

Bicycle Infrastructure Planning and Funding in San Mateo County: A Regional Comparison and Analysis



Prepared by the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

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I. Executive Summary

San Mateo County, with its year-round moderate temperature and pristine views, is an ideal place to promote bicycling as a commute option. Recognizing this potential, many cities within the county have worked hard to improve their individual bicycle plans and networks. For cyclists wishing to traverse across city boundaries along their commutes, however, the lack of countywide cohesion among bike routes often makes traveling longer distances a daunting task. Bicycle projects are generally delegated to individual cities and towns in the county, but commuters often need to travel from city to city, and nine percent of the population lives in unincorporated County.¹

San Mateo County needs centralized, empowered leadership to implement an effective bicycle infrastructure plan that will link communities and increase the region's environmental stewardship. There are many forms this institution could assume, but a few key qualities hold true whatever the configuration: The policies put forth in the 2000 San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle Route Plan must be implemented, there must be the means for acquiring and distributing funding for bicycle infrastructure on a countywide scale, and there must be a forum in which cyclists, cycling advocates, and other groups interested in transportation and sustainability can discuss issues and explore solutions. Achieving these goals will allow enormous progress toward crafting a more bicycle-friendly, active, and environmentally responsible San Mateo County.

The counties of the Bay area all have tools that they use to maintain, expand, and improve their bicycle networks, with varying degrees of success. As it seeks to improve its own bike network, San Mateo County has several options to consider and should look to its neighbors for guidance, as Bay Area counties are all under the funding umbrella of the Metropolitan Traffic Commission (MTC).

Alameda: Although the city composition in Alameda County is not quite like that of San Mateo County, two key aspects make it a useful point of comparison. The first is the political process used to ensure successful passage of its Measure B tax and the second is the recent consolidation of all major transportation agencies in the County. Alameda recently passed a Measure B half-cent sales tax measure with an amazing 81.5%. This was accomplished by reaching out to and applying Measure B funding toward the concerns of a large group of stakeholders, including bicyclists and pedestrians. Alameda County is also trying to improve its efficiency with regard to bicycle and pedestrian concerns by combining its various transportation agencies into the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). The new agency merged the former Congestion Management Agency (CMA) and Measure B/Transportation Authority in an effort to “eliminate redundancies and create efficiencies in planning and project delivery, and to streamline legislative, policy, and funding strategies.”

¹ County of San Mateo. “County of San Mateo 2010 – 2012 Profile.” FY 2010-12 Recommended Budget. 2010.

Marin: Marin County is comparable to San Mateo County in that there is no city with more than 30% of the county's population, or which covers a large portion of the county's area. All transportation issues in Marin County are administered through the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), which serves as both the CMA and Measure A transportation sales tax authority for Marin County. Additionally, a 13-member committee representing various community interests provides oversight of Measure A funds. One of the most notable aspects of Marin's bicycle program is the ease with which its well-organized information regarding the BPAC and bike plan can be found online.

Santa Clara: Santa Clara County is the most populous of those featured in this report. The City of San Jose, with almost 1,000,000 residents, dominates the county's transportation issues. Within Santa Clara County there are only two agencies that handle transportation issues: the county government (Board of Supervisors) and Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority (VTA). VTA handles the multiple roles of CMA, Measure A & B (BART) sales tax, administration, Measure B \$10 vehicle tax administration, and transit provider.

Summary of Best Practices

When compared with the other three counties, several inefficiencies in the ways that San Mateo County addresses bicycle issues emerge. It is the hope of this report's authors to foster discussion regarding the following identified best practices, with the ultimate goal that San Mateo County's infrastructure will evolve into an effective system for future countywide bicycle access planning and implementation.

1. Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (B/PAC) composition: MTC Resolution 875 clearly states that B/PACs are intended to be composed of bicyclists and pedestrians. Community input and oversight are invaluable in the bicycle infrastructure planning process, as the end users of a bicycle transportation system clearly have a valid stake in the process and especially pertinent viewpoints. The San Mateo County's City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG) B/PAC is composed of elected officials and community members who are appointed geographically, not by involvement in bicycle or pedestrian issues. The C/CAG B/PAC advises primarily on Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 funds, whereas the B/PACs in the three other counties are utilized for significantly more—both for input regarding accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians in major road projects, and for direction on funds from local sales tax measures.

2. Bicycle master plan: Though bicycle plans can vary greatly among municipalities, they should always be clear, contain reasonable goals, and rely on public input. Currently, the San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is being developed without significant public input. The "Policy Framework for the San Mateo County Comprehensive

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan”² is promising, but a strong framework for implementation needs to be developed for the policies to be meaningful.

3. Centralized coordination: Alameda, Marin, and Santa Clara Counties all have bicycle coordinators. Each of these individuals uses a bike for transportation within their county, giving them an intimate understanding of the challenges cyclists face. Furthermore, these individuals provide leadership on bicycle and pedestrian projects, work with the B/PACs of cities within the county, coordinate inter-agency development on issues such as Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and serve as a liaison between the B/PAC and agency staff. Currently San Mateo County does not publicly list any such position at either C/CAG or Transportation Authority (TA.)³

4. Inter-agency communication and protocol: Alameda, Marin, and Santa Clara Counties each have one agency serving as their sales tax measure authority and congestion management agency (CMA). Such consolidation streamlines the planning-funding-implementation procedure for bicycle projects. The current arrangement in San Mateo County positions transportation staff and B/PAC under one agency and Measure A funding in another. Any existing protocol for interaction between those two agencies with regard to bicycle issues is not publicly available—we would suggest that the County provide a clear definition of the proper chain of communication and official protocol for advancing bicycle issues between the various agencies.

² This document can be found at <http://www.sanmateocountybikepedplan.org/smccbpmp/project-documents/>

³ See appendix C regarding the roles of a typical bicycle coordinator.

II. Introduction

A remarkably diverse array of quality-of-life factors can be improved through widespread regional promotion of bicycling. In addition to the well-known health and environmental benefits of cycling, the promotion of cycling can lead to more cohesive communities, increased retail activity, and reduced traffic. As San Mateo County undergoes a rewriting of its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, it is important that best practices from around the Bay Area be analyzed and understood so that San Mateo County can make the most of this great opportunity to institute progressive bicycle policies on a countywide level.

The health and environmental benefits of cycling are well documented. A recent study at the University of North Carolina shows that bicycling to work can reduce obesity, triglyceride levels, blood pressure, and insulin levels.⁴ It has also been shown that countries with the highest levels of walking and biking for transportation experience the lowest levels of obesity.⁵ Increasing the level of cycling in a community can clearly improve health, offsetting health care expenses as a result. And, of course, bicycles avoid the emissions, chemicals, and manufacturing byproducts associated with automobiles.

Promotion of bicycling is one of the most thoroughly beneficial decisions a local or regional government can make. The most empirical measurement of this benefit is financial: bicyclists spend money in the towns in which they ride.⁶ Businesses that can benefit from improved cycling availability include eateries, drug and convenience stores, and entertainment venues within a couple miles of a bike path or lane.⁷ There are additional economic benefits beyond the retail sector. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, in an extensive study, has suggested that “ensuring that Wisconsin’s residents have safe and convenient bicycle facilities wherever possible could save the state, county, and municipal governments millions of dollars per year in health care, social services, and transportation costs.”⁸ When people are able to travel by bicycle more often, the results benefit society in a number of ways.

Without proper infrastructure, though, traveling by bike may not be safe and convenient enough to warrant consideration.⁹ In fact, “there is a direct correlation between feelings of

⁴ Gordon-Larsen P, et al “Active commuting and cardiovascular disease risk: The CARDIA Study” *Arch Intern Med* 2009; 169: 1216-23.

⁵ Basset, David R., et al “Walking, Cycling, and Obesity Rates in Europe, North America, and Australia” *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*; 2008

⁶ Marin County Bicycle Coalition, “Economic Benefits of Bicycling in Urban Environments.”
www.marinbike.org/Resources/EconomicBenefitsOfBicycling.pdf

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, “The Economic Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin.”
<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/econdev/docs/impact-bicycling.pdf>.

⁹ Effective bicycle infrastructure can include wide shoulders, bike lanes, mixed-use paths, bike boxes, proper signage, bicycle parking, safe barrier crossings, and a wide array of traffic calming and redirection measures. For more information, see <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/engineering/>.

personal safety and the number and percentage of weekly trips taken by bike.”¹⁰ Supporting evidence can be seen in New York, where 140 miles of new bicycle lanes led to a 35% increase in commuter bicycling in just three years.¹¹ Portland, too, enjoyed a doubling of bicycle commuting after increasing the city’s bike lanes by 215% from 1992-2005.¹²

In 2010, San Mateo County began a rewrite of its Comprehensive Bicycle Route Plan, now to include walking and be renamed the Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This rewrite gives San Mateo County an excellent opportunity to capitalize on its natural beauty and mild weather. A well-crafted plan will give the County the tools it needs to ensure San Mateo County grows as a world-class bicycling destination. Additionally, the County has the opportunity to address several weaknesses that currently present challenges to cyclists. In a draft policy framework, C/CAG has proposed policies that would expand countywide bicycle facilities, increase the numbers of people biking and walking, improve safety for non-motorized transport, encourage routine accommodation of cyclists and pedestrians in planning processes, and create support for cycling and walking at the local level.¹³ These are laudable goals, but even the best-laid plans require effective tools for implementation.

Purpose of this report

San Mateo County is facing a great opportunity to update its bicycle network. This report is meant to objectively analyze the bicycle planning and implementation programs of neighboring counties, identifying common organizational patterns and clarifying sometimes obscure agency roles and responsibilities. A summary of best practices is also provided, as is a list of regional, state, and federal funding resources available for bicycle infrastructure planning and implementation.

This report is not intended to directly guide the San Mateo County bicycle infrastructure planning process. Rather, it is intended to provide an objective comparison, coupled with analysis intended to highlight what the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition has determined to be universal beneficial qualities in a bicycle plan, such as transparency, oversight, proactive funding mechanisms, and community input.

Methodology

This report is the result of a grant from the San Francisco Foundation, in which SVBC set out to look at best practices from successful countywide bicycling programs in an attempt to learn how to best improve cycling in San Mateo County. As we began research on the subject, it soon

¹⁰ Inavero Institute for Service Research, “2009 Bicycling Perceptions and Experiences in Oregon and Southwest Washington,” presented to the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, September 8, 2009 <http://www.bikesbelong.org/resources/stats-and-research/statistics/facilities-statistics/>.

¹¹ New York City Department of Transportation, 2008 Bicycle Screenline Count <http://www.bikesbelong.org/resources/stats-and-research/statistics/facilities-statistics/>.

¹² Birk, M., and R. Geller, 2005. “Bridging the gaps: How the quality and quantity of a connected bikeway network correlates with increasing bicycle use,” *Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting 2006 Paper #06-0667*.

¹³ San Mateo City/County Association of Governments, September 2010. “Policy Framework for the San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.” Draft. Prepared by Eisen|Letunic.

became clear that the distinct funding schemes available to California counties and specifically San Francisco Bay Area counties, and the requirements associated with those funding schemes, made comparison to counties outside the region impractical. As a result, this report compares San Mateo County with three other San Francisco Bay Area counties – Alameda, Marin, and Santa Clara. This comparison and compilation of best practices were then presented to community leaders, elected officials, agency representatives, and cyclists in the County, and their feedback was integrated into Section V of this report.

All three counties are members of the nine-county region served by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) – a municipal planning organization (MPO) responsible for regional distribution of several different funding pools that can be used for bicycle facility planning and construction, such as the Regional Bikeway Network Program, Safe Routes to Transit, and the Climate Action Program. These counties are also subject to similar regional policies such as the MTC routine accommodations checklist and state policies such as California’s Complete Streets guidelines. As such, it is important to compare San Mateo County to its neighbors, which share many of the same funding streams available for projects.

Each county is examined for the ways it organizes and implements a bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee (B/PAC), a bicycle master plan, some sort of centralized staff position for bicycle infrastructure planning and oversight, and inter-agency communication. These categories were determined by SVBC to be crucial for successful implementation of a countywide bicycle program for the following reasons:

1. Bicycle / Pedestrian Advisory Committees, or B/PACs: These organizations vary in their roles, but generally are invaluable forums for public input and advisory bodies for public planning. B/PACs also serve oversight roles with regard to specific bicycle infrastructure funding measures.
2. Bicycle master plan: These documents are necessary to provide guidance as bicycle infrastructure is developed over the course of several years. Better plans will feature clear guidelines, funding sources, realistic milestones, and be developed with high levels of public engagement and input. In the Bay Area, county bicycle plans are adopted into the regional bicycle plan, further enhancing the likelihood of funding.
3. Centralized coordination: Just as county agencies exist for motor vehicle transportation issues, a county needs to have an accessible person or agency responsible for coordinating countywide bicycle strategy. This person is often responsible for gaining funding for bicycle projects, as well.
4. Inter-agency communication: Clearly defined channels of communication are important to effective bicycle planning, as funding and jurisdictions are often spread throughout multiple agencies, such as transportation, transit, parks, and health.

III. Comparing the Counties - At a Glance

County	Congestion Management Agency (CMA)	Local Transportation Tax Funds Authority	Last Bicycle Plan Update	Bicycle Coordinator Staff	Public Transit Agency	B/PAC or BAC
San Mateo	C/CAG	TA	2000, currently updating	No	SamTrans	C/CAG

Alameda	ACTC	ACTC	2006	Yes	AC Transit	ACTC
Marin	TAM	TAM	2008 (unincorporated areas, coordinated with cities)	Yes	Marin Transit	TAM
Santa Clara	VTA	VTA	2008	Yes	VTA	VTA

IV. Comparing the Counties – A Closer Look

San Mateo

Population: 718,989

Area: 449.07 square miles

Overview:

San Mateo County is unique in the region, in that the administration of transportation issues is handled by four different agencies: the County and its Board of Supervisors, City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG), Transportation Authority (TA), and SamTrans. C/CAG was formed in 1991 with the passage of California's Proposition 111 and acts as a stand-alone congestion management agency (CMA).

Transportation Agencies:

- C/CAG – Serves many functions within San Mateo County, including that of congestion management agency. C/CAG was founded in 1991 with the passage of California's Prop 111, which doubled existing state excise taxes on gasoline and required the formation of CMAs. C/CAG is also in charge of funds from the \$10 vehicle registration fee in the county, which will generate \$6.7 million per year. C/CAG has a 21-member elected board.
- Transportation Authority of San Mateo County – TA is responsible for the administration of Measure A half-cent sales tax transportation funds.
- SamTrans – The San Mateo County transit operator is also the managing agency for both Caltrain and TA. CEO Michael Scanlon serves as the head executive for all three agencies.
- Caltrain – The County's commuter rail operator also serves Santa Clara and San Francisco Counties.

Bicycle Coordinator:

Although several staff members at C/CAG coordinate the bike plan updates and staff the B/PAC, there is no bicycle coordinator position with specific bicycle planning expertise in the job description.

B/PAC or BAC:

- The C/CAG BPAC consists of both elected officials and residents of San Mateo County. The 15-member committee is composed of eight elected members and seven members that represent county residents.
- Although a charter describing the responsibilities of the C/CAG BPAC could not be located, by observation of minutes it appears that the main charge of the San Mateo County B/PAC is to make recommendations to C/CAG on bicycle and pedestrian projects to be funded with Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds.
- Unlike the other counties studied, there is currently no bicycle advisory committee working in conjunction with the TA, the Measure A funds authority in San Mateo County, although three percent of those funds, or approximately \$1.8 million per year, is slated for bicycle and pedestrian programs.¹⁴
- Caltrain, the tri-county commuter rail operator, has recently created a Bicycle Advisory Committee consisting of planning staff, plus equal representation from bicycle coalitions and the public in all three counties served. This committee follows the Brown Act.

Bicycle Plan:

- The county is currently working on the Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in conjunction with Alta Planning and Eisen/Letunic. The last bicycle plan, the Comprehensive Bicycle Route Plan, was approved in 2000. **This report is intended to offer ways in which to maximize the effectiveness of the San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan update process.**

County-Specific Funding:

- In San Mateo, community presence with regard to Measure A funds is through the 15-member Citizens Advisory Committee.
- San Mateo Measure A at 3% over 25 years is estimated to bring in \$45 million in bike and pedestrian projects, or \$1.8 million per year. Over the 25-year life of the measure, \$45 million in bicycle infrastructure spending will be a part of an estimated \$1.5 billion infrastructure package.

¹⁴ San Mateo County Transportation Authority. *2004 Transportation Expenditure Plan*.
http://www.smcta.com/Expenditure_Plan/Complete.pdf

Alameda

Population: 1,491,482

Area: 737.57 square miles

Overview:

Alameda County serves as an example of successful stakeholder outreach in the process of bolstering public support for sales tax measures intended for use on transportation projects. It also recently merged its congestion management agency with the agency that administers funds from its transportation sales tax measure.

Transportation Agencies:

- Alameda County Transportation Commission – The ACTC was recently formed as a merger of the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) and the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA). As a result, ACTC will serve as both the Congestion Management Agency and the Measure A funds authority. The new agency was created in an effort to “eliminate redundancies and create efficiencies in planning and project delivery, and to streamline legislative, policy, and funding strategies.”¹⁵
- Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District – AC Transit provides bus service to both Alameda and neighboring Contra Costa Counties.

Bicycle Coordinator:

Rochelle Wheeler, Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator.

B/PAC or BAC:

The most recent information on the Alameda County B/PAC lists the organization as being administered by ACTIA. The committee will presumably be integrated into the new ACTC. All members must live in Alameda County and be interested in improving the safety and convenience of bicycling and/or walking in Alameda County. Although members may be appointed based on their organizational affiliations, they are appointed as individuals. The published role of the committee may include, but is not limited to:

1. Provide input to ACTA and ACTIA project sponsors.
2. Provide input to the ACCMA on the update of the Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan.
3. Serve as the Alameda County Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) for Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 funding.

¹⁵ ACTC website. <http://www.alamedactc.com/>

4. Serve as the Alameda County B/PAC for regional bicycle and pedestrian funding, and the review of routine accommodation checklists completed for projects applying for funding from MTC.

Bicycle Plan:

- The Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan was adopted in October of 2006 by both ACTIA and ACCMA.
- Defines two problems:
 1. Unsatisfactory bicycle facilitation on both old and new roads.
 2. Responsibility for bicycle facilities that cross city borders is currently unclear.
- Identifies goals and objectives:
 1. Establish a countywide bicycle network.
 2. Integrate countywide bicycle network into transportation planning activities and improvement projects.
 3. Foster bicycling as a mode of travel.
 4. Promote bicycle safety and education.
 5. Promote implementation of the Countywide Bicycle Plan by maximizing public and private resources.
- Identifies funding sources for projects:
 1. Transportation Enhancement Program.
 2. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) improvement program.
 3. 5% of 2002-2022 Measure B funds designated for bicycle and pedestrian projects
 - 25% for regional projects.
 - 75% for individual city projects.

County-Specific Funding:

Alameda County's Measure B originally passed in 1986 and was due to expire in 2002. The measure had passed with a 57% majority and created funding for road projects with a half-cent sales tax. In 1998, the County put a new Measure B on the ballot to replace the original. The measure received 58% of the total votes, more than the original measure but not enough to qualify, as a 1995 California Supreme Court decision had instituted a super majority requirement on all special purpose measures.

In order to achieve the required $\frac{2}{3}$ vote, planners went back to the drawing board to create a larger group of stakeholders. They accomplished this by decreasing funding for highway and other roadway projects, and increasing transit funding and infrastructure funding for non-motorized modes of transportation – bikes and pedestrians. Funding for roadways was decreased from the 68% found in the original 1986 measure to just 49%. This move, along with outreach to transit users and environmental groups, led to the passage of Measure B with an amazing 81.5%. The new Measure B allocates 5% of a \$3 billion fund to bicycle and pedestrian projects, about \$7.5 million per year.

Marin

Population: 250,750

Area: 519.80 square miles

Overview:

Marin County is comparable to San Mateo County in that there is no city with more than 30% of the county's population, or which covers a large portion of the county's area. The County only has a population of 250,750 residents, compared to the 718,989 residents in San Mateo County, but the distribution is similar.

Transportation Agencies:

- Transportation Authority of Marin – All transportation issues in Marin County are administered through TAM. TAM's authority and the issues it tackles include addressing transportation issues, fulfilling the legislative requirements of Propositions 111 and 116, administering Measure A half-cent sales tax funds, and managing county transportation projects receiving federal, state, regional, and local funds.
- Marin County Transit District – Marin Transit is responsible for providing local transit service within Marin County. Marin Transit contracts with other providers for local bus and paratransit services. Services are funded using Measure A Funds, State TDA Funds, fares, property taxes and Federal Section 5311 rural transit funds.

Bicycle Coordinator:

Dan Dawson, Sr. Transportation Planner

B/PAC or BAC:

- The Marin County B/PAC serves as an advisory committee to TAM's Executive Director. It was established in May 2008 as mandated by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The committee is composed of 13 members (6 by geographic area and 7 by "special perspectives").

Geographic Area representatives: Novato/North Marin, Southern Marin, Larkspur/Corte Madera, West Marin, San Rafael, Ross Valley.

Special Perspective representatives: Seniors, Disabled, Schools, County Public Works Association (2), At-Large Bicycle, At-Large Pedestrian. One of the special perspective representatives must represent environmental interests and one must represent business interests.

Responsibilities of the committee include:

1. Advise on candidate project applications for State Transportation Development Act Article 3 funds administered by the MTC.
2. Advise on applications for funding under MTC's Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Program (RBPP).
3. Assist in the implementation of "routine accommodation."

Bicycle Plan:

- Marin County Unincorporated Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2008). No bicycle plan exists for Marin County as a whole; however in 2007 and 2008 TAM administered a coordinated update of the County's bike plan as well as all cities' and towns' bicycle and pedestrian plans. Each local agency managed their tailored public outreach effort and local approval of the document. The effort was funded by TDA Article 3 funds.
- The general bicycling objectives of the plan are:
 1. Increased Bicycle Access
 - Expand bicycle facilities and access in and between neighborhoods, employment centers, shopping areas, schools, and recreational sites.
 - Promote 20% of all trips by bicycle or walking by 2020.
 2. Increase bicycle transportation.
 - Complete a continuous network of bikeways that are feasible, fundable, and that serve bicyclists' needs.
 - Seek funding for bikeway projects through current local, regional, state, and federal funding programs and encourage multi-jurisdictional funding applications.
 - Maintain and improve quality, operation, and integrity of bikeway network facilities.
 - Provide end-of-trip bicycle parking facilities, both short- and long-term, at employment and commercial centers, multi-family housing, schools, and transit facilities.
 - Increase bicycle-transit trips through improved access, parking, rentals, facility accommodation, and monitoring.
 - Develop and implement bicycle education.

County-specific Funding:

Marin County's Measure A passed by a 71% majority in November of 2004. The Measure is funded by a half-cent sales tax increase over twenty years. Funds from the program are expected to net \$14 million per year.

The revenues are divided into four key strategies to reduce countywide congestion, each incorporating bicycle components.

1. School Access (11%):
2. Local Infrastructure (26.5%):
3. Local Transit (55%)
4. Highway 101 Carpool Lane and Bikeway (7.5%)

Unlike San Mateo County's Measure A funds, which are set at a flat 3% for biking and walking, Marin County incorporates bicycle funding in each of the key components (but does not state a funding level).

In Marin County, the Measure A funds are monitored by a 13-member oversight committee representing various community interests. This is purely an advisory committee with no oversight responsibilities.

Marin County has also received funding of \$25 million as part of the Non-Motorized Pilot Program, which was included in the last six-year federal transportation funding cycle, known as SAFETEA-LU. This funding has helped to offset some of the cost of the county's bicycle coordinator position.

Santa Clara

Population: 1,784,642

Area: 1,290.69 square miles

Overview:

Santa Clara County is the most populous of those featured in this report. The City of San Jose, with almost 1,000,000 residents, dominates the county's transportation issues. Within Santa Clara County there are only two agencies that handle transportation issues: the county government (Board of Supervisors) and Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority (VTA). VTA handles the multiple roles of CMA, Measure A & B (BART) sales tax, administration, Measure B \$10 vehicle tax administration, and transit provider.

Although the grouping of transportation agencies all under the VTA roof provides efficiencies, VTA has been criticized for the power that the City of San Jose and the County of Santa Clara hold on the board. San Jose has five board seats and Santa Clara County holds two. The other 14 cities are grouped into three seats with rotating two-year terms.

Transportation Agencies:

- Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is the county's CMA, Measures A and B tax authority, and transit provider.
- The Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department has jurisdiction on the county expressways, rural county roads, and the airport.

Bicycle Coordinator:

Michelle DeRobertis, Sr. Transportation Planner, is the official bicycle coordinator. A number of other VTA staff members also focus significant time on bicycle-related topics: Chris Augenstein, CMA Deputy Director; Ying Smith, Transportation Planning Manager; and Aiko Cuenco, Transportation Planner.

B/PAC or BAC:

- The VTA B/PAC serves as the primary bicycle/pedestrian advisory committee for Santa Clara County, advising both VTA and the Santa Clara County Roads and Airports Department.
- The committee is composed of 16 members, all of whom must be cyclists or pedestrians, and members of their local agencies' B/PACs.
- If no local agency B/PAC is established, the member must be interested in bicycle and pedestrian issues.

- The Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition may appoint an ex-officio member and one alternate. This member does not have voting rights and cannot be counted in establishing a quorum.

Bicycle Plan:

- The county adopted the Countywide Bicycle Plan in 2008. The plan guides the development of major bicycling facilities by identifying Cross County Bicycle Corridors and other projects of countywide or intercity significance.
- The stated goals of the 2008 plan include:
 1. Transportation Planning and Programming.
 2. Land Use Planning.
 3. Local Ordinances and Guidelines.
 4. Design and Construction – Infrastructure.
 5. Complementary Policies That Encourage Bicycling.

County-specific Funding

In 1996, Santa Clara County VTA voluntarily adopted a \$33 million Bicycle Expenditure Program (BEP) to fund significant projects in the Countywide Bicycle Plan. They use five main types of funding sources to fund the \$33 million, ten-year Bicycle Expenditure Program (BEP).¹⁶ The breakdown is as follows:

- 1996 Measure B Sales Tax Bicycle Program (\$12 million)
- Transportation Development Act Article 3 (\$7 million)
- Transportation Funds for Clean Air (Program Manager program) (\$12 million)
- Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century Transportation Enhancements (\$2.2 million)
- 20% local match from the project sponsors.

¹⁶ VTA Bicycle Expenditure Program. <http://www.vta.org/projects/bikeprogram.html>.

V. Best Practices and Interview Results

When compared with the other three counties, several inefficiencies in the ways that San Mateo County addresses bicycle issues emerge. It is the hope of this reports' authors to foster discussion regarding the following identified best practices, with the ultimate goal that San Mateo County's infrastructure will evolve into an effective system for future countywide bicycle access planning and implementation.

1. B/PAC composition: MTC Resolution 875 clearly states that B/PACs are intended to be composed of bicyclists and pedestrians. Community input and oversight are invaluable in the bicycle infrastructure planning process, as the end users of a bicycle transportation system clearly have a valid stake in the process and especially pertinent viewpoints. All four counties have B/PACs that serve advisory roles under the respective congestion management agencies. In contrast to San Mateo, Alameda, Marin, and Santa Clara's B/PACs are composed of biking and/or walking participants and advocates, and also serve to advise their counties' Measure A/B authorities on bicycle and pedestrian issues. San Mateo County's C/CAG B/PAC is composed of elected officials and community members who are appointed based on geography, not involvement in bicycle or pedestrian issues. The C/CAG B/PAC advises primarily on TDA Article 3 funds, whereas the B/PACs in the three other counties are utilized for significantly more—both for input regarding accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians in major road projects, and for direction on funds from local sales tax measures.

While SVBC maintains a preference for B/PACs to be composed of individuals who walk and bike as their primary modes of transportation, it is appropriate to note here that several of the people we spoke with in our interviews regarding this point thought that the current arrangement has certain advantages. They noted that it can assist cities to be motivated to apply for bike and pedestrian projects.

There was a very clear split in thinking between community groups, local agencies, and cyclists versus elected officials and C/CAG staff. In general, both the C/CAG staff members and the elected officials we spoke with thought that having elected officials on the B/PAC is effective. The elected officials were generally unaware of MTC's Resolution 875 and its requirements, and several also incorrectly assumed that it would be difficult to recruit more public members to the B/BAC. Staff from several other agencies in the county, leaders of various community groups, and cyclists familiar with San Mateo County all felt strongly that the C/CAG B/PAC should be composed entirely of people who walk and bike as one of their main modes of transportation.

2. Bicycle master plan: Laudable features of the bike master plans for the three comparison counties include Alameda's acknowledgement of unclear agency responsibility for inter-city routes, Marin's integration of its countywide plan with the plans of its individual cities, and Santa Clara's clear outlining of bicycle funding through its Bicycle Expenditure Program along

with clear delineation of cross county corridors and “across barrier connections” (ABCs). Though bicycle plans can vary greatly among municipalities, they should always be clear, contain reasonable goals, and rely on public input.

The San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is currently in its final stages of development. To our knowledge, there was no public input solicited before the plan writing process began. C/CAG hosted a single open house to discuss the plan with the public this past autumn, and never responded to Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition’s letter containing extensive input. The website where plan updates can be found, <http://www.sanmateocountybikepedplan.org>, is apparently wholly separate from the County’s existing B/PAC web page and not easily found. The “Policy Framework for the San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan”¹⁷ is promising, but a strong framework for implementation needs to be developed for the policies to be meaningful.

While C/CAG staff and several elected officials felt that the public outreach was more than adequate, it was also interesting to note that not a single one of the elected officials interviewed was aware of the bike plan update currently underway—indeed, several were entirely unaware that a bike plan existed at all.

3. Centralized coordination: Alameda, Marin, and Santa Clara Counties all have bicycle coordinators, either in the form of a transportation planner charged primarily with bicycle and pedestrian issues, or a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian coordinator. Each of these individuals uses a bike for transportation within their county, giving them an intimate understanding of the challenges cyclists face. Furthermore, these individuals provide leadership on bicycle and pedestrian projects, work with the B/PACs of cities within the County, coordinate inter-agency development on issues such as Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and serve as a liaison between the B/PAC and agency staff. Currently San Mateo County does not publicly list any such position at either C/CAG or TA.¹⁸

All of the interviewees asked about centralized coordination enthusiastically supported the idea of having a county-level staff person focused on promoting bicycling or active transportation. These assertions were quickly followed by concerns about viability given the current fiscal climate. Several of the interviewees felt that the appropriate agency to house such a position may be the San Mateo County Health System, which is already involved in related community wellness programs.

4. Inter-agency communication and protocol: Alameda, Marin, and Santa Clara Counties each have one agency serving as Measure A (and B, when applicable) authority and congestion management authority. Such consolidation streamlines the planning-funding-implementation procedure for bicycle projects. Though it is not practical for this report to recommend a major overhaul of San Mateo County agencies, it is nevertheless appropriate to suggest that the

¹⁷ This document can be found at <http://www.sanmateocountybikepedplan.org/smccbpmpp/project-documents/>

¹⁸ See appendix C regarding the roles of a typical bicycle coordinator.

County provide a clear definition of the proper chain of communication and official protocol for advancing bicycle issues between the various agencies from the identification and preliminary stages through the public input, funding, planning, and implementation stages. The current arrangement positions transportation staff and B/PAC under one agency and Measure A funding in another. Any existing protocol for interaction between those two agencies with regard to bicycle issues is not publicly available.

The data gathered during the interviews suggests that there is no formal protocol for interaction between TA and C/CAG. C/CAG staff did acknowledge that they are aware of the need to coordinate funding calls and such with TA and have endeavored to do so in the most recent request for proposals. Each of the community leaders and elected officials with whom this topic was discussed thought that greater coordination between the agencies would be beneficial to the County.

Finally, it is interesting to note that while all of the elected officials interviewed admitted to never riding a bike in San Mateo County, they all agreed that it should be a priority to improve the roads for cycling. Likewise, the community leaders and bicyclists, all of whom ride “often,” felt that improving the roads for cycling in the County needed to be more of a priority.

VI. Appendices

Appendix A

Bicycle Project Funding Sources

County-managed funding sources

Local Option Transportation Taxes

In the last few years the nationwide trend for transportation funding has moved away from “user fees” (most notably gasoline excise taxes), many of which have not kept pace with inflation. California's state excise tax on gasoline, which currently stands at \$.18 per gallon, has shrunk in real terms by 47% after accounting for inflation.

With user fees having less of an impact in transportation funding, and more emphasis on voter-approved funding (verses legislatively initiated), ballot measures have been successful. With more emphasis in the Bay Area and California put on public transit systems it has been easier to shift away from user taxes to voter approved general revenue taxes. Whether it is Measure 1A in Santa Clara County, Measure B in Alameda County, or Measure A in San Mateo County, voter approved transportation measures are now a reality in a majority of Bay Area counties.

Several other factors make Local Option Transportation Taxes (LOTTs) more attractive than traditional fees. Locally sourced taxes such as funds collected through Measure A sources bypass any direct authority from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO—in this case the MTC). Typically these funds are approved by the voters with an expenditure program in place, and without the need for MPO approval the projects are less costly to build and easier to deliver. Additionally, California has created further incentives for LOTT programs such as matching funds and access to special funding pools.

In San Mateo County the Transportation Authority has been authorized to administer the net Measure A proceeds (State Board of Equalization receives a fee to collect and distribute the funds to the different counties) to various county projects and programs. The total net proceeds to the program over the 25-year life are estimated at \$1.5 billion (in 2004 dollars). Bicycle and pedestrian funding represents 3% of the total or \$45m over 25 years.

Vehicle License Fees – SB 83

To provide CMAs an additional source of revenue to meet their significantly unfunded transportation needs, the California legislature passed SB 83 in 2009. The bill allows CMAs to put a measure on the local ballot that would permit fees on vehicles up to \$10. Although the proceeds to the counties would not be as large as sales tax options, the Vehicle License Fee (VLF) is considered more stable especially in slow economic periods.

Regionally, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara all passed VLFs in 2010. Alameda and San Francisco Counties, with extensive input from the cycling and other allied coalitions, were able to argue for more transit, pedestrian, and bicycle funding at the expense of strictly improving roadways. Alameda County, with the help of the East Bay Bicycle Coalition, was able to include a 5% bicycle funding share on the ballot measure. San Francisco County was able to argue for improved maintenance and resurfacing only on those streets that also share bicycle lanes.

Transportation Benefit Districts

Transportation Benefit Districts (TBD) are a new tool for countywide or citywide funding of transportation infrastructure. A TBD is an independent taxing district and quasi-municipal agency that is established to fund transportation improvements in the district. The benefit of a TBD is that it is not restricted to an established jurisdiction (city or county). It may encompass an entire county or city, a part of the county or city, or even cross over jurisdictional lines. Also, the TBD is flexible in term of what revenue sources are available. A TBD can choose from property taxes, sales taxes, vehicle license fees, parking fees, receipts from tolls, commercial development fees related to transportation projects, or local gas taxes.

Regionally-managed funding sources in the SF Bay Area

The **Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)** is the Bay Area's metropolitan planning organization (MPO). The commission administers seven different funding programs relevant to bicycle transportation. These grant programs include:

Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC)

The purpose of the Transportation for Livable Communities Program is to support community-based transportation projects that bring new vibrancy to downtown areas, commercial cores, neighborhoods, and transit corridors, enhancing their amenities and ambiance and making them places where people want to live, work and visit. TLC provides funding for projects that provide for a range of transportation choices, support connectivity between transportation investments and land uses, and are developed through an inclusive community planning effort.

Transportation Enhancements (TE)

The Federal Transportation Acts have provided a 10 percent set-aside from the Surface Transportation Program (STP) for the enhancement program. The purpose of the transportation enhancement program is to fund projects that allow communities to strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, enhance the travel experience for people traveling by all modes, and protect the environment.

Regional Bikeway Network (RBN)

The development of the Regional Bikeway Network is oriented toward utilitarian bicycle trips and emphasizes regional connectivity and connections to the transit system. A primary purpose of the Regional Bikeway Network is to focus regional bicycle-related funding on high-priority bicycle facilities that serve regional trips.

Safe Routes to Transit (SR2T)

Regional Measure 2, the \$1 bridge toll increase, is funding projects that enhance pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stations. To date nearly \$12 million has been awarded to over 30 capital and planning projects. Applications for the fourth cycle of the program will be accepted in 2011. Future funding cycles will occur in 2011, and 2013.

Transportation Development Act Article 3 (TDA)

TDA funds are derived from a statewide 1/4-cent retail sales tax. This tax is returned to the county of origin and distributed to the cities and county on a population basis. Under TDA Article 3, 2 percent of each entity's TDA allocation is set aside for bicycle and pedestrian projects, which generates approximately \$2.9 million in the Bay Area annually. Eligible projects include the design and construction of bike paths and bike lanes, bicycle-safety education programs, and the preparation of comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian plans. Eligibility for these funds requires a functioning B/PAC to give input regarding potential projects.

Climate Action Program

This \$400 million campaign focuses on public outreach and education efforts aimed at helping individuals develop climate-friendly behaviors, reduce the Bay Area's carbon footprint, and lay the groundwork for future climate change initiatives. The Climate Grants Program will fund major demonstration projects to test the most innovative strategies to promote changes in driving and travel behaviors.

Station Area Planning

As outlined in MTC's Transit-Oriented Development Policy, future transit extensions in the Bay Area must be matched by supportive local land use plans and policies. To assist cities in meeting these goals, MTC has launched a Station Area Planning grant program to fund city-sponsored planning efforts for the areas around future stations. These station-area plans are intended to address the range of transit-supportive features that are necessary to support high levels of transit ridership.

CA State Funding

Prior to a new post-highway funding bill introduced at the federal level (ISTEA 1991), California had created its own funding role for regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs, a predecessor to Congress' own MPO's). The Transportation Development Act provided for two

major funding sources for public transportation; the county-based Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and the State Transit Assistance (STA) fund.

Local Transportation Fund

Local Sales Tax Allocations, 1/44th of retail sales tax dollars. Allocation is made by the CMAs.

State Transit Assistance Fund

Derived from Gas Taxes (motor vehicle fuel and diesel) and distributed based on population (50%) and local transit performance, based on efficiency standards (50%).

Federal Funding¹⁹

Section 217 of Title 23 of the U.S. Code calls for the integration of bicycling and walking into the transportation mainstream. More importantly, it enhances the ability of communities to invest in projects that can improve the safety and practicality of bicycling and walking for everyday travel.

In 1991, Congress passed landmark transportation legislation, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which recognized the increasingly important role of bicycling and walking in creating a balanced, intermodal transportation system.

The National Bicycling and Walking Study, published by the U.S. Department of Transportation in 1994, translated this renewed interest in non-motorized travel into two specific goals: to double the percentage of trips made by foot and bicycle while simultaneously reducing the number of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians by 10 percent.

Subsequent legislation provided the funding, planning, and policy tools necessary to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities.

National Highway System

Funds may be used to construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System, including Interstate highways. *23 USC Section 217 (b)*

A bicycle transportation facility is "a new or improved lane, path, or shoulder for use by bicyclists and a traffic control device, shelter, or parking facility for bicycles."

¹⁹ US Department of Transportation. Federal Highway Administration. Environment. "Bicycle and Pedestrian Provisions of the Federal-aid Program." <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/bp-broch.htm>.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

Funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non-construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use and walking. TEA-21 added "the modification of public sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act" as an activity that is specifically eligible for the use of these funds. *23 USC Section 217 (a)*

Ten percent of each State's annual STP funds are set-aside for **Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEAs)**. The law provides a specific list of activities that are eligible TEAs and this includes "provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists," and the "preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian and bicycle trails)." *23 USC Section 109 (a)(35)*

Another 10 percent of each State's STP funds is set-aside for the **Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing programs**, which address bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. Each State is required to implement a Hazard Elimination Program to identify and correct locations that may constitute a danger to motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Funds may be used for activities including a survey of hazardous locations and for projects on any publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail, or any safety-related traffic calming measure. Improvements to railway-highway crossings "shall take into account bicycle safety." *23 USC Section 152*

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

Funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non-construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use. *23 USC Section 217 (a)*

Recreational Trails Program

Funds may be used for all kinds of trail projects. Of the funds apportioned to a State, 30 percent must be used for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for non-motorized trail uses, and 40 percent for diverse trail uses (any combination). *23 USC Section 206*

Provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists are eligible under the various categories of the **Federal Lands Highway Program** in conjunction with roads, highways, and parkways. Priority for funding projects is determined by the appropriate Federal Land Agency or Tribal government. *23 USC Section 204*

National Scenic Byways Program

Funds may be used for "construction along a scenic byway of a facility for pedestrians and bicyclists." *23 USC Section 162 (c)(4)*

Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants

These grants are available to support projects, including bicycle-related services, designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from employment. *TEA-21 Section 3037*

High Priority Projects and Designated Transportation Enhancement Activities

Such projects are identified by Section 1602 of TEA-21 and include numerous bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and traffic calming projects in communities throughout the country.

Glossary

ABC - Across-Barrier Connection. A bridge or other connection between two sections of bicycle route that are separated by a barrier. Barriers may include freeways, busy roads, railroad tracks, rivers, and other impediments to direct bicycle routes.

C/CAG - City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County. C/CAG is an intergovernmental agency (also known as a joint powers agency) that coordinates, plans, and finances regional issues such as transportation, air quality, storm water runoff, hazardous waste, solid waste and recycling, land use near airports, and abandoned vehicle abatement.

CMA - Congestion Management Agency. Initiated in California with the 1990 passage of proposition 111. CMAs are California state agencies (usually one for each county) that help to coordinate the distribution of state funds such as TDA and STA funds.

CMAQ - Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality. In 1990, Congress amended the Clean Air Act (CAA) to bolster America's efforts to attain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The amendments required further reductions in the amount of permissible tailpipe emissions and provided for a stronger, more rigorous linkage between transportation and air quality planning. In 1991, with the adoption of the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the law authorized the CMAQ program, and provided \$6.0 billion in funding for surface transportation and other related projects that contribute to air quality improvements and reduce congestion. The CAA amendments, ISTEA and the CMAQ program together were intended to realign the focus of transportation planning toward a more inclusive, environmentally-sensitive, and multi-modal approach to addressing transportation problems.

ISTEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. Federal funding legislation that was the first post-interstate highway bill. The bill was the first to address multi-modal transportation as well increased revenues for transit operations. This bill also coincided with the formation of MPO to effectively plan for transportation projects at the regional level.

LOTT - Local Option Transportation Taxes. A tax that varies within a state, with revenues controlled at the local or regional level and earmarked for transportation-related purposes.

MPO - Metropolitan Planning Organization. A federally mandated and federally funded transportation policy-making agency. Federal funding for transportation projects and programs are channeled through this planning process. Congress created MPOs in order to ensure that existing and future expenditures of governmental funds for transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive ("3-C") planning process.

Proposition 111 - Passed in 1990 in California. The proposition called for a major increase in gasoline taxes and the original intent was for the CMAs to use those funds to promote multi-modal transportation.

RTPO - Regional Transportation Planning Organization. Similar to California's Congestion Management Agencies, in other states these are referred to as RTPOs.

SRTS - Safe Routes to School. Although started in Copenhagen, Denmark, Safe Routes to School refers to the national legislation and partnership that seek to improve safety and encourage more children to walk and bike to school.

SR2T - Safe Routes to Transit. Refers to the laws and funding seeking to improve the safety and movement of pedestrians, bicycles, the disabled, and motor vehicles traveling to and around the general vicinity of public transportation stops.

STA - State Transit Assistance. California State funding for transit that also has a bicycle component (Safe Routes to Transit).

TDA - Transportation Development Act. Also refers to a class of funding set up by the act.

TDMA - Transportation Demand Management Agency. Typically a CMA will create and coordinate programs that reduce solo vehicle auto trips, or fund separate agencies that accomplish the same programs. The reasoning is that it is easier and cheaper to fund these programs than incurring financial, environmental, and organizational costs of building new roadways. Programs typically include van pools, carpools, or promoting the use of transit, rail, bicycle, or pedestrian options.

TA - Transportation Authority. The TA is one transportation agency in San Mateo County, California. Its main goal is to administer Measure A (half-cent sales tax for transportation) funds and programs.

Components of a Bicycle Coordinator Job Description²⁰

Though the role of Bicycle Coordinator varies in its duties from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the core responsibilities remain consistent. A bicycle coordinator is tasked with implementing the elements of her jurisdiction's bicycle plan. If no bicycle plan exists, a bicycle coordinator's primary task is to develop such a plan while also overseeing projects and plans of interest and concern to local cyclists, such as:

- Reviewing all development proposals and significant road projects to assess the impact, either negative or beneficial, to cyclists. Proposes suggestions for remedying negative impacts.
- Implementing bicycle education and promotion programs, such as Bike to Work Day and bicycle sharing programs.
- Researching and applying for grants to supplement local bicycle funding sources.
- Serving as a resource for public questions and comments regarding bicycling issues, both independently and in conjunction with the B/PAC.
- Staffing the B/PAC or BAC.
- Coordinating bicycle projects and plans with neighboring jurisdictions and, in the case of a countywide coordinator, among county member jurisdictions.

²⁰ Many of these suggestions are derived from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's "Bicycling Info" website guide to bicycle and pedestrian coordinators, found at <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/faqs/answer.cfm?id=3308>.