



Executive Summary

The Unincorporated Areas of Alameda County represent very diverse environments ranging from the populated communities of West County between the San Francisco Bay and East Bay Hills to the rural communities of East County. The opportunities to bicycle and walk in the Unincorporated Areas differ as much as the landscape. In the urbanized areas of Ashland, Cherryland, and San Lorenzo and the suburban communities of Castro Valley, El Portal Ridge, Fairview, and Hillcrest Knolls, residents have greater opportunities to bicycle and walk to school, work, shopping, and recreation. The shorter travel distances to get to these destinations and opportunities to connect to transit are more conducive for making daily trips by bicycling and or walking. The infrastructure to support bicycling and walking, such as bicycle lanes and sidewalks, are also more readily available in this part of the County. On the other hand, in the more rural areas of East County and Sunol, travel distances to destinations are longer. There is less infrastructure for use by bicyclists and walkers, and the opportunities to connect to transit are limited. However, there are great locations in East County and Sunol for recreational cycling and hiking which attract cyclists from all parts of Alameda County and the Bay Area.

The Alameda County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for Unincorporated Areas is guided by the County’s vision for safe, attractive, and convenient opportunities for bicycling and walking in the Unincorporated Areas. This includes bicycling and walking for trips to work, school, running errands, and recreating and facilities to accommodate all age groups regardless of their physical abilities.

The plan describes existing conditions for bicycling and walking, identifies needs for capital and program improvements to support these modes, and recommends improvement projects to enhance bicycling and walking in the Unincorporated Areas. High priority projects that meet the short-term needs of the communities are identified. Strategies for education, funding and implementation of the recommended projects and programs are also provided.

Purpose of the Master Plan

This plan was prepared to update the previous bicycle and pedestrian documents¹. It provides a vision for bicycling and walking in Alameda County as important alternative transportation modes. The plan also identifies implementable projects that will contribute to a more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly environment for the Unincorporated Areas.

¹ *Alameda County Bicycle Master Plan for Unincorporated Areas, 2007 and Alameda County Pedestrian Master Plan for Unincorporated Areas, 2006.*

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Much has happened since the last updates of the Bicycle Master Plan (2007) and the Pedestrian Master Plan (2006) for the Unincorporated Areas of Alameda County including increased concerns for our health and the impacts of our carbon footprint on the environment. The efforts most notable in affecting how we perceive transportation, and in particular bicycling and walking, are the Alameda County Unincorporated Areas Community Climate Action Plan, the Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan for Unincorporated Alameda County, and the Complete Streets Act.

Community Climate Action Plan: In June 2011, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors approved the Alameda County Unincorporated Areas Community Climate Action Plan (CAP). The goal of the CAP is to reduce countywide greenhouse gas emissions 15% by the year 2020. Modifying transportation choices through bicycle infrastructure and transit improvements are key measure to meet the goals of the CAP.

Complete Streets Act: Complete Streets is a national movement to ensure that roadways are consistently designed and operated with all users in mind including bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. In September 2008, the Complete Streets Act was signed into law in California that requires cities and counties to account for the needs of all roadway users when updating local general plans that address roadways and traffic flows. At the same time, Caltrans revised Deputy Directive 64, an internal policy document that embraces Complete Streets as the policy covering all phases of state highway projects, from planning and construction to maintenance and repair.

ADA Transition Plan: The Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan for Unincorporated Alameda County, prepared in 2008, addresses the barriers and improvements needed to ensure disabled access within the public rights-of-way. The Transition Plan further supports the concept of Complete Streets in making roadways usable for all.

In response to these and other concerns, this new plan provides:

- An update of the current plans to reflect current bicyclist and pedestrian demands for healthy exercise, accessibility for all users, and non-polluting transportation in one easy to use resource;
- A vision of bicycling and walking in Alameda County to elevate the importance of alternative transportation modes to connect schools, parks, neighborhoods and commercial districts as part of the planning and development process;
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects for a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly environment for all the communities in unincorporated Alameda County; and
- A competitive edge for the County to secure funding. Many grant providers prefer to award monies to local jurisdictions that have a well-developed process for selecting their projects. For example, the Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) requires that a jurisdiction have a current (within five years) Bicycle Transportation Plan in place that meets Caltrans' checklist of requirements. This checklist can be found in **Appendix A**.

Connecting Attractors and Generators

The underlying purpose of the bicycle and pedestrian networks developed in this plan is to help people travel by alternative transportation modes. There are many destinations that we travel to on an occasional or daily basis. Typically, these trips are generated from residential areas with destinations for work, school, to run errands, or visit with friends. Trip attractors are the places that we go to or, in other words, the destination of our trip. The bicycle and pedestrian networks are designed to connect the trip generators and attractors.

There are numerous attractors of bicycle and pedestrian traffic within the study area. These include major employment centers, major retail centers, colleges, schools, transit stations, libraries, and recreational facilities. In addition, residents and visitors will want to bicycle and walk to attractors in adjacent jurisdictions such as California State University - East Bay, the Alameda County Offices, Chabot College, Southland Mall, and the many regional parks located in this part of Alameda County. Even though some of these destinations are outside the Unincorporated Areas, it is important that bicycle and pedestrian access is available.

Goals and Policies

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan contains goals and policies for developing and implementing a bikeway system and pedestrian improvements that meet the County's vision for safe, attractive, and convenient opportunities for bicycling and walking for all types of trips and user groups. This includes trips for work, school, running errands, and recreation accommodating adults, children, seniors, disabled community, and transit users. Goals and policies are defined as the following:

- Goals are broad expressions of long-term vision that guide the plan and express the desired direction of bicycle and pedestrian planning.
- Policies are more specific statements of how to accomplish the vision and identify specific targets to measure the attainment of a specific goal.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian policies reflect the current thinking about the role of bicycling and walking in our communities. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for Unincorporated Areas seeks to elevate the importance of bicycling and walking in Alameda County. These goals reflect the desire of these communities to move forward to improve the bicycling and walking environment.

The policies show that bicycling and walking should be encouraged due to their positive impacts on the environment, physical and mental fitness, and neighborhood cohesion.

Special attention was given to access to schools and transit as well as access for seniors and the disabled because students, senior citizens, disabled citizens and transit passengers tend to rely more on walking for transportation purposes. However, improvements to the pedestrian environment benefit all people regardless of their primary mode of travel because everyone is a pedestrian for at least a portion of their journeys. The goals include:

- GOAL 1: Improve bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation for all users as a means to meet the goals of the Alameda County Unincorporated Areas Climate Action Plan²**
- GOAL 2: Create and maintain a comprehensive system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the local and sub-regional transportation network in order to establish a balanced multi-modal transportation system.**
- GOAL 3: Maximize the use of public and private resources for implementing bicycle and pedestrian improvements.**

² The Climate Action Plan (CAP) outlines a course of action to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions generated within the Unincorporated Areas of Alameda County. The CAP recognizes that transforming neighborhoods into places that provide safe and healthy environments where residents can meet their trip needs by foot, bicycle, and public transit is an important component in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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GOAL 4: Provide a safer bicycling and walking environment

GOAL 5: Promote land uses and urban design that support a pleasant environment for bicycling and walking

GOAL 6: Support agency coordination for the improvement of bicycle and pedestrian access

GOAL 7: Encourage bicycling and walking through education and outreach

Bicycle Network

Although the Unincorporated Areas differ greatly in demographics, land use density, and topography, there is a great potential for bicycling trips because of the favorable climate we enjoy most of the year, close proximity to many destinations in and around much of the Unincorporated Areas, the many parks and rural areas that offer great recreational cycling, and the availability of transit to extend the bicycle trip length.

Bicycle trip purposes can generally be broken down into utilitarian or recreational trips. The biggest difference between these user groups is that while recreational riders may be more interested in the routes leading to parks or other areas of interest, utilitarian riders are looking for the shortest and safest route between two points. Major concerns for all cyclists is sharing the roads with high volume, high speed traffic; narrow travel lanes on many roadways; lack of secure bicycle parking; and poor roadway maintenance.

The recommended bikeway network was developed to:

- Meet the needs of a variety of bicyclist types from experienced and casual adult riders to child cyclists;
- Provide a balance of major and minor roadways that would serve key destinations while providing flexibility in route selection for the variety of bicyclist skill levels; and
- Provide connectivity to key destinations.

The recommended bikeway network is composed of the three basic facility types as described in the Caltrans *Highway Design Manual* including:

- Class I bike paths on a completely separated right-of-way, generally shared with pedestrians.
- Class II bike lanes with a striped lane for one-way bicycle travel on the roadway.
- Class III bike routes which provides for shared use with pedestrians and motor vehicles on the roadway. To meet the specific needs of the Unincorporated Areas, additional Class III designations were designed:
 - Class IIIA roadway for roadways with low traffic volumes and slow traffic.
 - Class IIIB bike routes with wide curb lanes for roadways with high traffic volumes where width is not available for bike lanes.
 - Class IIIC bike routes for rural roadways providing wide shoulders for bicycle use.

The recommended bikeway network includes 250 miles of facility. The bikeways are distributed throughout the Unincorporated Areas and provide connections to local destinations and adjacent cities as well as neighboring counties. The breakdown of the bikeway network by facility type is shown in

Table ES-1. In addition to the bikeway network, recommendations are made for a bicycle rack program, bicycle parking standards/ordinance, signage and wayfinding program, and bikeway route mapping.

Bikeway Classification	Existing	Proposed	Total
Class I Bike Path	3.3	5.3	8.6
Class II Bike Lane	34.2	35.1	69.8
Class IIIA Rideway	0	37.4	36.9
Class IIIB Wide Curb Lane/Shoulder	4.3	5.0	5.0
Class IIIC Rural Route	0.0	129.8	129.8
Total	41.8	212.6	250.1

Note: The discrepancy in total mileage for Class IIIB is due to recommendation to convert existing Class IIIB to Class 2.

Pedestrian Network

A pedestrian network provides safe and convenient access for all users whether they walk or roll in a wheelchair, have visual impairments, or need a little extra time to cross the street. When designing the pedestrian network, the context of the entire roadway needs to be considered. Facilities must meet the needs of pedestrians of all mobility abilities as well as accommodate other roadway users such as motorists, bicyclists, and transit vehicles. Development of the pedestrian network considered sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps as well as pedestrian amenities such as street trees, benches, and buffer zones separating sidewalks from traffic and buildings.

As with bicycling conditions, the pedestrian environment differed greatly within the diversity of the Unincorporated Areas. The majority of streets in the Unincorporated Areas lacked continuous sidewalks; existing sidewalks were often in need of repair. As would be expected, sidewalks were more commonly found within urban and suburban development. Curb ramps often did not exist and crossing times for many of the multi-lane major arterial was not adequate for many pedestrians.

Recommended pedestrian improvements included:

- Projects recommended in the Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan for Public Right-of-Way in Unincorporated Alameda County.
- Streetscape improvement projects for major arterials that include widened sidewalks, curb extensions, bus stop improvements, landscaping, lighting and street furniture.
- Safe Routes to School projects for schools throughout the Unincorporated Areas.
- Sidewalk improvement and construction projects.
- Traffic calming projects to slow traffic speeds and reduce pedestrian crossing distances.
- Construction of multi-use trails that provide recreational opportunities as well as connections to schools and employment.
- Widened shoulders to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians on rural roads.

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Safety and Education

Existing safety conditions for bicycling and walking in the Unincorporated Areas includes an evaluation of recent collision activity and current safety and education programs available to residents. Additional programs are recommended to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. It should be noted that while improving safety is a high priority in Alameda County, bicycling and walking involve an inherent risk that no improvements can completely eliminate. It is the responsibility of all road users to follow the rules of the road and to treat each other with respect to increase road safety.

Bicycle Collisions

In the three-year period between 2007 and 2009, there have been 89 reported collisions involving bicycles in the Unincorporated Areas. This is an average of 30 incidents per year. This is a decrease from the 2007 Bicycle Plan with an annual average of 37 reported collisions. The 1999 Bicycle Plan showed an annual average of 50 reported collisions. While this overall is good news, it is unclear whether this decrease is due to increased safety measures, reduced driving due to the recession, reduced number of collisions reported to the police, or other factors.

Pedestrian Collisions³

In the three-year period between 2007 and 2009, there have been 72 reported collisions involving pedestrians in the Unincorporated Areas. This is an average of 24 incidents per year. This is a decrease from the 2006 Pedestrian Plan which reported an annual average of 42 pedestrian-involved collisions per year.



Safety and Education Programs

The safe interaction between pedestrian, bicyclists, and motorists hinges on a shared understanding of the basic rules and responsibilities for travel on public roads. Communities and schools can play a lead role in promoting this understanding through educational programs and other initiatives that encourage safe, responsible behavior by all road users. The following bicycle and pedestrian safety and education programs are currently available in the Unincorporated Areas:

- Bike to Work Day
- Bicycle Safety Classes
- Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors (WN4S)
- Safe Routes to Transit
- School Crossing Guard Program
- Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program
- Alameda County Share the Road Program
- Safe Routes to School Program



³ Photos in upper right corner and above middle courtesy of www.pedbikeimages.org/Mike Cynecki

Implementation

The implementation plan for bicycle and pedestrian improvements used a series of criteria to prioritize the recommended projects. The criteria differed somewhat for bicycles and pedestrians based upon the unique needs and requirements of each mode. The criteria included:

Bicycle Prioritization Criteria

1. Connection to Activity Centers
2. Safety
3. Connectivity
4. Project Support

Pedestrian Prioritization Criteria

1. Connection to Activity Centers
2. Safety
3. Accessibility
4. Project Support

Based upon the resulting priority score, each project was further classified with a High, Medium, and Low priority rating. These ratings are defined as:

- **High Priority:** Projects that have the highest priority for implementation and targeted for completion within five years.
- **Medium Priority:** Projects that have moderate priority for implementation and targeted for completion within ten years.
- **Low Priority:** Projects that have the lowest relative priority and targeted for completion within 10 to 15 years.

High Priority bicycle projects resulted in two separate lists: 1) Projects that scored highest in the priority ranking; and 2) 'Signage Only' projects that could be implemented for relatively little investment in resources. The 'Signage Only' projects were recognized as a cost-effective opportunity to implement many miles of bikeway with the limited resources available.

A total of 22 High Priority bicycle projects and 47 'Signage Only' bicycle projects were identified. A total of 30 High Priority pedestrian projects were selected.

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