



## I. INTRODUCTION

Santa Barbara is known throughout the country as a pedestrian-friendly place. All of the elements of a livable community are present: wide Downtown sidewalks covered with unique street furniture and artwork, paseos leading to shops and restaurants, vibrant neighborhoods, parks, schools, and a world-class beach promenade, to name a few. Even the details in Santa Barbara, such as custom-designed newspaper racks, trashcans, and benches, make the mundane seem magnificent. However, this Plan is designed to take Santa Barbara's pedestrian system to the next level: to develop a comprehensive pedestrian system that enhances and increases the city's walkability to the extent that all people will feel safe walking, to increase connections to destinations throughout the city, to enhance the Paseo network, and to increase the number of children who walk and bike to school. Additionally, a major goal of the enhanced pedestrian system is to increase the overall health of Santa Barbara's residents by promoting walking as a viable means of transportation.

A moderate-sized city (population 92,325 in 2000), Santa Barbara is built around a historic Downtown. Santa Barbara's early development grid pattern embodied walkability, setting the stage for recent pedestrian enhancements. The spine of the City, State Street, has undergone a series of pedestrian enhancements that have made it one of the most successful traditional main streets in the country. These improvements reflect the City's desire to retain its vital Downtown and neighborhoods, and to retain the charm and unique nature that attracted people here in the first place.

Despite these assets, Santa Barbara residents desire to make their city even more attractive for walking, and to address constraints for pedestrians, especially outside the Downtown. In various areas throughout Santa Barbara, especially around schools, libraries, community centers, and business districts, there is a need for pedestrian infrastructure upgrades. These include intersection improvements, sidewalk completion, Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, landscaping, and connectivity. In addition, the Safe Routes to School program and other innovative programs covered in this Plan seek to address the needs of people of all ages and abilities.



Safer pedestrian crossings are an important goal of this plan.

In addition to the goals stated above, this Pedestrian Master Plan seeks to extend Santa Barbara's distinction as one of the most pedestrian-friendly urban communities in the country to the benefit of residents, commuters, shoppers, and visitors alike. Further developing an attractive and inviting pedestrian environment will help to preserve and promote Santa Barbara as a place where people want to live, work, and visit.

What will Santa Barbara be like for pedestrians in the future? This Master Plan offers a vision of a future Santa Barbara where:

- People can conveniently walk to their destinations.
- People feel safe walking.
- People are healthier; childhood obesity is decreased.
- People from all age groups feel comfortable walking.
- There is an increased sense of community; people have chance encounters while walking.
- People with disabilities are more easily mobile.
- The elderly or frail feel more independent.
- Children can safely develop independence and a sense of belonging to the larger community.
- Visitors are attracted to the enhanced walking environment.
- Commercial streets are exciting places to visit.

The goals, policies, and strategies outlined in this Plan are provided to turn this vision into a reality. The Plan includes phased recommendations that will entice people to walk more for short trips, enhance the environment for people with disabilities and children walking to school, and lead to an overall increase in the number of pedestrian trips. It focuses on enhancing pedestrian safety in crosswalks and along streets. The Plan also represents a blueprint for improving residents' quality of life by creating a more sustainable environment and reducing traffic, noise, and energy consumption. It includes innovative and exciting options for safe and convenient pedestrian passage, and will link local bus routes and an emerging network of bicycle routes.

## Plan Contents

- **Chapter II. History of the Pedestrian System**  
Reviews the history of Santa Barbara's pedestrian system.
- **Chapter III. The Pedestrian System Today**  
Reveals the state of overall pedestrian mobility in Santa Barbara, and sets the stage for the goals, policies, and strategies outlined in later chapters. It discusses existing conditions, collision patterns, pedestrian needs, and uses Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping data to analyze pedestrian counts and crashes. It reveals the results of public input, which included public workshops, survey questionnaires, and personal contact. The public input process was a driving force behind many of the proposals contained in this Plan.
- **Chapter IV. Goals and Policies**  
Reviews existing City goals (such as in the General Plan's Circulation Element) and their relationship to this new Plan. It also outlines the goals of this Plan.

*A community that considers walking as a mode of transport and is designed to support walking is regarded as more livable, attractive, and more socially interactive, and is likely to have a lively community civic spirit. However, the automobile-dominated planning of the last 50 years has created widespread barriers to people's ability to incorporate this physical activity into their daily routines."*

- Gil Garcia, Santa Barbara City Council

- **Chapter V. Goal 1 – Improving the Pedestrian System**  
Proposes pedestrian improvement projects and programs.
- **Chapter VI. Goal 2 – Establish and Enhance Routes to School that will Enable and Encourage More Students to Safely Walk to School**  
Presents the infrastructure for a “Safe Routes to School” program.
- **Chapter VII. Goal 3 – Protecting and Expanding the Paseo System**  
Identifies the existing and future Downtown paseos and how they might be protected and enhanced..
- **Chapter VIII. Pedestrian Design Guide**  
Outlines specific design standards and guidelines for all aspects of the pedestrian system, including designing for accessibility.
- **Chapter IX. Goal 5 – Encouraging People to Walk**  
Outlines various campaigns and programs that will encourage more people to walk.
- **Chapter X. Goal 6 – An Institutional Foundation That Supports the Pedestrian**  
Creating the City structure to implement the plan including changes to the land development process and zoning ordinance as well as a recommended funding strategy.

## Roots of the Plan: The Circulation Element

The Circulation Element (CE) of the Santa Barbara General Plan (October 1998) has an ambitious vision statement:

“While sustaining or increasing economic vitality and quality of life, 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.”

This grand vision is broken into 16 separate goals. Goal 5, “Increase Walking and Other Paths of Travel,” is the precursor to this Pedestrian Master Plan.

Goal 5 discusses methods to identify and build on the City’s existing positive pedestrian environment. It specifically identifies its focus as “paths of travel,” rather than merely “sidewalks,” in order to recognize both the diverse existing network of sidewalks and paseos, and the diverse abilities, needs, and interests of pedestrian system users.

After identifying general opportunities and constraints for the City’s pedestrian system, Goal 5 outlines eight specific policies, with a series of supporting strategies for each policy. These policies and strategies form the basis of the goals, policies, and strategies of this Master Plan.



## Public Participation Process

This plan is not only the outgrowth of Circulation Element policies, but also an extensive public participation process to understand the needs and priorities of residents and stakeholders. A Technical Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from a wide variety of City agencies provided insight and guidance with regular meetings for more than a year. An extensive school-focused effort – including full-page newspaper ads, outreach at schools, and input from members of the established Santa Barbara Coalition for Sustainable Transportation – led to the Safe Routes to School recommendations.

The public process included meetings held on July 8 and October 2, 2003, at which participants discussed such issues as pedestrian crossing safety, sidewalks, and other general and specific pedestrian issues in the City. Residents identified specific locations that have perceived safety issues. Participants brainstormed about the positive and negative aspects of Santa Barbara’s existing pedestrian environment, and recommended ideas to improve the walking experience. These concerns and ideas were then incorporated into the *needed improvements list* outlined in Chapter V.

The public process also included a survey, which garnered 354 responses, a significant amount for this type of project. It found that Santa Barbara residents walk often (nearly 75% of respondents walk at least once a week) and for a wide variety of reasons, from exercise to errands to social meetings. Respondents wanted more continuous sidewalks, safety in crossing intersections, lighting at night, and general aesthetic improvements for a more pleasant walking environment. More than half said they would walk more than an hour if conditions were ideal, although the top three main obstacles to walking were identified as destination distance, fast and excessive auto traffic, and the need to transport heavy objects. Detailed survey results are shown in Chapter III.

## How Citizens Can Use This Plan

Citizens can use this Plan to ensure that pedestrian needs and conditions were properly identified, and assist the City in keeping this Plan accurate over time as it is updated. Citizens can also identify City priorities and proposals and how and when they may impact their own neighborhoods or walking routes. Parents can use the Safe Routes to School chapter to assist in selecting the best path to school for their children. Perhaps most importantly, citizens can use this Plan to learn about the various tools and strategies that are available to improve conditions on their streets, and work with the City to help fund and implement those improvements.

## How the City Will Use This Plan

This document will serve as a technical resource for the City to guide the implementation of goals and policies originally identified as policies in the General Plan Circulation Element. The City will use this document to identify appropriate programs and capital improvement projects; seek further neighborhood input; prioritize projects; understand the feasibility, benefits, and impacts of proposals; obtain funding; and update City design and management policies, guidelines, and practices.