



CHAPTER 6: TRAILS NETWORK AND WATER CROSSINGS

INTRODUCTION

As an island community with an extensive waterfront and lagoons, Alameda has a large, invaluable and growing network of trails and walkways for people to get around town and to recreate using active transportation. The Plan's proposed new trails and upgrades to existing trails will provide stronger connections to local and regional destinations, including schools and parks. This Trails Vision Network will:

- » Complete the Cross Alameda Trail and Bay Trail;
- » Install new trails to complete gaps in existing networks;
- » Maintain and upgrade existing trails to be more comfortable and usable; and
- » Improve trail crossings of roadways to make them safer.

Being an island community also requires people walking and biking to cross waterways to leave the island, or traverse between the main island and Bay Farm. This Plan will:

- » Upgrade existing bridges and making them easier to access, safer and more comfortable to use
- » Pursue new crossing options in the west end of the island; and
- » Explore the feasibility of a second bicycle/pedestrian bridge between the main island and Bay Farm.

TRAILS NETWORK

Alameda's extensive trail system includes trails where people walking and bicycling share the trail (called "shared use paths"), parallel but separate walking and bicycling paths, and narrow pedestrian walkways which typically serve as a connector between streets or provide access to the waterfront. These trails can be paved or unpaved, or even made of wood, and sometimes include short bridge connectors.

This Plan proposes 14 miles of new or upgraded trails, almost all of which will improve access to and along the waterfront. The Trails and Water Crossings Vision Network is shown in Figure 7.

Table 8. Existing and Proposed Trail Mileage

Type of Facility	Existing Mileage	Proposed Mileage	Total Mileage
Shared use path (or separate bicycle and walking paths)	26	14	40
Off-street Walkway (paved)	8	0	8
Off-street Walkway (unpaved)	4	0	4
Total	38	14	52

For the list of proposed trail segments and more information about them, see *Appendix A. Active Transportation Project Prioritization*.

MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADES

Alameda's existing trail network is in need of maintenance and upgrades. Many of Alameda's trails are in poor condition due to their age, tree root uplift and a lack of regular maintenance. In addition to this, many of the City's shared use trails are narrow and not built to meet current levels of demand. A safe trail system also requires safe and consistent crossing treatments at roadways. As part of this Plan, the City conducted a limited inventory of existing trail conditions which will serve as the starting point for developing a trail maintenance and upgrade project to improve the safety and comfort of Alameda's existing trails.

BAY TRAIL AND CROSS ALAMEDA TRAIL

Alameda has two major trail systems – the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Cross Alameda Trail – which are made up of a variety of low-stress walking and bicycling facility types, including trails, sidewalks and separated bike lanes.

The Bay Trail is a regional asset that, when complete, will connect cities around the Bay Area. In Alameda, approximately 17 miles of the Bay Trail route are existing, with another 12 miles needed to complete the portion of the Bay Trail planned for Alameda, as shown in Figure 8. This Plan recommends a significant re-routing of the current adopted Bay Trail route in Alameda to match recent waterfront development opportunities and a new regional focus on the trail being as close to the waterfront as possible, even if that means the facility may not be feasible for many years. In situations where shared use paths are not deemed feasible even in the long-term, on-street bikeways are proposed with adjacent sidewalks.

The Cross Alameda Trail, first conceived in 1991, is a continuous, low-stress four-mile corridor between the Seaplane Ferry Terminal to the west and the Miller-Sweeny Bridge to the east. Over 70% of this trail is now complete, with full completion expected within three or four years. The trail significantly improves east-west connectivity throughout the city and provides sustainable connections to transit, schools and commercial areas.



Cross Alameda Trail along West Atlantic Avenue

WATER CROSSINGS

Of Alameda's five bridges and two estuary tubes, only one facility, the Bay Farm Island Bicycle Bridge, includes adequate space for bicycling and walking separated from vehicles. To encourage sustainable travel on and off the island for work, school, transit, entertainment or exercise, more options are needed to cross the estuary safely and comfortably by bike and foot.

CREATE NEW WEST END CROSSINGS

West of Park Street, the only estuary crossing option for walking or biking between Alameda and Oakland is along the two-way, three-foot pathway in the Posey Tube. Few people, understandably, use this option. Several projects are being planned that would bridge this gap in the west end, benefiting not just Alameda, but the region.

- » The **Oakland-Alameda Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge**, first recommended in a 2009 study, has been estimated to serve 35,000-42,000 trips per week⁷, by creating a comfortable, safe and enjoyable connection between Alameda, Jack London Square, Downtown Oakland, BART and Amtrak. While this regional long-term project will ultimately require leadership and resources from county, regional and state agencies, in 2022 the City is leading a \$1.55 million planning study to move the project forward by further defining bridge alignment and landing options.
- » A **water shuttle** between Alameda and Oakland is the near-term option for a sustainable estuary crossing in the west end. A first step will be a pilot water shuttle service, partially funded with private funds.
- » The **Webster Tube Path**, while not the long-term crossing solution, will be a new four-foot path, similar to the Posey Tube path, in the Webster Tube. The project is led by Caltrans as part of a larger set of improvements connecting the Posey Tube to Interstate 880, called the Oakland Alameda Access Project, and is expected to be completed in 2027.



Rendering of the proposed Oakland-Alameda Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge

⁷ Estuary Crossing Study: Detailed feasibility and travel demand analysis. January 25, 2021. Found here: www.alamedaca.gov/bridge.

UPGRADE AND EXPAND EAST END CROSSINGS

- » The **Miller-Sweeney Bridge**, one of the three existing bridges to Oakland, is prioritized for high-quality, low-stress bicycling and walking facilities, either through a retrofit or replacement of the bridge, or a re-use of the Fruitvale Railroad bridge corridor. The bridge connects Alameda to the Fruitvale BART station.
- » The **Park Street and High Street Bridges** are both proposed to have low-stress biking and walking facilities, such as shared use paths. Of these two bridges, the Park Street Bridge is a higher priority, given its direct connection to Downtown Oakland.
- » The **Bay Farm Island Bicycle Bridge** is a key link between the main island and Bay Farm Island and is heavily used by middle and high school students. Trail upgrades and safety enhancements are needed on the access routes on either side of the bridge.
- » The **Wooden Bridge**, running underneath the Bay Farm Island auto bridge, connects the Bicycle Bridge to the Bay Farm Island community. While it will ultimately be replaced as part of the Bay Farm Island Flood Protection and Coastal Resilience project, maintenance of the wooden surface is needed in the near term.
- » The **Shoreline to Seaview Bridge**, newly proposed in the 2021 General Plan, will connect the base of Park Street to Bay Farm Island near Seaview Parkway, providing a more direct route between the centers of Bay Farm Island and the main island. A first step will be to study the feasibility of this new concept.



Figure 7. Trails and Water Crossings Vision Network



Figure 8. Bay Trail Route