

Alameda Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans DRAFT Evaluation of Current Practices

November 29, 2010

1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the key plans, policies and practices at the local, county, regional, state and federal levels that affect bicycling and walking in Alameda County. The review covers the most relevant planning documents, policy efforts and agency practices, as well as institutional issues identified by the local jurisdictions. (Funding programs, practices and priorities also play a critical role in the delivery of bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs, and will be examined separately in the chapter on funding and implementation of each of the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans.) The chapter summarizes the plans, policies and practices, and evaluates them with an eye toward how they promote or hinder bicycling and walking. It discusses practical challenges encountered by agencies in implementing their plans, policies and projects, and suggests ways to overcome these challenges. Because the policy context surrounding nonmotorized transportation has changed substantially even since 2006—when the updated Bicycle Plan and first Pedestrian Plan were adopted—special attention is paid to relevant policy areas that have emerged or advanced in importance in the past five years.

Ultimately, the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans will be adopted by the Alameda CTC and implemented in collaboration with jurisdictions and others in the county. Now that the Alameda CTC has merged the transportation planning, coordination, technical assistance and funding functions of the CMA and ACTIA, there are opportunities to maximize the agency's impact on bicycling and walking. For this reason, the suggestions in this chapter focus on how the Alameda CTC can promote nonmotorized transportation and assist other agencies to do the same; emphasis is placed on assisting local jurisdictions, which are responsible for implementing most capital bicycle and pedestrian projects. The suggestions in this chapter will be refined and developed into specific recommendations and action items in each plan's chapter on implementation.

Over the past decade, transportation policy in Alameda County has become more supportive of bicycling and walking. All jurisdictions in the county, as well as transportation agencies at the county, regional, state and federal levels, now have plans or policies that promote nonmotorized transportation. At the same time, emerging policy areas—for example, climate action, complete streets and active transportation—promise to further advance bicycling and walking.

The full impact of these plans and policies has not yet been felt, in large part because many of them are too recent to have been translated into on-the-ground realities. At the same time, institutional practices carried over from the past sometimes conflict with making progress on bicycling and walking improvements. In general, though, the trend in institutional support is a positive one, making this an

encouraging and promising time for creating a balanced transportation system that fully includes bicycling and walking.

② Emerging policy areas

As mentioned above, the policy context surrounding nonmotorized transportation has changed substantially even in the few years since adoption of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans in 2006. This section reviews four policy areas that have emerged or advanced in importance in recent years: (i) complete streets and routine accommodation; (ii) climate action; (iii) smart growth and Priority Development Areas (PDAs); and (iv) active transportation. These efforts are still so new that they are either still in the developmental stages or have just begun being implemented, making it difficult to evaluate their impact on the ground. However, as explained below, they all hold the promise of significantly improving the policy landscape for bicycling and walking in coming years.

Complete streets and routine accommodation

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, almost 200 cities, counties, states and other agencies around the country have adopted complete streets policies. “Complete streets” describes roadways that are planned, designed, operated and maintained for safe and convenient access by all users—including bicyclists, pedestrians and transit riders—and in ways that are appropriate to the function and context of the facility. “Routine accommodation” is a related concept that has recently been replaced by the term complete streets in most contexts. It is the practice of considering the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists habitually in the planning, design, funding and construction of transportation projects. In recent years, a number of routine accommodation and complete streets policies have come into effect at the local, regional, state and federal levels:

Locally, the following jurisdictions have complete streets or routine accommodation policies: Alameda County, Berkeley, Hayward, Newark, Oakland, Piedmont and Pleasanton. Most of these have been adopted in the last five years, making it difficult to assess their impact or effectiveness.

In future years, all jurisdictions will have to incorporate complete streets into their planning. **Assembly Bill 1358, the California Complete Streets Act of 2008**, requires “that the legislative body of a city or county, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element of the general plan, modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users [including] motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, seniors, movers of commercial goods, and users of public transportation....” This provision of the law goes into effect on January 1, 2011. The law also directs the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research to amend its guidelines for the development of circulation elements so as to assist cities and counties in meeting the above requirement. AB 1358 can be expected to result in a new generation of circulation elements and a surge in complete streets policies and ordinances around the state as general plans are updated over time, beginning in early 2011.

Although there is no specific policy in place, the Alameda CTC makes it a practice to consider bicycling and walking whenever it develops a transportation project that could impact these forms of travel negatively. According to Alameda CTC staff, there are several reasons why accommodations might not appear in a final project design. Most commonly, these are limited funding and conflicts with the facility design standards of Caltrans or local agencies.

Suggestions:

- One way to address funding shortfalls for bicycle and pedestrian facilities as part of current projects is to design streets in ways that allow for future upgrades. An example includes locating signal and utility poles, curbs and drainage inlets in ways that allow for crosswalks, sidewalks and curbs to be widened later, or for sidewalk amenities to be installed.
- Regarding design standards, there are several ongoing efforts, described below, to update the most commonly used manuals to make them more responsive to the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Because Alameda CTC has recently merged two separate agencies, it is a good opportunity to explore other ways to integrate the idea of complete streets into agency practices, including the possibility of an agencywide complete streets policy.

In 2006, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) adopted **Resolution Number 3765**, now referred to as the **MTC Complete Streets Policy**, outlining a policy that projects funded all or in part with regional funds “shall consider the accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as described in Caltrans Deputy Directive 64” (see below) in the full project cost. The policy requires project-sponsoring agencies—including the Alameda CTC and local jurisdictions—to submit a completed checklist evaluating bicycle and pedestrian facility needs as part of the planning and design of each transportation project submitted for funding to MTC; the checklist “is intended for use on projects at their earliest conception or design phase so that any pedestrian or bicycle consideration can be included in the project budget.” The checklist completion also serves to bring the project designer’s attention to the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, and to inform the public about how projects are or are not accommodating these modes. MTC’s funding decisions are not contingent on how the checklists are filled out.

MTC’s policy also requires congestion management agencies (CMAs), such as the Alameda CTC, to forward all submitted project checklists to their bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees (BPACs) for review. According to MTC staff, there are several ways in which the CMAs could improve their compliance with this requirement, as listed below.

Suggestions:

- The Alameda CTC could require local agencies to submit completed checklists well in advance of project decisions; submitting checklists to the BPACs with ample time to allow for meaningful review and comment, and for project sponsors to respond adequately.
- Upgrade to online tracking of checklists and projects.

- Conduct field reviews to confirm that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations were constructed as indicated in the project checklists.

► **MTC routine accommodation policy and checklist:**

www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/bicyclespedestrians/routine_accommodations.htm

In 2001, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) adopted **Deputy Directive 64 (DD-64), Accommodating Nonmotorized Travel**, which established a routine accommodation policy for the department. A revised directive adopted in 2008 as **DD-64-R1, entitled Complete Streets—Integrating the Transportation System**, significantly strengthened the policy beyond just “considering” the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. Among the responsibilities that Caltrans assigned to itself under the revised directive are:

- Ensure bicycle, pedestrian, and transit interests are appropriately represented on interdisciplinary planning and project delivery development teams.
- Ensure bicycle, pedestrian, and transit user needs are addressed and deficiencies identified during system and corridor planning, project initiation, scoping, and programming.
- Ensure incorporation of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel elements in all...plans and studies.
- Promote land uses that encourage bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel.
- Research, develop, and implement multimodal performance measures.

Both directives did not include specific accountability and mechanisms for implementation. In interviews conducted as part of the development of these updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans, Caltrans staff mentioned, for example, that there has been limited departmental guidance on how, and which, roadway projects should be reviewed for impacts on bicyclists and pedestrians, and at what stage of project development; and, more importantly, on how to provide for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially if local or countywide nonmotorized transportation plans have not identified bikeways or pedestrian priorities in the area. Caltrans’ design guidance documents—for example, its Highway Design Manual—do not universally coincide with the department’s complete streets policy.

In part to address these shortcomings, in 2010 Caltrans adopted the **Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan**. The plan sets forth actions under seven categories to be completed by various Caltrans districts and divisions within certain timelines to institutionalize complete streets concepts and considerations within the department. The action categories include updating departmental plans, policies and manuals; raising awareness; increasing opportunities for training; conducting research projects; and actions related to funding and project selection. As one of its implementation actions, Caltrans is currently updating the Highway Design Manual, in large part to incorporate multi-modal design standards.

Suggestion:

- Locally, during these updates to the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans, Caltrans District 4 staff suggested that the plans include a list of highway overcrossings and

undercrossings of Caltrans roadways that lack good bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities, to help the department identify opportunities to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

- ▶ **Deputy Directive 64-R1:** http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete_streets_files/dd_64_r1_signed.pdf
- ▶ **Caltrans' Complete Streets Implementation Action Plan:**
http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ocp/complete_streets_files/CompleteStreets_IP03-10-10.pdf

Climate action

The past five years has seen an expansion of legislative and planning efforts in California to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in order to mitigate climate change. **Assembly Bill 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006**, aims to reduce the state's GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Meanwhile, **Senate Bill 375**, passed into law in 2008, is the first in the nation that will attempt to control GHG emissions by directly linking land use to transportation. The law requires the state's Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop regional targets for reductions in GHG emissions from passenger vehicles for 2020 and 2035 as a way of supporting the targets in AB32.

The GHG emission reduction targets adopted by ARB for the Bay Area are 7 percent per capita by 2020 and 15 percent per capita for 2035, relative to 2005 levels. Each of the 18 metropolitan planning organizations in California—including, in the Bay Area (MTC and ABAG)—will need to prepare a **sustainable communities strategy (SCS)** for meeting the emission reduction targets in its region through transportation and land use actions that reduce the number of vehicle-miles traveled. It is expected to take several years before AB 32 and SB 375 begin to transform Alameda County's transportation or land use patterns. The main way in which these laws are expected to support bicycling and walking is through implementation of the Bay Area's long-term Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a 30-year planning document. As a part of the broader SCS, the RTP (and therefore the Countywide Transportation Plan, CWTP) will need to be designed to meet the GHG emission reduction targets. The RTP and CWTP are discussed later in this chapter.

- ▶ **Website for the Bay Area's SCS:** <http://www.onebayarea.org>

At the local level, every jurisdiction in Alameda County has adopted or is in the process of adopting a **climate action plan** (or similar), as outlined below. Also, many jurisdictions have established a climate action program to implement their plan. All of the plans that are available in final or draft form propose bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs among their strategies to meet their climate action goals. However, because of recent adoption of the plans' (the first one was adopted in February 2008), it is too early to evaluate their impact or effectiveness to date. The extent to which local climate action plans will result in the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian projects depends on many factors, including funding availability, political will and the GHG reduction potential of nonmotorized transportation projects compared to that of other projects. A major potential roadblock is the need for additional research on the GHG reduction benefits of bicycling and walking, including cost-benefit

analyses, the relative cost-effectiveness of different nonmotorized transportation strategies, and comparisons of such strategies against other types of projects.

Alameda County Climate Action Plans:

- **Alameda County:** <http://www.acgov.org/sustain/next/plan.htm> (plan in progress)
- **Alameda:** http://www.ci.alameda.ca.us/community/climate_protection.html (plan adopted February 2008)
- **Albany:** <http://www.albanyca.org/index.aspx?page=256> (plan adopted April 2010)
- **Berkeley:** <http://www.cityofberkeley.info/sustainable> (plan adopted June 2009)
- **Dublin** (plan in progress)
- **Emeryville:** <http://www.ci.emeryville.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=338> (plan adopted November 2008)
- **Fremont:** <http://www.fremont.gov/index.aspx?NID=432> (plan in progress)
- **Hayward:** <http://www.ci.hayward.ca.us/CAPo8/CAPo8.shtm> (plan adopted July 2009)
- **Livermore** (plan in progress)
- **Newark:** <http://www.newark.org/residents/going-green> (plan adopted January 2010)
- **Oakland:** <http://www.oaklandpw.com/Page774.aspx> (plan in progress)
- **Piedmont:** <http://www.ci.piedmont.ca.us/climate.shtml> (plan adopted March 2010)
- **Pleasanton:** <http://www.pleasantongreenscene.org> (plan in progress)
- **San Leandro:** <http://www.ca-ilg.org/node/2461> (plan adopted December 2009)
- **Union City:** http://www.union-city.ca.us/green_city/Climate%20Action%20Plan.html (plan in progress)

Smart growth and Priority Development Areas

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are areas within existing communities that have been identified by local jurisdictions and approved by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) as appropriate for infill development. The objective of PDAs is to create more housing, jobs, retail and services in pedestrian-friendly environments served by transit. According to ABAG, PDAs could accommodate as much as half of the Bay Area's projected housing growth through the year 2035. For these reasons, PDAs could result in a significant increase in the number of walking trips in Alameda County. To the extent that compact, transit- and pedestrian-friendly developments are also favored by cyclists, PDAs could also increase the number of bicycling trips.

PDAs are eligible for extra regional and state funding for planning and capital projects if they create more housing, jobs, retail and services in pedestrian-friendly environments served by transit. PDAs have been designated in 12 of the 15 jurisdictions in Alameda County; they are listed below and are shown on the map on a following page. Of the 19 BART stations in Alameda County, all except North Berkeley and Rockridge are located in a PDA.

Alameda County Priority Development Areas

- **Alameda County:** Urban unincorporated areas - Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, Fairview and San Lorenzo

- **Alameda:** Naval Air Station
 - **Berkeley:** Adeline St., Downtown, San Pablo Ave., South Shattuck, Telegraph Ave., University Ave.
 - **Dublin:** Dublin Transit Center, Town Center, West Dublin BART station area
 - **Fremont:** Centerville, Central Business District, Irvington district
 - **Hayward:** Downtown, South Hayward BART station area, the Cannery
 - **Livermore:** Downtown
 - **Newark:** Dumbarton Rail station area, Old Town
 - **Oakland:** Coliseum BART Station area, Downtown and Jack London Square, Eastmont Town Center, Fruitvale/Diamond Areas, MacArthur Transit Village, TOD Corridors, West Oakland
 - **Pleasanton:** Hacienda area
 - **San Leandro:** Bay Fair BART station area, Downtown, East 14th Street
 - **Union City:** Intermodal station district
- **Priority Development Area Showcase (FOCUS):** <http://www.bayareavision.org/pda>

One of the predecessors to the Alameda CTC, the ACCMA Board, approved three goals to encourage the connection between transportation and land use in Alameda County. These goals are: (i) promote infill transit-oriented and walkable communities and compact development, as appropriate, and support the development of multi-family housing, mixed-use development and alternative transportation adjacent to transit centers; (ii) strengthen transit use and alternative modes of transportation, and increase connectivity between them; and, (iii) improve and maintain existing infrastructure and support future investments that promote smart growth, including access improvements to transit. In support of these goals, the Alameda CTC administers a **Transit-Oriented Development Technical Assistance Program (TOD TAP)**, which helps project sponsors overcome barriers to TOD implementation.

Suggestions:

- The Alameda CTC could strengthen its smart growth efforts by providing technical assistance and resources to local jurisdictions on the planning and design of bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly developments.
- More ambitiously, the Alameda CTC could condition some of the funding it provides to local jurisdictions on the achievement of land use-related objectives. As an example of this, Contra Costa's Measure J, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation, requires that local jurisdictions comply with the county's Growth Management Program (GMP) to be eligible for funding under two of Measure J's programs. Among the requirements of the GMP is that each jurisdiction "incorporate policies and standards into its development approval process that support transit, bicycle and pedestrian access in new developments." To help local jurisdictions comply with this requirement, the Contra Costa Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan references and provides links to a number of design guidelines and similar resources.

Active transportation

"Active transportation" is a relatively new term encompassing bicycling, walking and access to transit, which places emphasis on the health, environmental and other benefits of these forms of travel, while also stressing that bicycling and walking serve utilitarian, not just recreational, purposes. The Alameda CTC is a partner in the national Active Transportation Campaign, created to support a program to provide large investments in walking and bicycling that will shift people from driving to walking, biking and transit. As a result of this campaign, in 2010, the Active Community Transportation Act was introduced in the House of Representatives to create a \$2 billion program as part of the next federal transportation bill. This program would provide grants of \$25 million–\$75 million to dozens of communities nationwide for projects and programs that would increase bicycling and walking. To position itself to compete for funding, Alameda County developed an **Active Transportation Plan** detailing how a possible \$50 million in new funding could make a substantial impact on walking and bicycling in the county. The plan establishes three priorities: promote access to transit; connect communities with urban greenways; and develop promotional and educational campaigns to

encourage bicycling and walking. The goals from the Active Transportation Plan have been incorporated into the goals for these updated Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans.

The Alameda CTC administers a number of projects and programs in support of its active transportation effort and is seeking funding for others. These include a countywide safe routes to schools program and efforts to build the East Bay Greenway and complete other countywide trails.

3 Transportation plans

Local bicycle and pedestrian master plans

Because they have authority over most land within their boundaries, local jurisdictions plan, design and construct the majority of bicycle and pedestrian capital projects. In Alameda County, these jurisdictions include 14 cities and the County, which administers the unincorporated areas. All 15 jurisdictions support nonmotorized transportation through the goals and policies of the circulation element of their general plan. In addition, most of the jurisdictions have prepared bicycle master plans, and many also have pedestrian master plans, to provide more specificity to the information in their circulation element related to nonmotorized transportation. Some of the jurisdictions have separate plans for bicycling and for walking while others have combined plans.

The table below summarizes the local bicycle and pedestrian plans in Alameda County, as indicated by the year in which the original plan or its most recent update was adopted. All jurisdictions except Piedmont have an adopted or in-progress bicycle plan (either stand-alone or combined). All jurisdictions except Hayward, Livermore and Piedmont have an adopted or in-progress pedestrian plan (either stand-alone or combined). The final section of this chapter, below, outlines the most common challenges encountered by local jurisdictions in implementing their bicycle and pedestrian plans and, more generally, in improving the environment for users of nonmotorized transportation.

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Stand-alone bicycle plan</i>	<i>Stand-alone pedestrian plan</i>	<i>Combined bicycle/ pedestrian plan</i>
North planning area			
Alameda (city)	2008; Update expected in 2010	2009	--
Albany	2006; Update expected in 2011	Expected in 2011	--
Berkeley	2005	2010	--
Oakland	2007	2002	--
Piedmont	--	--	--
Emeryville	--	--	1998; Update expected in 2011

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Stand-alone bicycle plan</i>	<i>Stand-alone pedestrian plan</i>	<i>Combined bicycle/ pedestrian plan</i>
Central planning area			
San Leandro	--	--	2004; Update expected in 2011
Hayward	2008	--	--
County (uninc. areas)	2007	2006	--
South planning area			
Fremont	2005; Update expected in 2011	2007	--
Newark	--	--	Expected in 2011
Union City	--	--	2006
East planning area			
Pleasanton	--	--	2010
Dublin	--	--	2007
Livermore	2003; Update expected in 2010	--	--
Total (adopted + underway)	8	5 + 1	5 + 1

Alameda Countywide Transportation Plan

The Alameda Countywide Transportation Plan (CWTP) was last updated in 2008. The CWTP sets policies, guides decision-making and, perhaps most importantly, establishes priorities for capital projects and strategic initiatives. The plan incorporates the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans by reference. The next update of the CWTP, currently in progress and scheduled for adoption in 2012, will include the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans, as well as a transportation demand element which will provide even more opportunities to address nonmotorized transportation. The Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans are being updated slightly ahead of the CWTP, providing a chance to fold policies, priorities, recommended projects and programs, and other content from these plans into the updated CWTP. The CWTP prioritized bicycle and pedestrian projects or programs that come from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans will be positioned to compete well for funding and implementation. This is critical, since the updated CWTP will provide the foundation for an expenditure plan that may reauthorize Measure B, the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation. This expenditure plan will be developed along the same timeline as the CWTP update, and may be on the ballot in November 2012.

► **Alameda Countywide Transportation Plan:** <http://www.accma.ca.gov/pages/HomeCountywideTransPlan.aspx>

Regional Bicycle Plan

In 2009, MTC, the regional transportation planning agency for the Bay Area, updated its **Regional Bicycle Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area**. Among other things, the plan updated the regional bikeway network, one of the purposes of which is to focus MTC's spending on high-priority bicycle facilities that serve regional trips. All the congestion management agencies in the Bay Area, including the Alameda CTC, were surveyed to determine needed updates to each county's portion of the regional bikeway network. The regional bikeway network—both existing and proposed segments—extends approximately 2,140 miles. That figure includes 348 miles in Alameda County, which is for the most part the “financially constrained” subset of the “vision” bicycle network outlined in the 2006 Countywide Bicycle Plan. At the time of the Regional Bicycle Plan update, a total of 161 miles, or 46% of the Alameda County total, had been built or was fully funded and awaiting development within the county. The updated plan estimated the cost to complete the regional bikeway network in Alameda County at \$166 million.

There is currently no equivalent regional pedestrian plan for the Bay Area.

► **Regional Bicycle Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area:**

www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/bicyclespedestrians/MTC_Regional_Bicycle_Plan_Update_FINAL.pdf

Regional Transportation Plan

Just as the Countywide Transportation Plan incorporates the priorities of local jurisdictions, so the **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** incorporates priority projects and programs from the nine counties that make up the Bay Area, and establishes the funding priorities for the region. MTC is in the process of updating the RTP, which will have a horizon year of 2040. The updated RTP will be different from previous versions in that the new plan will be part of the broader Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area, a state-mandated effort to meet GHG emission reduction targets through transportation and land use actions that reduce the number of vehicle-miles traveled.

As mentioned earlier, the California Air Resources Board has adopted long-term emission reduction targets for the Bay Area. MTC is now in the process of integrating these targets into its update of the RTP. Due to the need to meet these targets, it is likely that the next RTP will place greater policy emphasis on, and devote more funding to, nonmotorized transportation, transit and supportive land uses than previous RTPs have done. The extent of this push will not be known for some time, however, since the first draft of the RTP is not scheduled to be released until the first quarter of 2012.

► **Website for the Bay Area's SCS:** <http://www.onebayarea.org>

Community-Based Transportation Plans

In 2002, MTC launched its **Community-Based Transportation Planning program**. The goal of the program is to engage low-income Bay Area communities in identifying barriers to mobility, and

evaluating options and setting priorities to overcome these barriers. Community-based transportation plans (CBTPs) are developed through a collaborative planning process that involves residents, community- and faith-based organizations, transit operators, county CMAs and MTC. A CBTP contains a demographic analysis of the area; a list of prioritized transportation gaps and barriers; strategies or solutions to address identified gaps; and a list of potential funding sources for implementation. Five CBTPs have been completed in Alameda County: Alameda (city), Central and East Oakland, South and West Berkeley, Central Alameda and West Oakland.

Given the broad goal of CBTPs to improve mobility for low-income, senior, youth and disabled populations, transit and paratransit have been a strong emphasis of these plans. In addition, each of the Alameda County CBTPs contains recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs. These are typically focused on access to transit and key community facilities. For example, the South and West Berkeley CBTP recommended access improvements to the Ashby BART station and improved pedestrian crossings near senior centers. As for all transportation projects, implementation of the CBTPs contends with limited funding. Furthermore, implementing these projects also requires coordination among several parties, such as jurisdictions and transit operators, which provides additional challenges to completing projects.

► **MTC's Community-Based Transportation Planning program:** <http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/cbtp>

4 Other policies and practices

CMP, deficiency plans and countywide transportation model

State law requires that urban areas develop and update a **Congestion Management Program (CMP)** for monitoring and improving their designated transportation network. In Alameda County, the Alameda CTC prepares the CMP for a network of 232 miles of freeways, highways and arterials. The CMP requires a certain level-of-service standard on all CMP routes except in areas designated as “infill opportunity zones.” The CMP encourages the use of travel demand management strategies—including bicycle- and pedestrian-related programs—to meet the CMP’s performance measures.

The Alameda CTC requires local jurisdictions to prepare **deficiency plans** for segments of the CMP roadway network that do not meet adopted level-of-service (LOS) standards. Deficiency plans provide an opportunity to analyze the causes of congestion in specific areas and determine alternative solutions to restore LOS. As part of their deficiency plans, local governments may prioritize systemwide and non-capital strategies for relieving congestion, including public transit and nonmotorized transportation improvements, and travel demand management measures.

Despite this flexibility, meeting the CMP LOS requirements can be challenging as the need to reduce traffic congestion can not always accommodate other transportation modes (where the right-of-way is constrained) and mitigation measures designed for automobile drivers can degrade conditions for

bicyclists and pedestrians. The impacts are similar to those caused by LOS requirements under CEQA (see below). The Alameda CTC could improve this situation by:

Suggestions:

- Expanding the CMP segments and areas exempt from the LOS requirement.
- Developing and applying a multi-modal approach to measuring LOS, that includes person throughput and access balanced with vehicle throughput and mobility.
- Establishing CMP policies that prioritize alternative transportation and travel demand management strategies as viable solutions for restoring a roadway's LOS.
- Encouraging and supporting improved long-term coordination between transportation and land use decisions by local jurisdictions along CMP routes.

The Alameda CTC maintains a **countywide transportation model** to determine future demand for transportation facilities and services. The model is used to analyze congestion management decisions including the benefits of improving roadways, using transportation demand management strategies and transit. The model is a conventional "4-step" travel-demand model addressing trip generation, trip distribution, mode choice and trip assignment. The model inputs are based on socio-demographic data supplied by ABAG at the census tract level, which are then disaggregated to the finer "traffic analysis zones" by local jurisdictions.

Suggestions:

- The model could be modified to predict future bicycle and pedestrian trips. This would help identify corridors for nonmotorized transportation improvements.
- As an alternative, the Alameda CTC could consider developing a simple and inexpensive spreadsheet sketch model of bicycle and pedestrian demand forecasting.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that project-sponsoring public agencies evaluate and disclose the potential environmental impacts of their development projects. Due to requirements to mitigate automobile traffic congestion, CEQA sometimes results in the degradation of conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians when roadway changes are made to improve automobile level of service (LOS). An example of a mitigation measure to reduce auto traffic impacts could be to widen intersections or add traffic lanes. These measures could reduce auto traffic congestion while making streets less bicycle and pedestrian-friendly. With its focus on reducing auto traffic congestion by preserving capacity for cars, CEQA can also make it hard to implement higher-density, infill and other types of smart growth developments, as well as "road diets" (removing auto travel lanes to allow room for bike and pedestrian facilities), sidewalk widenings, bike lanes, traffic calming measures and other bicycle and pedestrian projects.

To resolve some of the LOS-related issues, a number of jurisdictions have adopted flexible automobile LOS standards. San Jose and Yuba City, for example, accept a lower LOS in their downtown; the City

of Chico allows it in built-out areas served by transit; and Sacramento County allows lower LOS inside its “urban services boundary.” For its residential streets, Pleasanton uses a “quality of life LOS,” which considers the amount of cut-through auto traffic, traffic speeds, peak-hour and average daily traffic volumes, ease of crossing the street and the ease of exiting driveways. Berkeley has no automobile LOS standard; instead, it evaluates a project’s traffic impacts on case-by-case basis, considering impacts on all modes of transportation, and allowing beneficial impacts on bicycling, walking, transit, air quality, noise, visual quality or safety in residential areas to serve as mitigating or offsetting factors.

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, in 2009, revised the CEQA guidelines in several ways that lessen, though they do not eliminate, the law’s bias toward reducing traffic congestion:

- The old guidelines asked if the project caused an increase in auto traffic compared to existing traffic; the new guidelines ask if the project conflicts with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the entire circulation system.
- Instead of asking if the project exceeds a LOS established by the county congestion management agency, the new guidelines ask if the project conflicts with an “applicable congestion management program, including but not limited to LOS and travel demand measures, or other standards.”
- The new guidelines no longer consider inadequate parking capacity as a potential impact.

Lastly, the process to obtain CEQA clearance can be lengthy and expensive, which adds to the cost of a proposed project. Implementation of San Francisco’s bicycle plan was frozen for four years, until mid-2010, when opponents sued over the project’s CEQA review. The result has been uncertainty among local jurisdictions about the level of environmental clearance needed for bicycle and pedestrian plans. This uncertainty might discourage some jurisdictions from pursuing robust or controversial nonmotorized transportation projects so as to avoid a burdensome CEQA scenario.

Suggestions:

The Alameda CTC could help local jurisdictions overcome CEQA-related obstacles to the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian projects by providing technical assistance on:

- The level of environmental review recommended for different types of bicycle or pedestrian plans and projects.
- Alternatives to automobile LOS thresholds.
- Trip-generation methodologies appropriate for smart growth development projects.
- Ways to streamline the CEQA review process or even to exempt some projects outright.

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

The **Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)** is a document published by the Federal Highway Administration specifying standards for the design, installation and use of traffic signs, signals and road-surface markings. The MUTCD was last updated in December 2009. California uses its own version of the manual, which conforms substantially to the federal MUTCD. Caltrans is issuing a draft of the state’s MUTCD incorporating the 2009 federal MUTCD in parts, and expects to adopt a revised state MUTCD in 2011.

The 2009 federal MUTCD incorporates a number of improvements related to bicycle and pedestrian signage and markings, many of which have been included in the state's draft MUTCD. The most significant changes to the federal manual are listed below.

- Recommended walking speed for calculating pedestrian clearance time is reduced from 4 feet per second to 3.5, with some exceptions
- Countdown signals are now required for most new pedestrian signals
- Variations of "Yield Here to Pedestrians" sign
- Pedestrian hybrid beacon (also known as a HAWK signal) has been added
- New guidelines on marking medians for ADA access
- New guidance on pedestrian pushbutton location
- Warning school signs are required to be fluorescent yellow-green.
- Signing is no longer mandatory along bike lanes
- New "Bikes May Use Full Lane" sign
- New shared-lane marking to denote the recommend location for cyclists in a traffic lane
- New combined bicycle/pedestrian warning sign

► **Federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices:** http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009/pdf_index.htm

► **California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices:**

http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/mutcdsupp/ca_mutcd2010.htm

5 Issues identified by local jurisdictions

As mentioned earlier, most capital bicycle and pedestrian projects in Alameda County, and many support programs, are implemented by the 15 local jurisdictions (the County and 14 cities). With this in mind, the questionnaire administered to local agencies as part of the data-gathering effort to update the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans asked staff to identify the challenges they most commonly encounter in implementing projects and, more generally, in improving the environment for users of nonmotorized transportation. The three implementation challenges most commonly cited as a "major obstacle" were: (i) inadequate funding (mentioned as a major obstacle by eight jurisdictions); (ii) shortage or absence of trained staff (mentioned by five); and, (iii) conflicts with other public agencies (also mentioned by five). At the October 2010 meeting of the Alameda County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans Working Group, attended by representatives from agencies throughout the County, members were asked to elaborate on each of the three obstacles. Below is a summary of this discussion and some suggested ways to address the obstacles.

Inadequate funding

- Jurisdictions with dedicated bicycle or pedestrian planners need funding for engineering staff to design funded projects (in other words, to make projects "construction ready").
- Jurisdictions that do not have dedicated bicycle or pedestrian staff also tend to lack funding for capital projects because they do not have the staff resources to apply for grant funds.

- Funding for projects is very limited due to current economic conditions.
- Many projects in capital improvement programs are unfunded or only partially funded.
- All jurisdictions lack adequate funding to maintain their bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This situation is having a ripple effect, discouraging jurisdictions from constructing multi-use paths and other facilities because the new projects will add to the maintenance burden.
- It was suggested that a countywide fund for local maintenance needs be created, as has been done in Marin County. Another suggestion was to reclassify paths as roads, to make them eligible for funding for local streets and roads.

Shortage or absence of trained staff

- Only two jurisdictions represented in the discussion—Berkeley and Oakland—have full-time bicycle or pedestrian staff. In all other jurisdictions, these duties are assumed by planners or engineers with many other responsibilities, some of which might be a higher priority.
- In jurisdictions where the bicycle or pedestrian coordinator is a planner, design and project management staff is in short supply; where the coordinator duties are held by an engineer, long-range planning and grant writing can be bottlenecks.
- Training engineering staff on bicycle and pedestrian issues would help compensate for the shortage of dedicated bicycle and pedestrian coordinators. This need was revealed by MTC's complete streets checklist, since engineers typically ask the bicycle/pedestrian planner to complete it.
- Grants above about \$1 million tend to justify the hiring of staff for implementation; however smaller grants do not, so there are often insufficient staff resources to deliver funded projects.
- In a time of reduced local staffing to apply for and implement capital transportation projects, even when funds are available, many local jurisdictions are unable to hire staff or even interns, due to hiring freezes or current budget concerns. At the same time, hiring and managing consultants is very time consuming for staff.
- Some grant opportunities require extensive staff time that makes it difficult for smaller jurisdictions to compete.
- It is challenging for jurisdictions with limited staff to deal with multiple responsible agencies for implementing bike and pedestrian projects

Conflicts with other public agencies

- In some areas, the best opportunities for new bicycle and pedestrian facilities are on rights-of-way such as canals, creeks, and railroad corridors, which are controlled by other agencies. Projects in such locations tend to be more challenging to implement than those on property owned by the jurisdiction, so they tend not to be prioritized or are abandoned altogether.
- Projects that need federal environmental clearance require more and specially trained staff, which many agencies do not have.
- The perpetual state budget crisis sometimes slows the implementation of projects receiving state funding.