad right-of-way. The City will also guard against actions that would make a future raiiside bikeway prohibitive.

## **Timelines and priorities**

Several projects were already planned for implementation at the time the Bicycle Master Plan was being written. Those projects will move forward as programmed, through Public Works and the Regional Transportation Plan. On the following page are additional projects to be fully considered for future implementation. This list may be expanded, as opportunities become available.

## **Proposed projects**

Please see original document to review this table.

## **Responsibility for implementation**

Please see original document to review this table.