



SOLANO COUNTYWIDE BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Future of Cycling | Active Travel | 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adopted by the STA Board on December 14, 2011*

*Approved with the addition of comments submitted by the Technical Advisory Committee.
These comments will be amended into this document by December 23, 2011

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The Solano Countywide Bicycle Plan
also is posted on
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Preface

A New Era of Transportation

A key factor in bicycle and pedestrian-friendly communities throughout the country and world is the mutual respect between motorists and people on bicycle or foot. While Solano County prides itself on having smaller sized livable communities, there are many opportunities to improve the education and understanding between all users of the road. Public comments that were received through the development of this Plan noted the lack of respect between motorists and bicyclists. A common concern noted in one public forum was how few people stop their cars at crosswalks to allow people—even children—to cross. Many bicyclists told stories of aggression toward them from motorists. Conversely, it is not uncommon to see bicyclists running stop signs or riding two or three abreast on narrow roads, which are frustrating activities for motorists.

At times, planning and street design can play a prominent role in the opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely travel from place to place within their communities of residence or as guests. Complete Streets Policies designed to provide direction to Planning and Public Works departments throughout California and the Northern California Region have been developed in recent years. These policies have been an essential addition to the stewardship of accommodating bicycle travel. Complete Streets policies provide required guidelines for planning and implementation of street design with a specialized emphasis on bicycle and pedestrian transportation, which can be referenced in Chapter 4.

This Plan calls for a new era of mutual awareness and understanding between all people using public right-of-ways. It calls on bicyclists and pedestrians to police themselves and spread the word on the importance of obeying the rules-of-the-road. For example, in communities such as the City of Davis in neighboring Yolo County, bicyclists are widely accepted as having a right to use the roadways, while at the same time bicyclists adhere to established rules of the road as well. The Plan identifies several strategies to educate the general public on the rights of bicyclists and on the importance of sharing the road and deferring to bicyclists and pedestrians when needed. With education of the public as well as the improved requirements for planning and design, the Plan aims to improve the link between this level of respect and the overall quality of life in Solano County for everyone.



Introduction

Purpose

The Solano Countywide Bicycle Plan (hereafter referred to as “Bicycle Plan”) is a planning tool for the countywide bikeway network in Solano County. It serves as a guide to planning and engineering professionals in Solano County’s jurisdictions. It also serves as a platform that interested members of the public can utilize to engage their city’s planning and public works staff for the betterment of the community in which they live.

The main purpose of the Solano Countywide Bicycle Plan is to encourage the development of a unified bicycle system throughout Solano County. The system consists of the physical bikeway routes, wayfinding signage, and associated amenities such as bicycle lockers, showers, etc. The Plan focuses on a bikeway network that will provide origin and destination connections in Solano County as well as to surrounding counties. Additionally, it contains policies that are designed to support and encourage bicycle transportation; design standards for use in implementation efforts; and promotional strategies. This Plan strives to identify regional bikeway facilities that are consistent with the local facilities planned in each of the STA’s member agency’s jurisdiction, and regional facilities in neighboring counties.

The Solano Countywide Bicycle Plan is a component of the Solano Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), which has a long-range overall planning horizon

to the year 2035. Projects shown on the Proposed System map Figure 3-5B will be given priority for various state and federal funding sources programmed through the Solano Transportation Authority (STA). Each member jurisdiction of the STA is encouraged to incorporate the Plan’s recommendations into their local planning policies and road standards. The STA, with the Plan as the basis, will assist local agencies seek various funding sources as suggested in the Plan to implement the projects at the local level. It is expected that through individual and combined efforts; many of the proposed projects contained within, or major portions of them, will be implemented over time.

Bicycle Plan Vision Statement:

Complete and maintain a countywide bikeway network that will service the transportation needs of bicyclists in Solano County.

Bicycle Plan Purpose Statement:

“To facilitate and provide safe and efficient bicycle travelling as an everyday means of transportation in Solano County”



History

The first Solano Countywide Bicycle Plan was adopted in 1995 and has been used successfully to develop regional bikeway segments and secure regional, state, and federal funding. The 1999 South County Bicycle Plan Update incorporated the 1988 Vallejo Trails Master Plan and the 1999 City of Benicia General Plan Update. The South County Bicycle Plan focused on bicycle issues in southern Solano County. In the 2004 Update, the South County Bicycle Plan was incorporated as part of one countywide document. This 2012 Countywide Bicycle Plan replaces all prior Countywide Bicycle Plan Updates. This latest Plan is expanded to incorporate the many changes that have occurred since the 2004 Update, the South County Bicycle Plan, and the 1998 Solano Travel Safety Plan.



The Bicycle Advisory Committee meets regularly over the year to assist in the bicycle planning process in Solano County.

Problem Statement

Safety, access, quality of life, and effective implementation are imperative elements for a complete transportation system and Solano County's success as a bicycle-friendly county.

Safety

Safety is the number one concern of citizens, whether they are avid or casual recreational cyclists or bicycle commuters. A consistent bicycle network with either bike lanes or wider curb lanes and signing is generally lacking in the county. In some instances design decisions may have been made to increase vehicular traffic and/or parking capacity and speeds at the expense of bicyclists and pedestrians. The Plan intends to help reduce the accident and fatality rate for bicyclists through design standards and guidelines, education, and enforcement.

Access

Access for bicyclists to recreation, school, shopping, work, and other destinations is hampered in some instances by the long distances between major destinations. In others, the barriers posed by the numerous highway corridors in the county (such as SR 12, SR 37, I-80, I-505, I-780, and I-680) present bicyclists with problems, as facilities are fragmented by numerous and difficult interchange crossings. Facilities and services are a part of accessibility, demand, and increased use of bicycles as a means of travel around the county. With a goal of increasing bicycling, the bicycle commute share would increase from 1,187 adult commuters (2000 U.S.



Solano Countywide Bicycle Transportation Plan

census)—about one percent mode share—to 2,375 adult commuters. Factoring in the potential for children bicycling to school, bicycle-to-transit trips, and other utilitarian trips, Solano County has the potential to increase the bicycle mode share to close to four percent by 2030, which is above the national average.

Quality of Life

This plan urges the STA and its member jurisdictions to take measurable steps toward the goal of improving every citizen's quality of life, improving public health, creating a more sustainable environment, reducing traffic congestion, vehicle exhaust emissions, noise, and energy consumption. The importance of developing a bicycle system that is safe, attractive and inviting is a key element in preserving Solano County as a place where people want to live, work, and visit. This is increasingly important as Solano County considers higher density in existing areas and builds housing, businesses, and roads in the future. The attractiveness of the environment not only invites bicyclists to explore Solano County's beautiful rural scenery, hills, and waterways, but more importantly, a beautiful environment helps to improve everyone's positive feelings about the quality of life in Solano County.

Effective Implementation

Education, enforcement, engineering, and funding are the basic components of an effective implementation program for this Bicycle Plan. Education must be targeted towards the bicyclists as well as to the motorist regarding the rights and responsibilities of the bicyclist and automobile driver. Comprehensive enforcement of existing traffic and parking laws, coupled with the implementation of sound design and engineering principles for bike corridors is also critical. This plan also encourages systematic review by STA member agency staff and the BAC of all new development projects, including public works efforts to assure compliance with planning and building codes and the principles of this Bicycle Plan. Finally, this plan proposes an aggressive strategy for obtaining grants and competing for other funding sources in order to realize the physical improvements identified as the highest priorities. This Plan intends to equip the STA and its members to successfully compete for state and federal funding, by meeting the requirements of the California Bicycle Transportation Act, Completes Streets Policies (see chapter 4), the Federal Transportation Bill funding, and future state and federal funding sources.



Local Adoption Procedure

Caltrans has not developed a standard policy about how County Bike Plans can be used by local jurisdictions to meet Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) requirements. However, the Caltrans Bicycle Facilities Unit (BFU) has been fairly consistent in their approach to this matter. There are three (3) options for a local agency (including a county, town, or city) to qualify for BTA funding:

1. Agency can complete own local plan
2. Use the County Plan provided to each agency on CD to create a local Bicycle Master Plan
3. Adopt the County Plan with specific caveats and additional information to make it relevant to that community (Caltrans supports this position as it relates to using County Plans for cities and towns)

How to Use the Plan

This plan is a guide to anyone interested in improving the local transportation and air quality standards in their community. It is important to note that each city and the County can adopt this Plan and meet the state and federal requirements for grant funding sources to develop the projects contained within. However, each jurisdiction can also develop and approve its own bicycle plan, or use some portion of this Plan to do so. This Plan has incorporated existing local plans and priorities as part of its recommendations to eliminate that need. Local projects not specifically included in this Plan can be adopted and funded by each community as well.

For STA Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) and members of the public, it is essential to note that each person can contact their local bicycle planning staff to make comments or provide suggestions. Please contact STA staff with comments for the current contact information for the local bikeway facilities coordinator in your city.



Major Recommendations of the Countywide Bicycle Transportation Plan Update

The Countywide Bicycle Transportation Plan recommends the completion of a comprehensive bikeway network and support facilities, along with new educational and promotional programs to improve conditions for bicyclists in Solano County. The primary countywide system calls for the implementation of approximately 145 miles of bikeways connecting all of the member agencies at an estimated cost of approximately \$80 million over the 25-year life of the plan. The priority projects identified for implementation in the short-term (next five years) include:

- Jepson Parkway Bikeway Phase I – planned cross-county route from SR 12 in Suisun City north to Leisure Town Road in Vacaville
- Dixon West B Street Bicycle-Pedestrian Undercrossing – a critical safety improvement and multi-modal connection to a future train station
- Vacaville-Dixon Bicycle Route (Hawkins Road)
- Vacaville Ulatis Creek Bicycle Facilities
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage - Countywide Plan

Overview of Plan Contents

The Solano Countywide Bicycle Plan highlights the priority projects and process to develop the County's network for the seven cities and the County (Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville, Vallejo, and Solano County).

Chapter 1 – Existing Conditions

Chapter 1 is a review of the physical, social, economic, and environmental benefits of bicycling, and the opportunities presented by current federal and state policies and funding programs.

Chapter 2 – Purpose Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Included in this Chapter are the STA's goals and objectives for the Countywide Bicycle Plan and the planning process to meet these goals.

Chapter 3 – Proposed Countywide Bikeway System

Chapter 3 lists the Countywide Priority Bikeway Projects that are relevant to each jurisdiction in Solano County. The chapter provides a financially constrained list of priority projects that can be funded and constructed within the next 5-10 years as well as a list of longer-term projects that will take beyond 10 years to implement.



Chapter 4 – Policies and Programs

This Chapter provides references for regional policies such as Complete Streets and safety programs such as Safe Routes to School (SR2S) and Safe Routes to Transit (SR2T).

Chapter 5 – Cost Analysis and Implementation Strategy

This Chapter outlines the estimated costs for the projects identified in the plan and recommendations for efficient implementation of these projects. It also includes federal, state, and local sources for bikeway facilities funding. A matrix summarizing funding sources is provided at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 6 – Data Collection

This chapter provides an overview of sample methodology for bicycle counts as well as commuter transportation data.

Chapter 7 – Performance Measures and Evaluation

Chapter 7 is new to the Countywide Bicycle Plan and explains recommended measures for the progress of the implementation of the Countywide Bikeway Network.