

1. Introduction



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The County of Los Angeles Bicycle Master Plan (Plan) proposes a vision for a diverse regional bicycle system of interconnected bicycle corridors, support facilities, and programs to make bicycling more practical and desirable to a broader range of people in the County. The Plan is intended to guide the development and maintenance of a comprehensive bicycle network and set of programs throughout the unincorporated communities of the County of Los Angeles for 20 years (2012 to 2032). The implementation of this Plan will start upon adoption by the Board of Supervisors. The success of the Plan relies on the continued support from all County Departments, the Board of Supervisors, the bicycling public, and advocates throughout the County who recognize the benefits of cycling in their community. The implementation of the network and the programs and policies outlined in the Plan will not be possible without availability of significant and sustained funding levels from grants as well as dedicated funding sources available to the County.

The Plan is an update to the 1975 County Bikeway Plan. The Plan provides direction for improving mobility of bicyclists and encouraging more bicycle ridership within the County by expanding the existing bikeway network, connecting gaps, addressing constrained areas, providing for greater local and regional connectivity, and encouraging more residents to bicycle more often. This Plan is a sub-element of the Transportation Element of the Los Angeles County General Plan. The General Plan is the long-range policy document that guides growth and development in the unincorporated County. The County's General Plan⁴ is currently being revised and updated. Once the County's General Plan Update is adopted, this Plan will become a component of the Mobility Element of the County's General Plan. This Plan addresses the guiding principles, goals and policies of the General Plan as it plans for a more bicycle-friendly county that reduces traffic congestion and carbon footprint, and provides improved opportunities for bicycling and active transportation.

The Plan proposes to build off the existing 144 miles of bikeways throughout the County, and install approximately 831 miles of new bikeways in the next 20 years. The 831 miles of proposed bikeways consist of approximately 71 miles Class I bike paths, approximately 274 miles Class II bike lanes, and approximately 463 miles of Class III bike routes, as defined/described in Chapter 1000 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual. The Plan also proposes a network of 23 miles of bicycle boulevards, which are facilities that prioritize bicycle travel on low-traffic, low-volume streets and are intended to provide greater safety and comfort to bicyclists. An introduction to the different types of facilities is provided in **Chapter 3: Table 3-1**, which are discussed in detail in the Design Guidelines presented in **Appendix F: Figures 1-1 and 1-2** illustrate the portions of the total miles and estimated cost of the recommended bikeway network by facility type.

Along with the proposed bikeway network, the Plan outlines a range of recommendations to facilitate accomplishing the regional goals of increasing the number of people who bike and the frequency of bicycle trips for all purposes. This will be accomplished by encouraging the development of Complete Streets⁵, improving safety for bicyclists, and increasing public awareness and support for bicycling in the County of Los Angeles. The recommendations include bicycle infrastructure improvements, bicycle-related programs, implementation strategies, and policy and design guidelines for the unincorporated communities of the County of Los Angeles and where the County owns property or has jurisdictional control, such as along flood control facilities.

⁴ A draft of the 2035 General Plan is available at: <http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan>.

⁵ Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street. – www.completestreets.org

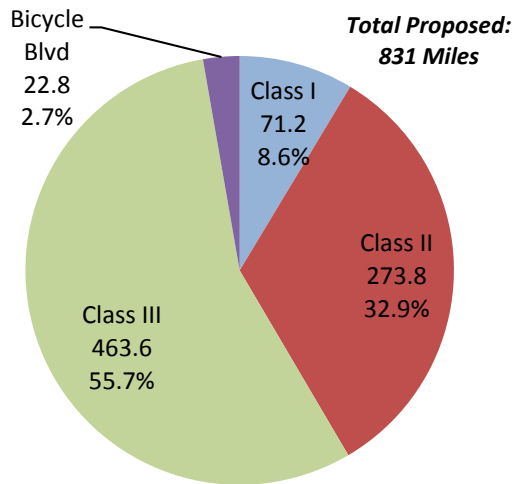


Figure 1-1: Total Miles of Proposed Bikeway Facilities

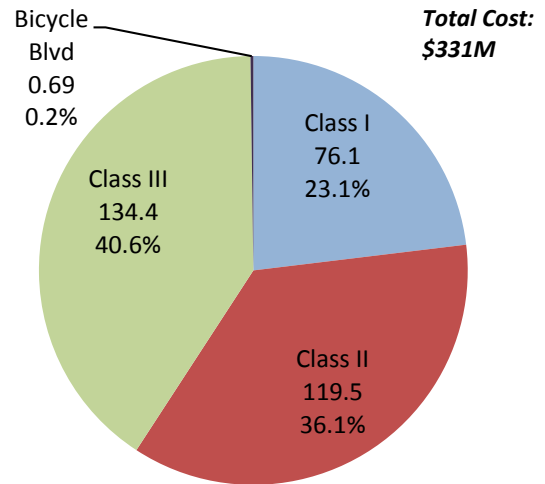


Figure 1-2: Estimated Cost of Proposed Bikeway Facilities

1.1 Setting

The unincorporated areas of the County of Los Angeles comprise 2,656.6 square miles of Los Angeles County's 4,083.2 square miles, equivalent to approximately 65% of the County's total land area. These unincorporated areas are climatically and ecologically diverse. The majority of unincorporated County land is located in the northern part of the county and includes expansive open space. The unincorporated areas of the County consist of 124 separate, non-contiguous land areas. These areas in the northern part of the County are covered by large amounts of sparsely populated land and include the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests, and the Mojave Desert. The unincorporated areas of the southern portion of the County consists of 58 communities, located among the other urban incorporated cities in the county, which are often referred to as the County's unincorporated urban islands. The County's southwestern boundary consists of 70 miles of Pacific Ocean coastline and encompasses two islands, Santa Catalina and San Clemente.

Representing about 11% of the County's total population, the unincorporated area population is projected to be approximately 1,188,000 people in 2010⁶.

Figure 1-3 displays Los Angeles County's location within the region as well as Planning Area boundaries.

⁶ 2008 SCAG Regional Plan, Table 2.5: Los Angeles County Population Projections

1.2 Purpose of the Bicycle Master Plan

The Plan is an update to the 1975 County Bikeway Plan. The Plan provides direction for improving mobility of bicyclists and encouraging more bicycle ridership within the County by expanding the existing bikeway network, connecting gaps, addressing constrained areas, providing for greater local and regional connectivity, and encouraging more residents to bicycle more often.

The Plan complies with Streets and Highways Code Section 891.2, making the County eligible for Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) funds. The BTA is an annual program that provides state funds for city and county projects that improve safety and convenience for bicycle commuters. Appendix A presents the County of Los Angeles Bicycle Master Plan BTA Checklist.

1.3 Benefits of Bicycling

A more bicycle-friendly County will contribute to resolving several complex and interrelated issues, including traffic congestion, air quality, climate change, public health, and livability. This Plan can affect all of these issues by guiding unincorporated areas toward bicycle friendly development, which collectively can have a profound effect on the existing and future livability in the County of Los Angeles.

1.3.1 Environmental/Climate Change Benefits

Replacing vehicular trips with bicycle trips has a measurable impact on reducing human-generated greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere that contribute to climate change. Fewer vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) translate into fewer mobile source pollutants released into the air, such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons. Providing transportation options that reduce VMT is an important component of decreasing GHG emissions and improving air quality. Appendix B presents a quantitative estimate of the air quality benefits associated with current bicycling rates, as well as future activity levels in each unincorporated planning area.

1.3.2 Public Health Benefits

Public health professionals have become increasingly aware that the impacts of automobiles on public health extend far beyond asthma and other respiratory conditions caused by air pollution. There is also a much deeper understanding of the connection between the lack of physical activity resulting from auto-oriented community designs and various health-related problems, such as obesity and other chronic diseases. Although diet and genetic predisposition contribute to these conditions, physical inactivity is now widely understood to play a significant role in the most common chronic diseases in the United States, including heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Creating bicycle-friendly communities is one of several effective ways to encourage active lifestyles, ideally resulting in a higher proportion of the County's residents achieving recommended activity levels.

1.3.3 Economic Benefits

Bicycling is economically advantageous to individuals and communities. According to some statistics, the annual operating costs for bicycle commuters are 1.5% to 3.5% of those for automobile commuters.⁷ Cost savings associated with bicycle travel expenses are also accompanied by potential savings in health care costs.

⁷ Active Transportation website: <http://www.activetransportation.org/costs.htm>

On a community scale, bicycle infrastructure projects are generally far less expensive than automobile-related infrastructure. Further, shifting a greater share of daily trips to bike trips reduces the impact on the region's transportation system, thus reducing the need for improvements and expansion projects.

1.3.4 Community/Quality of Life Benefits

Fostering conditions where bicycling is accepted and encouraged increases a community's livability from a number of different perspectives that are often difficult to measure but nevertheless important. The design, land use patterns, and transportation systems that comprise the built environment have a profound impact on quality of life issues. Studies have found that people living in communities with built environments that promote bicycling and walking tend to be more socially active, civically engaged, and are more likely to know their neighbors, whereas urban sprawl has been correlated with social and mental health problems, including stress.^{8,9} The aesthetic quality of a community improves when visual and noise pollution caused by automobiles is reduced and when green space is reserved for facilities that enable people of all ages to recreate and commute in pleasant settings.

1.3.5 Safety Benefits

Conflicts between bicyclists and motorists result from poor riding and/or driving behavior as well as insufficient or ineffective facility design. Encouraging development and redevelopment in which bicycle travel is fostered improves the overall safety of the roadway environment for all users. Well-designed bicycle facilities improve security for current cyclists and also encourage more people to bike, which in turn can further improve bicycling safety. Studies have shown that the frequency of bicycle collisions has an inverse relationship to bicycling rates, which means more bicyclists on the road equates to lower crash rates.¹⁰ Providing information and educational opportunities about safe and lawful interactions between bicyclists and other roadway users also improves safety.

1.4 Public Participation

Community involvement was vital to the development of the Plan. The Plan team held three rounds of public workshops to present to the public the Plan's findings and recommendations and to receive public feedback.

The **first round** of workshops introduced the Plan to the public and provided opportunities for public input. The Plan team performed extensive outreach to inform County residents of these workshops, including sending electronic mail blasts to stakeholders, including all 88 cities in Los Angeles County, posting notices on the project website, producing a meeting flyer in English and Spanish, creating and distributing a press release, and mailing comment cards to local bike shops, libraries, and parks and recreation facilities. There were a total of ten first round workshops held between February and March 2010. Meeting attendance was an average of ten people.

The **second round** of workshops, held in June 2010, served as a mid-project update for the public. These workshops focused on specific study corridors being evaluated by the project engineering team; education, encouragement and enforcement program recommendations; and project prioritization methodology. There

⁸ Frumkin, H. 2002. *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*. *Public Health Reports*, 117: 201–17.

⁹ Leyden, K. 2003. *Social Capital and the Built Environment: The Importance of Walkable Neighborhoods*. *American Journal of Public Health* 93: 1546–51.

¹⁰ Jacobsen, P. *Safety in Numbers: More Walkers and Bicyclists, Safer Walking and Bicycling*. *Injury Prevention*, 9: 205–209. 2003.

were a total of 11 public workshops during the second round, which also attracted an average of ten people per workshop. In addition to the outreach efforts used for the first round of workshops, the outreach for the second round of workshops included discussion of the Plan at Town Council meetings in unincorporated areas and at meetings held by Regional Planning for community specific plans, distribution of postcards at “Bike To Work Week” events throughout the County sponsored by LACMTA, and posting public service announcements on County websites, Bus Shelters in unincorporated areas, and on buses and shuttles that operate within or near unincorporated areas.

The **third round** of public workshops included a presentation of the draft Plan and provided opportunities for the public to provide input on the draft Plan. In addition to the outreach efforts used for the first and second round of workshops, the County retained the Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC) to assist with the outreach and to encourage attendance at the workshops. LACBC issued a press release to news media, radio and television; they worked with various entities to coordinate the posting of our workshop information on these entities’ websites; and sent electronic mail blasts to their members/subscribers. There were a total of 11 public workshops held between March and April 2011, with an average attendance of ten people per workshop.

The public comment period for the draft Plan was from March 31st to June 3rd, which was extended to target participants on the Los Angeles Bike to Work Week. The County again enlisted LACMTA’s assistance to distribute quarter page flyers at the Bike to Work Day pit stops, encouraging interested parties to comment on the draft Plan.

To improve connectivity between the Plan’s recommendations and the existing and planned bikeways in other jurisdictions, the County kept the cities throughout Los Angeles County aware of the status of the Plan via electronic mail blasts. The cities were invited to review and comment on the Plan, as well as to attend the public workshops. Although not every city responded, representatives from numerous cities attended the public workshops and submitted comments on the Plan.

1.5 Updates and Amendments to the Plan

This Plan provides direction for developing a comprehensive bicycle network, support facilities, and programs for the County. Although this is a 20 year planning document, the County recognizes that in order to achieve the desired results of increasing bicycling throughout Los Angeles County, the County needs to remain flexible to updating and amending the recommendations and proposals contained in this Plan.

The County will consult the community stakeholder group, the affected communities, and other stakeholders throughout implementation of this Plan. Over time, additional facilities may be identified for which bikeway facilities are desirable, or it may be desirable to change a bikeway designation from one classification to another based on community input and/or engineering considerations.

As indicated in Policy 1.5, the County will complete regular updates of the Bicycle Master Plan every five years. In addition, the Plan may be amended more frequently if necessary. Updates and amendments to this Plan would be subject to approval by the County Regional Planning Commission and the County Board of Supervisors. Class II bikeways shall be deemed consistent with the Plan wherever either a Class II or Class III Bike Route is mapped. Accordingly, no plan amendment shall be required when a mapped Class III Bike Route is replaced with a Class II Bike Route.

1.5.1 Requests for Additional Facilities and/or Modifications to the Proposed Bicycle Network

The County added a significant number of facilities as a result of the public comments received throughout development of the Plan. Since it was necessary to finalize the bicycle network before completing the Final Environmental Impact Report for this Plan, the County could not continue to consider the requests that were received after November 2011 for inclusion into the Plan. The County is maintaining a record of the additional requests received, and will consider them for inclusion in future updates and/or amendments.

1.5.2 Class III Bike Routes in Rural Communities

Prior to approval of the Plan, the County received feedback from bicycle advocacy groups requesting that the Class III bicycle routes proposed in rural areas of the County be changed to Class II bike lanes. They expressed concern for bicyclists sharing the road along the proposed Class III facilities, given the high speed of vehicular traffic exhibited on these rural roadways. During the public outreach phase of the Plan, other members of the public expressed a preference for Class III bike routes over Class II bike lanes on these rural roadways to better preserve the rural characteristics of their communities.

The Plan proposes several hundred miles of Class III bicycle routes along these rural roadways; however, the Plan also recognizes that most of these facilities require widening and/or shoulder improvements to provide adequate room for bicyclists to ride. The Design Toolbox in Appendix F provides additional design consideration to enhance bicyclist safety for these “Shoulder Bikeways”. If during the implementation phase of a project, the community supports changing the designation to a Class II bike lane, the County will evaluate the feasibility.

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