

Executive Summary

WALKING AND BICYCLING ARE INCREASINGLY recognized as important components of the transportation system. They can reduce traffic, air pollution and energy consumption, and also improve the health and quality of life of residents and communities. In recognition of these benefits and to provide support for these transportation modes, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority adopted the first Contra Costa Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (CBPP) in 2003. The plan assessed the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians in the county and identified a set of countywide improvements that would encourage more people to walk and bicycle.

PURPOSES OF THE UPDATED CBPP

The 2009 update to the CBPP was driven in large part by the need to address a number of important changes affecting walking and bicycling in Contra Costa that have taken place since adoption of the original CBPP. Among the significant changes are the following:

- In 2004, Contra Costa voters passed Measure J, which extends the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, in-

cluding bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and continues the countywide Growth Management Program.

- Other new funding sources for pedestrian and bicycle improvements were created and some existing funding sources were modified or eliminated.
- The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the regional transportation planning agency for the Bay Area, adopted a "routine accommodation" policy, generally requiring that new transportation projects consider the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Public support for nonmotorized transportation has continued to increase since the adoption of the 2003 CBPP.

In addition to addressing these changes, the CBPP was updated with a number of other important objectives in mind. Key objectives include:

- Refine the vision, goals and policies in the original CBPP.
- Update the existing conditions, especially the collision data and commuting statistics for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Update the priorities for pedestrian improvements and the countywide bicycle network.
- Provide planning, design and implementation tools and other resources to local jurisdictions regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities, access to transit, and safety, promotion and education programs.
- Update the implementation tasks and establish evaluation criteria for prioritizing recommended improvements for available funds.
- Incorporate guidelines for pedestrian-and bicycle-friendly developments.
- Assist local jurisdictions in complying with requirements of the state's Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA). The BTA is a state-wide funding program for bicycle facilities administered by Caltrans. To be eligible for BTA funds, cities and counties must have adopted bicycle plans that include certain required components.

CONTENTS OF THE UPDATED CBPP

The 2009 CBBP contains the following chapters and appendices:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter describes the original CBPP briefly, the changes that prompted an update, the purposes of the updated CBPP, the update process (including public involvement), the contents of the CBPP and, lastly, how those contents meet Caltrans requirements for bicycle plans.

Chapter 2: Existing conditions

Chapter 2 discusses three important factors that shape the walking and bicycling environment in Contra Costa. The first is the physical landscape, including climate, topography and development patterns. The county's mild and generally dry climate is conducive to walking and bicycling. Its diverse natural landscape both accommodates and

presents obstacles to walking and, especially, bicycling: on one hand, the county enjoys many paths and trails, both along the coast and inland; on the other, hills and water bodies make bicycling between certain destinations challenging. The county exhibits a broad range of development patterns, from a few older, compact, pedestrian-oriented districts to large swaths of low-density, automobile-oriented suburban development.



The second factor is commute statistics. According to various sources, walking accounts for 1.6–1.9 percent of work trips or of commuters, while bicycling represents 0.5–0.6 percent. This compares to approximately 70 percent for drive-alone, 12–16 percent for carpooling and 9–13 percent for transit.

The third factor is collisions involving cars and pedestrians or bicyclists. According to the California Highway Patrol, there were 59 pedestrian fatalities, 1,308 pedestrian injuries, 19 bicycle fatalities and 1,120 bicycle injuries reported for Contra Costa in 2002–2006. During this period, pedestrians and bicyclists made up almost 21 percent of

the traffic fatalities in the county. This is a considerably disproportionate share, given that walking and bicycling account for less than 2.5 percent of work trips or commuters.

Chapter 2 also includes lists of pedestrian and bicycle projects, or of projects with pedestrian and bicycle components, funded by or through the Authority in recent years. The inventory includes projects funded through the Authority's Measure C and Measure J bonds and projects recommended for funding by the Authority under two MTC funding programs.

Chapter 3: Relationship to other plans

The CBPP will build on, and need to coordinate with, a number of related planning efforts occurring not only at the countywide level but also at the city, regional, state and federal levels. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the policy framework surrounding nonmotorized transportation in Contra Costa by summarizing the key plans, programs, policies and other planning efforts that will affect and be affected by implementation of the CBPP. Key planning efforts include local general plans and bicycle and pedestrian plans, the Authority's Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan and Measure J Expenditure Plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Bay Area Regional Bicycle Plan, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) Master Plan, the Bay Trail and Ridge Trail planning processes, various routine accommodation and "complete streets" policies at the federal, state and regional levels, and recent state legislation related to global warming and emissions of greenhouse gases.

Chapter 4: Goals and policies

This chapter refines the vision, goals and policies that were established in the original CBPP, particularly to stress the Authority's unique role as the countywide transportation planning, funding and

coordinating agency. The five goals, each of which is supported by several more detailed policies, are:

- ❶ Expand, improve and maintain facilities for walking and bicycling
- ❷ Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists
- ❸ Encourage more people to walk and bicycle
- ❹ Support local efforts to improve conditions for walking and bicycling
- ❺ Consider and plan for the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists

Chapter 5: Pedestrian facilities

The heart of this chapter is a discussion of general locations to which the Authority will give priority under its funding sources for capital pedestrian projects. Pedestrians have a much more limited access and mobility range than other transportation users. Unlike bicyclists and drivers, who use streets and trails to travel between cities throughout the county, pedestrians do not typically travel long distances. Walking does not rely on a countywide network of facilities but instead is clustered in small, local, accessible nodes and short, direct access routes. Pedestrians, however, are able to expand their access range greatly by walking to transit. There are three types of "pedestrian-priority" locations that follow from this characterization of walking:

- Downtowns and other "pedestrian-oriented districts" (areas where walking receives relatively high priority and importance, either by practice or policy);
- Access routes to transit stations and stops; and
- Access routes to other activity centers such as significant employment and shopping areas, schools, community centers, public venues, parks and trails.

Chapter 5 also includes an overview of pedestrian facilities in Contra Costa, important considerations in the planning of such facilities, the

main types of facilities that local jurisdictions can implement and on-line tools and resources for local agencies on the planning and design of facilities. Types of pedestrian facilities highlighted include walkways, curb ramps, intersection improvements, traffic calming measures, over- and undercrossings, and streetscape improvements.

Chapter 6: Bicycle facilities

Chapter 6 describes and maps the Countywide Bikeway Network (CBN), a priority system of bikeway corridors, both on- and off-street, that provide essential connections between residential neighborhoods throughout Contra Costa and employment and shopping centers, schools, parks, transit hubs, downtowns and other key activity centers. The “building blocks” of the CBN are the Bay Trail and other regional trails; the San Pablo Avenue corridor; connections between West and Central counties and between Central and Alameda counties; the Central County–San Ramon Valley corridor; and connections within Central County and between Central and East counties. Chapter 6 also describes bicycle connections between Contra Costa and neighboring counties and includes a table of unbuilt segments of the CBN.

The chapter also discusses key considerations in planning for bicyclists, the main types of bicycle projects that local jurisdictions can implement, and online tools and resources for local agencies on the planning and design of bicycle facilities. Types of bicycle facilities highlighted include bike paths, lanes and routes, multi-use trails, traffic calming measures, bicycle boulevards, over- and undercrossings, signage and bicycle-activated loop detectors.

Chapter 7: Support programs

While critical, facilities are only part of the walking and bicycling experience. Another important aspect is the various support programs

and projects that encourage people to walk and bicycle and that allow them to derive the greatest utility and pleasure from the facilities that have been built. Chapter 7 discusses the main types of support programs for nonmotorized transportation that local jurisdictions in Contra Costa could support or implement themselves: access to transit, encouragement, safety, education and enforcement.



The chapter includes a discussion of the eight transit operators that serve Contra Costa and discusses the three primary needs of pedestrians and bicyclists for accessing transit: safe routes to stops and stations; pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented amenities at stops and stations; and accessible transit vehicles. It also contains a discussion of encouragement programs and projects (including bicycle parking, showers and changing rooms, and promotions) and of safety, education and enforcement programs and projects (including safe routes to schools, education and law enforcement). The chapter includes a number of online resources on support programs for walking and bicycling.

Chapter 8: Other tools for local agencies

This chapter provides online tools, resources, references and other information for local agencies, and also for the Authority, on four additional issues identified as important for the update of the CBPP:

- Planning and design of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly developments, to help local jurisdictions comply with the Growth Management Program condition in Measure J that each jurisdiction “incorporate policies and standards into its development approval process that support transit, bicycle and pedestrian access in new developments.”
- The roles and responsibilities of local agencies and the Authority under MTC’s routine accommodation policy, especially with regard to the routine accommodation checklist developed by MTC.
- How local agencies can use the CBPP to become eligible for funds from the state’s Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA).
- Guidance on the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act to public rights-of-way.

Chapter 9: Implementation

While the CBPP is a document of the Authority, it can only be implemented with the collaboration of local jurisdictions and certain special agencies and district in Contra Costa. It is these agencies that have the land use responsibilities that enable the planning, design and construction of pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Chapter 9 updates lists of actions that the Authority will take to carry out the CBPP and those actions suggested for local jurisdictions and other agencies. It also describes the main funding programs under Measure J and from other sources that local jurisdictions can use to fund their nonmotorized transportation projects and programs.

The Authority’s main role with respect to implementation of the CBPP is to provide funding to local jurisdictions and special districts (such as the EBRPD) to plan, design and construct pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Perhaps most importantly for this reason, Chapter 9 proposes evaluation criteria for prioritizing projects for funds available through the Authority, including under Measure J. The proposed criteria and priority types of projects are:

- **Safety:** Projects designed to address a documented or commonly recognized safety deficiency, especially conflicts with motor vehicles.
- **Range of users:** Projects that attract and meet the needs of a broad array of distinct groups of users, including school children, students, seniors, the disabled, families, commuters and recreationalists.
- **Countywide or regional significance:** This includes projects in Contra Costa located in a pedestrian priority location, on the countywide bicycle network or on the regional bicycle network designated by MTC.
- **Destinations served:** Projects near key existing and planned activity centers such as shopping areas, employment centers, transit centers, stations or stops, civic buildings, parks, schools, libraries and other community facilities.
- **Other latent demand criteria:** Projects in areas with attributes (other than destinations served) that influence the decision to walk or bicycle; these include population and employment density, mix of land uses, percentage of zero-vehicle households and relative lack of car parking, among others.
- **Connectivity:** Projects that would close a gap, remove a barrier to access, shorten the distance by foot or bike, or provide an alternative to a trail that is closed overnight.
- **Feasibility:** Feasible, ready-to-go projects, for which planning and preliminary design work have been done.

- **Integration:** Projects that appear in a local plan or integrate with other local efforts being undertaken.
- **Matching funds:** Projects that have partial funding, secured or promised, from other sources.
- **Public support:** Projects for which there is evidence of public support or that have been identified as priorities by the public and by the RTPCs and other relevant agencies.

Appendices

The updated CBPP includes four appendices:

- **Appendix A:** Explains the methodologies used to estimate information related to bicycle ridership that appears in the Existing Conditions chapter.
- **Appendix B:** Contains information gathered from the local jurisdictions in Contra Costa under three topics: (i) Does the jurisdiction have a pedestrian-oriented plan or policies adopted as part of its general plan that support walking; (ii) Has the jurisdiction identified locations where it especially wants to encourage walking and improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians; and, (iii) Has it incorporated concerns for pedestrians (and bicyclists) into its review and approval process for development projects.
- **Appendix C:** Contains data gathered from the local jurisdictions in Contra Costa on the 11 bicycle-related informational topics required by Caltrans to be included in bicycle plans for purposes of BTA eligibility.
- **Appendix D:** Contains maps of local bicycle networks in Contra Costa, including both existing facilities and facilities planned or proposed by local jurisdictions or agencies. This more detailed network, while not identical to the designated CBN, does overlap with and include most of the corridors established in that network.

- **Appendix E:** Provides summaries of the projects on the Authority's Comprehensive Transportation Project List (CTPL) that are directed at walking or bicycling, or that have a pedestrian or bicycling component. The CTPL is a database of in-progress and proposed local transportation projects throughout Contra Costa.