

Goals of Bike Plan 2020

1. Complete 500 miles of bikeways
2. Achieve 5% bike mode share
3. Reduce bike collisions by 50%
4. Add 5000 bike parking spaces
5. Achieve Gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community status



Chapter 1 – Introduction & Policy Considerations

Bicycling would seem to have a lot going for it. The cost of a bike is about one twentieth that of a car. Bikes don't require any gas or insurance. San José's weather and topography - very little rain, no snow, and mostly flat roadways - seem ideal for bicycling. Nearly half of all trips are three miles or less¹, a distance well-suited for bicycling. Riding a bike is a great way to exercise and avoid health issues such as obesity and Diabetes. With half of the south bay's carbon emissions coming from transportation, bicycling helps fight global warming.

With all these benefits to bicycling, why are only about 1% of trips in San José made by bike? Ask anyone who *doesn't* ride a bike and you're likely to get two responses: it's not safe, and it's not convenient. Achieving the vision of *Bike Plan 2020* requires addressing these two perceptions of safety and convenience. Each Goal and Strategy in this plan addresses these perceptions of safety and convenience, with the intent of making San José a city where bicycling is safe, convenient, and commonplace.

Addressing safety and convenience is sometimes defined in terms of Vulnerable Road Users. This concept highlights the increased exposure of bicycling and walking (versus driving a car) and then implements changes to reduce that increased exposure. For example, if struck by a car, a bicyclist is more likely to be injured than is a motorist. So planning to reduce this risk for bicyclists is a high priority. Vulnerable Roadway User policies establish safety as a top priority to be addressed by Engineering, Encouragement, Education, and Enforcement. For more on Vulnerable Roadway Users, see the sidebar on page 1-2.

Previous Planning Efforts

Bike planning in San José dates to the early 1970's when the city began installing bike lanes on city streets. In 1978, after state law officially defined bike lanes, San José city council passed its first bike lane resolution grandfathering existing bike lanes under the law. Since that time, 20 city council resolutions have passed approving new bike lanes, and nearly 200 miles of bikeways have been constructed.

In 1992, Wilbur Smith Associates and Transmetrics created a *Transportation Bicycle Plan* for the City of San José. In 1999, Fehr & Peers prepared a *San Jose Commuter Bicycle Corridor Study*. In 2000, the city added a *Transportation Bicycle Network* to its general plan, defining current and planned bikeways. Also in 2000, the city adopted *San Jose Greenprint*, a strategic plan which includes a goal of "Creat[ing] a citywide trail network that encourages alternative transportation modes..."

Policy Context

The City of San José's General Plan identifies several policies that encourage the development of a bicycle network.² These policies include a recommended Bikeway Network totaling approximately 500 miles of bikeways. About 250 miles of this network have been completed. Policies in the General Plan use broad language to

encourage, though not require, effective bicycle accommodation throughout the city. San José's Municipal Code includes requirements for bike parking and showers in new development.³ Chapter 3 recommends specific improvements to these provisions.

County, regional, state and federal governments each have policies that encourage or require bicycle accommodation.⁴

Bike Plan 2020 Development Process and Outreach

Development of *Bike Plan 2020* began in 2008 with staff collection and review of existing city bicycle planning and accommodation documents. Staff then reviewed best practices of bike-friendly cities in the U.S. and abroad. Next, a draft *Bike Plan 2020* outline was prepared, including an updated Bikeway Network. The draft outline and network were shared at four public workshops.⁵ Through these workshops, staff received 135 public comments and suggestions which were incorporated into the analysis. The draft *Bike Plan 2020* was posted to DOT's Bike/Ped Program web page for public access and review. Notice of the public workshops and web information was distributed to bike shops and bike clubs including Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. San Jose's Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee received a presentation on *Bike Plan 2020* and provided input. Information on the draft Plan was also distributed to multiple public agencies.⁶

Strategy 1.1

Revise City policies to improve bicyclist accommodation

While San Jose's existing policies form a good foundation for bicycling, the following opportunities to strengthen bike policies should be implemented. Each will contribute to an improved environment for bicycling.

Action 1.1.1 – Adopt and implement a Complete Streets policy.

In 2007, California passed AB 1358, the Complete Streets Bill. This new law requires cities, when updating the circulation element of a general plan after 2010, to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users including bicyclists. As part of the San Jose General Plan Update, San Jose should incorporate Complete Streets best practices.

Action 1.1.2 – Continue implementation of the Transportation Impact Policy element of the City Level of Service Policies. The Transportation Impact policy allows funds paid by new development for transportation impacts to be used for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. This policy facilitates multi-modal transportation improvements, rather than roadway expansions benefitting only the automobile. It is an important tool in building a bicycle friendly community.

Action 1.1.3 – Appropriately regulate power-assist bicycles.

Increasing gas prices, finite car parking facilities, and a growing awareness of climate change issues have all heightened interest in alternatives to the automobile. As this interest grows, power-assist bicycles will become an increasingly attractive part of the solution. Power-assist bicycles usually consist of a bicycle with an electric-assist

Complete Streets

The Complete Streets national organization formed to provide transportation facilities that enable safe access and use for all users. This movement builds upon and expands the Context Sensitive Solutions concept by focusing on transportation facilities (not only buildings), and by including a broader audience (not limited to planners). Complete Streets include bikeways, where appropriate, to improve mobility. For more on Complete Streets, go to completestreets.org



A related concept, known as Most Vulnerable Users, seeks safe facilities for all transportation modes, including bicycling. This reduces the disparity between bicycle mode share and bicyclist injuries and fatalities. While bicyclists account for only 1% of trips, they represent 3% of roadway fatalities and 4% of roadway injuries.

Complete Streets will help address the Most Vulnerable User challenge by providing safe and convenient places to ride a bike.

Counting bikes

One of the five *Bike Plan 2020* goals calls for increasing bike mode share to 5%. Mode share represents the percent of trips made by a type or “mode” of transportation. The most recent annual Census update indicates about 1.2% of commute trips are made by bike in San José. This compares to 0.5% nationally.



San José Bike Commuters	
Current	1.2%
2020 Goal	5.0%

Locally, San José conducts bicyclist counts at several locations throughout the city. These include on-street counts conducted by the Department of Transportation and off-street (trail) counts conducted by the Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services. Some locations see bike counts exceeding 1400 bikes per day.

motor. The bicycle can be pedaled or the electric-assist can be used. The City of San Jose should appropriately define and regulate power-assist bicycles. Generally, power-assist bicycles should be allowed on bicycle facilities (versus being required to use motor vehicle travel lanes) only if they have characteristics similar to a bicycle (i.e. electric/zero-emissions, low maximum speed, and small size to fit in bike facilities).

Strategy 1.2

Pursue long-term actions to exceed *Bike Plan 2020* Goals

World-class bicycling cities have bike mode shares as high as 40%. Because achieving such high rates of bicycling will take longer than the ten-year time horizon of *Bike Plan 2020*, San José must establish long-term goals now and begin working toward them. The following actions should be pursued now with a goal of completion in a 25-30 year time frame.

By encouraging bicycling, each of these actions builds a more livable community – one with less car traffic, less smog, and fewer roadway collisions. *Bike Plan 2020* promotes active transportation that reduces reliance on cars. By doing so, the plan also addresses two of society's greatest challenges: climate change from CO₂ emissions and public health problems from sedentary life styles.

Action 1.2.1 – Install bicycle facilities on most busier streets.

Most people do not feel comfortable bicycling on busy streets. Without bicycle facilities, streets with higher traffic speeds and volumes discourage bicycling. To create a truly bike-friendly community where anyone can ride, bike facilities must be provided on all but the calmest streets. Most streets with one or more of the following features should have a bicycle facility of some type: (a) more than one lane of traffic in one or both directions; (b) posted speeds higher than 25 mph; or (c) streets with Average Daily Traffic (ADT) greater than 5,000.

Action 1.2.2 – Provide two-way bike facilities on both sides of busy streets that have longer blocks. Longer blocks on busy streets create a barrier for bicyclists. Traffic law and safety require bicyclists to travel in the same direction as motorists. But it's difficult for bicyclist to cross busy streets to reach the correct side. And with long blocks, bicyclists may be required to travel a long distance in the opposite direction to reach a safe crossing. The solution is a two-way bicycle facility on both sides of the street. This should be pursued on busy arterials with longer blocks.

Action 1.2.3 – Zone existing and future neighborhoods for mixed use. Creating neighborhoods that include nearby jobs, housing, shopping, and schools reduces the distance of daily trips. Shorter trips become more viable by bicycle. When a neighborhood market is six blocks (not six miles) away, the trip can easily be made by bike. When a job is 3 miles (not 15 miles) from housing, bicycling to work becomes a reasonable option. Zoning for mixed use supports bicycling.

¹ 2001 National Personal Transportation Survey.

² See Transportation Policies 51-57, Chapter 4; Map 15 & Appendix I, Chapter 5.

³ See SJMC 20.90.300 et seq.

⁴ See the following documents described in Exhibit F: VTA's Countywide Bike Plan and Bicycle Technical Guidelines; MTC's Regional Bike Plan and Routine Accommodation policy; California's Deputy Directive 64; California's Complete Streets legislation AB1358; California ACR 211; and FHWA's Joint Statement, *Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel*.

⁵ See Table 2. Workshops: (1) Downtown San Jose Public Workshop, December 15, 2008; (2) East San Jose Public Workshop, January 14, 2009; (3) South San Jose Public Workshop, January 20, 2009; and (5) San José City Hall Workshop August 6, 2009.

⁶ Cities of Campbell, Cupertino, Fremont, Los Gatos, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, Santa Clara, Saratoga, Sunnyvale; County of Santa Clara; Valley Transportation Authority; Alameda County Transportation Authority; Metropolitan Transportation Commission; Caltrain; BART; and XXXX