



# Memorandum

**TO:** TRANSPORTATION AND  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** James R. Helmer

**SUBJECT: BICYCLE MASTER PLAN  
UPDATE**

**DATE:** 08-06-08

Approved

Date 8/9/08

## RECOMMENDATION

Accept status report on updating the San Jose Bicycle Master Plan

## BACKGROUND

The City of San Jose has a bicycle master plan that includes the development of an integrated 300-mile bikeway system. The system includes 100 miles of off-street trails (referred to as Class 1 bikeways) and a 200-mile network of on-street bikeways. The on-street system includes a combination of bike lanes (Class 2 bikeways) and bike routes (Class 3 bikeways). Bike lanes are designated with pavement markings that provide a designated riding area for cyclists along City streets. Bike routes are designated with signs that advise bicyclists and vehicles to share the road.

The off-street bikeway trail system is part of the City's parks and recreation plan and is documented in the City's GreenPrint. The adopted on-street bikeways are documented in the City's General Plan as part of the Transportation Element (Map 15 and Appendix I). The City's bikeway network is currently 57% complete. Of the 300 mile currently planned bikeway system, 171 miles are complete. This includes 33 miles of paved trails and 138 miles of designated on-street facilities. The City maintains a map that documents the currently completed bikeway system. Copies are available on the City's website at [www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation/bikeped/-maps.asp](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation/bikeped/-maps.asp)

There is currently strong policy interest as well as an increased community interest in developing an enhanced transportation system that supports an increased level of bicycling in the San Jose community. This is reflected in San Jose's Green Vision strategy and the Sustainable City strategy in the City's General Plan. Key benefits of increased travel by bicycling are:

- **Enhance the environment** by reducing the impact of pollution and noise, and limiting greenhouse gases.
- **Reduce travel expenses** associated with fuel and driving costs, particularly for short trips
- **Improve health** and well being by promoting routine physical activity

- **Increase opportunities** for residents of all ages to participate socially and economically in the community, regardless of income or ability. Greater choices of travel modes also increase independence, especially among seniors and children.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Transportation and Environment Committee of current efforts to update the City's Bicycle Transportation Master Plan. The general goals of the update are to expand and enhance the City's bikeway network in order to improve bicycling safety and increase bicycle travel. The update also includes a review of best practice programs by other jurisdictions related to safety education, enforcement and encouragement.

The following analysis in this report provides further information on the scope and schedule for the Bicycle Master Plan Update as well as benchmarking data on the best cities for bicycling. Staff will be available at the Committee meeting to discuss this topic further with the Committee.

## ANALYSIS

### Expansion of Bikeway Network

Staff is currently planning an expansion of the City's bicycle transportation system. The current effort proposes to expand the system from the current 300 miles to approximately 450 miles. Staff has worked with the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to identify new on-street bikeway corridors that provide a Citywide network serving all neighborhoods and major destinations. It is noted that implementation of the expanded on-street bikeway network will likely require removal of vehicle lanes and/or on-street parking on many segments of roadways. Consideration of specific projects will include an environmental review and public outreach process. The new bikeway plan is proposed to support an update of the transportation element as part of the current comprehensive City General Plan update.

### VTA's Countywide Bicycle Plan Update and New Bicycle Expenditure Plan

The VTA has completed an update to the Bicycle Plan for Santa Clara County. The updated plan focuses on developing a 500-mile network of on-street Cross County Bicycle Corridors. The plan also addresses development of 17 off-street trail corridors and the use of the 62-mile expressway system. A new emphasis of the VTA plan, is the identification of barriers to bike access across freeways, railroad corridors and waterways. The plan identifies 232 roadway crossings that are inadequate for bicycle travel and suggests developing 113 new crossings as part of an Across Barrier Connection (ABC) program. In the upcoming year, the VTA will be developing an updated Bicycle Expenditure Plan (BEP) identifying priority projects for future regional transportation grants. Currently, San Jose's priorities for the BEP are related to funding development of the City's Creek Trail system.

### Best Cities for Bicycling

Significant information comparing cities on bicycle transportation programs has recently been made available. In 2007, a major benchmarking report on “Bicycling and Walking in the U.S.” was prepared by Thunderhead Alliance with funding provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Bikes Belong Coalition. Additionally, the League of American Bicyclists provides evaluation and awards for “Bicycle Friendly Communities” and the national Bicycling Magazine annually identifies the “best cities” for bicycling. Figure 1 includes information on the leading bicycling cities in the United States.

**Figure 1 – Benchmarking Data on Bicycling in Other Cities**

#### **A. Best Big Cities for Bicycling**

General Rank	City	Bicycling Magazine Rating (2008)	Bicycle Friendly Award (2008)	Bike to Work % (2005)
1	Portland, OR	Top 5 Best City	Platinum	3.5
2	Seattle, WA	Top 5 Best City	<i>Has not applied</i>	2.3
3	San Francisco, CA	Top 5 Best City	Gold	1.9
4	Chicago, IL	Top 5 Best City	Silver	0.7
5	Tucson, AZ		Gold	2.2
6	Minneapolis, MN	Most Improved	Silver	2.4
7	Austin, TX		Silver	1.3
8	Washington DC	Most Improved	Bronze	1.7
9	Denver, CO		Bronze	1.4
10	New York, NY	Most Improved	Bronze	0.5

#### **B. Other Notable Bicycling Cities**

Ref.	City	Bicycling Magazine Rating (2008)	Bicycle Friendly Award (2008)	Bike to Work % (2005)
A	Boulder, CO	Top 5 Best City	Gold	6.9
B	Davis, CA		Platinum	14.4
C	Madison, WI		Gold	3.2
D	Palo Alto, CA		Gold	6.0
E	Santa Cruz, CA		Silver	6.1
F	Santa Barbara, CA		Silver	4.9
G	San Luis Obispo, CA		Silver	1.9
H	Mountain View, CA		Bronze	3.4
I	Sacramento, CA		Bronze	1.8
J	Sunnyvale, CA		Bronze	0.7

#### **C. San Jose Status**

Ref.	City	Bicycling Magazine Rating (2008)	Bicycle Friendly Award (2008)	Bike to Work % (2005)
	San Jose, CA	Most Improved	Bronze	0.4

The most prestigious recognition program for bicycling is the “Bicycling Friendly Community” award by the League of American Bicyclists. Over 200 communities have applied for recognition, but only 84 have received a designation of Bronze (57), Silver (19), Gold (6), and Platinum (2).

### San Jose Improvement Opportunities

Based on San Jose's status in comparison with other cities in the United States, San Jose has a modest bike system and program and has received national recognition as a bike friendly community and for making improvements. Key positive elements of the San Jose current program are: 1) completion of a 171 miles (57%) of the bikeway network, 2) development goals for a 100-mile trail system, 3) comprehensive bike accommodations on transit, 4) Street Smarts public safety education programs, 5) a network of more than 1000 public bike parking spaces, and 6) location for major bicycling events like the Tour of California, the recent LiveStrong Challenge, and annual Bike to Work days.

Key areas for improvement in San Jose as compared to leading bicycling cities are focused on improving biking safety and use through 1) expanding bike network by closing gaps in system, 2) encouraging bike commuting to work, 3) increasing bike riding to school, 4) expanding bike parking, 5) encouraging bike travel to special events, and 6) enhanced education and enforcement programs for bicyclists and motorists.

In general, the elements of a comprehensive bike program include the "5 E's" of Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation.

### Master Plan Schedule and Implementation Strategy

The updated Bicycle Master Plan is proposed to be completed over the next 6 month, with staff continuing to work in coordination with the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Additionally, staff plans to develop a near-term implementation strategy that focuses on key investment priorities and program enhancements aimed to improve bicycling safety and increase bicycling use. Measures of performance toward goal attainment will be contained in the Departments annual business plan and the Green Vision Implementation Plan. Staff proposes to schedule the Bicycle Master Plan and Implementation Strategy for further review by the Transportation and Environment Committee in early 2009.



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For questions please contact John Brazil, Bike/Ped Program Coordinator, at 975-3206.