

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alameda community's need for expanded and improved transportation options, the need to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the City's roadways, and the need to address climate change all require that the City of Alameda continue its ongoing efforts to build and maintain safe and connected bicycle and pedestrian networks. This Active Transportation Plan (Plan) describes the specific infrastructure improvements and programs to be accomplished by 2030 to make Alameda a city where people of all ages, abilities, income levels and backgrounds can safely, conveniently and comfortably walk, bike and roll (using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and micro-mobility devices) to their destinations and to transit. In so doing, the Plan is designed to improve public health and safety, reduce automobile congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, and enhance the quality of life in Alameda.

The Plan builds upon and updates the City's 2009 Pedestrian Plan and 2010 Bicycle Plan to include the most current best practices for increasing safety and supporting active transportation. The Plan also addresses current local needs as articulated by many diverse voices in the community that participated throughout the preparation of the Plan over the course of several years and many in-person and virtual meetings. The Plan was also shaped by the valuable input of a special Community Advisory Group, several advisory boards and the City's Transportation Commission.

Active transportation refers to all active modes of transportation including walking and bicycling, as well as using wheelchairs and mobility scooters, push and electric scooters, electric bikes, skateboards and new and ever-evolving shared mobility options, like bike share.

Alameda's Active Transportation Plan is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction provides an overview of the adopted City policies and community engagement that provide the foundation for this plan.

Chapter 2: Vision and Goals introduces a vision for the future of active transportation in Alameda and five planning goals for active transportation.

Chapter 3: Existing Conditions provides an overview of existing facilities, community perceptions and opportunities for improvement.

Chapter 4: Pedestrian Design Strategy describes where, how and what types of pedestrian infrastructure improvements are selected and used.

Chapter 5: Bicycle Network describes a broad Bicycle Vision Network necessary to achieve Plan vision and goals.

Chapter 6: Trails Network and Water Crossings describes improvements necessary to support high-quality bicycle and pedestrian access to and from Oakland and access to and along the waterfront.

Chapter 7: Programs describes 31 programs needed over the next eight years to support and encourage safe and comfortable walking and biking.

Chapter 8: 2030 Infrastructure Plan outlines 30 specific capital improvement projects needed over the next eight years to support meeting the vision and goals of this and other city plans. The chapter also describes the performance metrics necessary to track and measure effectiveness and includes the plan for the future of the Slow Streets program, started during the pandemic.

Seven appendices provide supporting data for the improvements and programs outlined in the Plan.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

Alameda is a thriving, family-friendly community with an excellent physical setting and waterfront environment to support walking, rolling and bicycling as a preferred mode of transportation for many of the daily trips that people take to work, school, the store, local businesses districts and to our recreational and waterfront public amenities. With its human-scale, relatively small size (10 square miles), tree-lined streets, flat topography, conveniently located shopping districts, and mostly 25 mile per hour speed limits, Alameda is the ideal community for bicycling and walking.

In part because of all these physical advantages and benefits, 63% of all trips in Alameda are three miles or less in distance (easy on a bike). Thirty-one percent (31%) of all trips are less than a mile in distance (an easy walk for most).

Despite these advantages and short distance trips, most people are driving. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of all trips are made in a car. Only 2% of all trips are made on a bicycle and only 3% of all trips are made on foot.

Alameda's flat topography and island geography also makes Alameda extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As documented in the City of Alameda 2019 Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, the threat of sea level rise in Alameda is existential, and Alameda must take action to address these threats. Approximately 70% of greenhouse gas emissions generated in Alameda come from a reliance on the automobile for daily trips.¹

Despite Alameda's 25-mile-per-hour speed limits and "small town" character, many Alamedans don't feel safe walking and bicycling. Over half of Alameda residents, according to a 2019 survey², stated that they would drive less and walk or ride a bicycle more if they felt safer doing so. Statistics show that over the last 10 years (2012-2021), on average approximately seven people were killed or severely injured each year while walking or biking in Alameda.

The purpose of this Active Transportation Plan is to change these statistics. This Plan is designed to make those short trips that can easily be done by foot or on a bicycle easier, more convenient, safer and more comfortable so that more people will choose to bicycle or walk when making those trips instead of using a car. In so doing, this Plan will make Alameda and its residents healthier physically and mentally, reduce greenhouse gases to help address the climate crises, and make Alameda's streets safer for everyone. It will make it safer and easier for people to run errands and children to walk or bike to school. Ultimately, the purpose of this plan is to improve the quality of life here in Alameda for everyone, including children, older adults and people with disabilities and future generations of Alamedans.

AN ACTION PLAN

The Active Transportation Plan is essentially an action plan. It does not propose new city policy. The Plan implements existing, adopted city policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce traffic congestion and

¹ *Alameda Climate Action and Resiliency Plan*, September 2019.

² 2019 City of Alameda statistically significant survey of adult residents (16+), described in Chapter 3.

reduce fatalities and serious injuries on City streets.³ Examples of the existing policy foundation that this Plan will help implement include:

Climate Change:

"Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 50 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero GHG emissions as soon as possible. Alameda will achieve these targets by completing current actions and implementing new actions focused on transportation, building management, waste management, and carbon sequestration." (Climate Action and Resiliency Plan (CARP) Goal, Page 5)

"For Alameda to achieve its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, Alameda must transform its transportation system to give residents convenient and safe, climate-friendly transportation choices and alternatives to the single occupant vehicle." (General Plan, Page 80)

"Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation by improving the local roadway network to support all mobility choices while specifically encouraging walking and bicycling and prioritizing improvements that both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support General Plan policies that facilitate transit-oriented housing opportunities, pedestrian friendly business districts, and improved transportation choices." (General Plan Policy CC-07, Conservation and Climate Action Element)

Active Transportation Improvements:

"Develop a well-connected, low-stress, and uncluttered network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are comfortable and well-designed for people of all ages and abilities. Seamlessly link the network with Alameda's key destinations such as schools, designated commercial corridors, grocery stores, parks and transit stops." (General Plan Policy ME-14, Mobility Element)

"Build additional bike lanes...by adding more dedicated and protected bike lanes and making pedestrian/bicycle improvements that increase safety, make it easier for people to use these modes, and connect residential neighborhoods with commercial centers and workplaces." (CARP Action T-2)

"Prioritize low-stress biking infrastructure such as separated bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards and bike trails, which is comfortable for the majority of the community...and...Provide separated bicycle lanes instead of unprotected, standard bicycle lanes, unless not feasible..." (General Plan Action ME-14(h), Mobility Element)

"Support the completion of a continuous shoreline Bay Trail along the entire perimeter of the City of Alameda." (General Plan Policy OS-9, Parks and Open Space Element)

Safety

"People of all ages and abilities can travel safely using any mode, and traffic deaths and serious injuries are eliminated by 2035." (Vision Zero Action Plan vision statement)

Alameda's Vision Zero Policy (adopted in 2019) establishes safety as the highest priority in all transportation plans, projects, and decisions with the goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on Alameda streets.

"Prioritize the transportation improvements needed to serve the most vulnerable communities, including youth, seniors, those with limited mobility, those with limited income, and historically underserved communities." (General Plan Policy ME-3, Mobility Element)

³ For more information about all of the plans and policies reviewed in developing this Plan, see Appendix C. Plans and Policies Review.

A COMMUNITY PLAN

The actions and improvements included in this Plan were identified, shaped and prioritized with the help and direction from the Alameda community. This is their plan.

The planning process began in late 2019 with an intensive public engagement period to allow the community to identify needed improvements to the existing biking and walking environment. The COVID-19 pandemic provided the community and City policy makers and staff with new ideas and insights about how and when people make trips and the many different purposes and uses for public spaces and rights of way. Within months, the Alameda community was experimenting with new ways to use these spaces, including the Slow Streets program to expand spaces for safe bicycling and walking and a Commercial Streets program which expanded the use of streets for outdoor dining and closed Alameda Avenue to automobiles to allow more room for pedestrians, outdoor dining and gathering space. By the summer of 2020, draft recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian projects, programs, policies and priorities were presented to the community for community review and direction.

Appendix B. Summaries of Community Survey and Public Engagement provides additional details on the public engagement activities, but the highlights to date include:

- » Over 150 attendees of all ages at the initial community open house;
- » Over 2,100 written public comments and suggestions on existing walking and biking conditions in Alameda, via interactive online maps;
- » Over 680 responses to eight (8) different surveys;
- » Over 550 written public comments on the recommended bicycle network, via an interactive online map
- » Nine (9) workshops with traditionally underrepresented groups, including people of color, high school students, lower-income residents, seniors and un-housed populations;
- » Five (5) workshops with business associations;
- » Seven (7) virtual open houses and listening sessions on draft plan recommendations;
- » Three (3) Transportation Commission public workshops;
- » One (1) workshop with the Commission on Persons with Disabilities;
- » One (1) workshop with the Recreation and Parks Commission;
- » Two (2) workshops with the Social Services and Human Relations Board; and
- » Two (2) Community Advisory Group meetings, which included eleven (11) community members representing renters, older adults, high school students, transit riders, people with disabilities, walking and bicycling advocates and members of the Latinx and Asian-American communities.





CHAPTER 2: VISION AND GOALS

VISION

The bicycle and pedestrian improvements included in this Alameda Active Transportation Plan are intended to help the people of Alameda reach a vision of what Alameda can be:

Alameda will be a city where people of all ages, abilities, income levels and backgrounds can safely, conveniently and comfortably walk, bike and roll (using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and micro-mobility devices) to their destinations and to transit. As a result, Alameda will be a healthier and safer place to live, work and recreate, Alameda will have reduced its automobile congestion and greenhouse gas emissions and the quality of life in Alameda will be enhanced for everyone.

To achieve this ambitious vision, the Alameda community, its elected officials, its appointed advisory boards and commissions and its staff will need to continuously strive to achieve five primary goals in all decision making and actions:

GOALS



Safety

Increase the safety of all people using active transportation.

Safety is critical to success. People must be and feel safe walking or riding a bicycle in Alameda. Parents must feel safe allowing their children to walk or ride to schools and parks. Seniors and other vulnerable residents must be and feel safe walking or rolling to bus stops, the store or for their health and recreation. Safety must be a primary objective for all improvements and investments.



Equity

Prioritize active transportation investments in underserved communities and actively engage underrepresented groups in the planning process.

To achieve the vision, everyone must have equal access to safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Every investment and improvement decision must consider and include the needs of those communities that have historically been underserved or underrepresented. Decisions must be made in partnership with those most in need, not just with those who have resources and time to advocate.



Connectivity and Comfort

Develop a well-connected network of active transportation facilities that are comfortable and convenient for people of all ages and abilities.

Today, the public roadway provides great connectivity and relative comfort for people driving their automobiles, but these same roadways are generally less comfortable and connected for people walking and bicycling. Crossing major streets can be uncomfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians. Crossing the Estuary to Oakland by walking or bicycling is extremely uncomfortable. Protected, low-stress bicycle facilities are not continuous and often interrupted by uncomfortable crossings or gaps in the network. Although Alameda has an excellent network of sidewalks, pedestrians are often confronted by difficult and uncomfortable pedestrian crossings of major streets. Success requires that the Alameda community and its decision makers continuously work to increase connectivity and comfort so that the bicycling and walking network is as comfortable and connected as the automobile network.



Community

Promote and inspire safe and fun walking, bicycling and rolling to foster a strong culture of walking and bicycling.

Bicycling, walking and rolling can be the most enjoyable modes of transportation. Bicycling and walking builds community. Neighbors meet neighbors walking and bicycling. Kids make friends on the way to school bicycling and walking. Seniors who feel safe walking are able to support and help their fellow seniors, who may just need companionship. New forms of “micro-mobility” are expanding options. Electric bicycles make longer bike trips easier. Electric scooters are a convenient and fun way to travel for some. To achieve success, the City must promote, inspire and support a culture of walking and bicycling.



Mode Shift

Increase percentage of walking and bicycling trips.

To achieve the vision of a cleaner, safer, less congested, more climate-friendly community, the City’s actions must promote mode shift. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of trips are completed in an automobile. Only 5% are completed by walking or bicycling. Decisions and investments must work to change these numbers: to increase walking and biking, while reducing driving.