

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
STAFF REPORT
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BICYCLE MASTER PLAN**

SUMMARY

At the continued public hearing on January 11, 2012, staff from the Department of Public Works (Public Works) will present the revised Bicycle Master Plan [Attachment 2], which is a supplementary document to the County General Plan Transportation Element and would replace the 1975 Plan of Bikeways.

BACKGROUND

On November 16, 2011, the Regional Planning Commission (Commission) held a public hearing to consider the County of Los Angeles Bicycle Master Plan (Plan) and Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Ten members of the public testified, and numerous written comments were received.

The Commission continued the public hearing to January 11, 2012, to allow staff from Public Works to return with the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and Resolution and recommendations regarding: 1) the provision of more Class II bike lanes to the network; 2) modifications to a portion of the network due to security and safety concerns raised by residents of the Mar Vista area; 3) language on signs for Class III bike routes; 4) the prioritization criteria, specifically related to the lowest income and highest health risk communities; 5) educational programs for drivers; and 6) more information on cycle tracks and ways to incorporate the Model Design Manual for Living Streets.

In addition, on November 29, 2011 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion regarding the Plan [Attachment 3]. The motion instructs Public Works to: 1) include cycle tracks and other innovative bikeway facilities, allow the use of innovative designs once adopted by the State, and include provisions to facilitate the County's early adoption of these methods; and 2) collaborate with Regional Planning and Public Health to identify opportunities to include the Los Angeles County Model Design Manual for Living Streets into the General Plan Mobility Element, and continue to work with the bicycling community on revisions to the Plan. Public Works will report to the Board within 45 days of the motion on the progress made toward the completion of the outlined objectives.

REVISIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

A number of issues were raised by the Commission and other stakeholders at the November 16 public hearing, and by the Board of Supervisors on November 29. The following outlines these issues and the revisions made to the Plan to address these concerns and/or provide further clarification:

The Provision of More Class II Bike Lanes to the Network: Public Works received comments requesting that the Plan propose more Class II bike lanes in lieu of the proposed Class III bike routes. Of particular concern was the proposed Class III facilities in rural areas given the high speed of vehicular traffic exhibited on these rural roadways. Conversely, during the public outreach phase of the Plan, a preference for Class III bike routes over Class II bike lanes was expressed by some to better preserve the rural characteristics of these communities.

In response to these concerns, the County added Section 1.5 entitled “Updates and Amendments to the Plan” to Chapter 1 of the Plan to clarify that the Plan recognizes that most of the proposed Class III rural bike routes require widening and/or shoulder improvements to accommodate bicyclists. The Design Toolbox in Appendix F of the Plan was modified to provide additional design features to enhance bicyclist safety for these “Shoulder Bikeways.” If during the implementation phase of a project, the community supports changing the designation to a Class II bike lane, the County will evaluate the feasibility, and work to amend the Plan at that time. The Plan was also revised to provide a proposed Class II bike lane on Elizabeth Lake Road within the Lake Hughes town center area in the Antelope Valley.

Modifications to a Portion of the Network Due to Security and Safety Concerns Raised by Residents of the Mar Vista Area: Residents adjacent to the Sepulveda Channel voiced opposition to the inclusion of a Class I bike path along the channel due to security concerns. Public Works does not recommend removal of this facility from the Plan at this time. Public Works is committed to further enhancing bike access throughout the County, and the right of way along our flood channels is an important public amenity that Public Works must consider. This project is rated low in priority and is identified in Phase 3 for implementation, (between 2027 and 2032). The community may think differently about this project in the future, and as with all bikeway projects of this nature, there will be a community outreach process prior to proceeding with implementation. Staff has contacted the City of Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) to solicit input on the proposed bicycle facility. As yet, Public Works has not received any response from LAPD.

Language on Signs for Class III Bike Routes: The Commission suggested that the Plan include proposals to add signs along the Class III bike routes to notify motorists to slow down for bicyclists. California State law requires the State to adopt uniform standards and for local agencies to conform to those standards. Currently, there are no signs in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices that direct motorists to slow down for bicyclists; however, there are various other signs and markings available to heighten motorists’ awareness of the presence of bicyclists, such as “Share the Road” signs. The design toolbox in Appendix F was modified to provide additional design considerations to enhance bicyclist safety for Class III bike routes.

The Prioritization Criteria, Specifically Related to the Lowest Income and Highest Health Risk Communities: During development of the Plan, Public Works obtained input from the Plan Technical Advisory Committee and the Bicycle Advisory Committee, which were formed to steer

development of the Plan. The prioritization methodology was a main focus for the second round of community workshops. The prioritization metrics used include numerous factors developed with support of those members of the committees and participants from the community workshops. Additionally, Public Works has analyzed the project implementation phases related to income level and health risk.

An analysis of proposed bikeway phasing where adult obesity data was available showed that 50 percent of the bikeways in Phase 1 are in those areas with the highest adult obesity rates as shown in the map and table [Attachment 4].

Similarly, the maps and table for proposed bikeway phasing by income level show that 47 percent of the bikeways in Phase 1 are located within the lowest income communities [Attachment 5].

Based on the significant public input that was undertaken to develop the prioritization methodology, and the results of the analysis performed, Public Works does not recommend adjusting the prioritization metrics contained in the Plan.

Educational Programs for Drivers: The Plan proposes bicycle education programs that target bicyclists, drivers, and others. It includes Community Bicycle Education Courses, Youth Bicycle Safety Education, Bicycle Rodeos, and Public Awareness Campaigns. Of these programs, motorists would receive valuable education through Public Awareness Campaigns, and by participating in bicycle rodeos or other family community events. A high-profile outreach campaign that highlights bicycle safety is an important part of helping all roadway users to understand their roles and responsibilities. Public awareness campaigns address how to share the road; proper roadway position and etiquette; bicycling rights; safe bicycling skills; yielding to pedestrians; where bicycling is permitted and where bicyclists should walk their bikes; and light and helmet use. Although bicycle rodeos are geared toward school-aged children, rodeos may also be held on weekends to encourage parents and other family members to participate.

Request for Additional Bikeway Facilities in the Sawtelle VA, Marina Del Rey, and South Monrovia Islands: The Commission requested consideration of additional bikeway facilities to provide better access for bicyclists trying to get past the Interstate 405 in the Sawtelle VA area; provide a connection between the bikeway facilities on Washington Boulevard and the Marvin Braude Bike Trail in the Marina del Rey area; and “creating a loop” between the South Monrovia Islands and Whittier Narrows.

Opportunities to cross the Interstate 405 are planned within the Sawtelle VA area. The City of Los Angeles has an existing Class III bike route on Ohio Avenue along the southern boundary of the unincorporated Sawtelle VA area that connects to other City of Los Angeles bike facilities; both a Class I and Class III at Sepulveda Boulevard, and Class III's at Federal Avenue and Barrington Avenue. In addition, the City of Los Angeles 2010 Bicycle Plan proposes a bicycle-friendly street on Montana Avenue, which is approximately 1.5 miles north of Ohio Avenue. Additional bikeway facilities are not currently recommended for this area, as the existing

roadway widths are not sufficient to incorporate bikeway facilities without removal of vehicle lanes or roadway widening. Considering the extremely heavy vehicular volumes through this area, road diets are not recommended. Acquiring right of way to widen the road is not a viable alternative since the adjacent properties are generally owned by the Federal government, including the Los Angeles National Cemetery and West LA Federal Building.

In the Marina del Rey area, the bike lanes on Washington Boulevard end at Pacific Avenue and do not currently connect to the Marvin Braude Bike Trail. Between Pacific Avenue and the Marvin Braude Bike Trail, nearly a 500-foot segment, Washington Boulevard is not designated as a bikeway facility. Washington Boulevard is located within the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles, and any proposal of bikeway facilities for Washington Boulevard are under their purview. The City of Los Angeles 2010 Bicycle Plan does not propose any extension or improvements to the bike lanes on Washington Boulevard.

Within the South Monrovia Islands, staff added additional facilities on Tyler/West Hondo Parkway and Tenth Avenue. In the vicinity of the South Monrovia Islands, the Cities of Arcadia, Irwindale, and El Monte are located between the Rio Hondo Bike Trail and the San Gabriel River Bike Trail. There are no unincorporated areas or County properties located within this stretch for which Public Works can provide a connection. Staff is not aware of any plans by these Cities to provide such a connection at this time.

Information on Bicycle Boulevards in the Design Guidelines: One of the public comments received is that treatments for bicycle boulevards should be provided in the Design Guidelines of the Plan. Section F.5.4, Bicycle Boulevards, has been added to the Design Guidelines, Appendix F of the Plan.

Information on Cycle Tracks and Ways to Incorporate the Los Angeles County Model Design Manual for Living Streets Into the Plan: Policy 2.7 in the Plan states that Public Works will *“Support the use of the Model Design Manual for Living Streets as a reference...”*

In response to the Board motion on November 29, Public Works added Section F.5.6, Innovative Design Treatments, to the Design Guidelines. These innovative bicycle treatments include colored bicycle lanes, raised bicycle lanes, buffered bicycle lanes, cycle tracks, and bicycle boxes.

While these treatments currently do not have approved design standards, the County has incorporated them into the Plan’s toolbox of treatments for use when their uniform designs and standards are approved by Caltrans. Caltrans and FHWA allow for the experimental treatments. The County promotes the use of these innovative treatments and will apply for and implement experimental projects utilizing them where cost effective and where such projects enhance the safety of bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

Collaboration with County Departments and the Bicycling Community: To respond to the Board motion, Public Works, Regional Planning, and Public Health will work collaboratively to

identify other opportunities to include the Los Angeles County Model Design Manual for Living Streets in the Draft General Plan Mobility Element, which is part of the comprehensive effort to update the County's General Plan. In addition, after the November 16 hearing, staff continued to work with the bicycling community to clarify the provisions of the Plan and to identify additional revisions to the Plan. Discussions with stakeholders were conducted and a follow up meeting with the Los Angeles Bicycle Coalition.

Other Changes: To further address issues and concerns raised by stakeholders, staff made the following revisions:

- Modifications to the bicycle network
 - Upgraded 3.4 miles of Class III bike route to Class II bike lanes on Elizabeth Lake Road within the Lake Hughes town center (Antelope Valley Planning Area)
 - Added 0.8 mile of Class II bike lanes on Montrose Avenue in the La Crescenta-Montrose community (San Fernando Planning Area)
 - Added 1.6 mile of Class III bike routes on Tyler Ave, W. Hondo Parkway and S. 10th Avenue (West San Gabriel Valley Planning Area)
- Added policies and programs related to participation in a working group spearheaded by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to develop a regional bicycle sharing program within the County.
- Corrected errors identified following release of the October 2011 draft

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The County of Los Angeles, as the lead agency through Public Works, has completed the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Plan [Attachment 6].

The Final EIR analyzes the potential for significant environmental impacts associated with the Plan. The Final EIR does not detail impacts that may occur from specific projects included in the Plan, as these facilities have yet to be designed. Site-specific environmental reviews may be required for particular projects and programs as they proceed to implementation and the required detailed information is available.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Staff has included all comments received since the November 16, 2011 hearing [Attachment 7].

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Public Works recommends that the Regional Planning Commission approve the Final Plan and direct staff to transmit it to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration at a public hearing, by approving the attached resolution [Attachment 8].

RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the Regional Planning Commission close the public hearing on Project R2011-00874 and find that the Final EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the County, and approve the resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors hold a public hearing to consider and adopt the Final EIR and find that the significant adverse effects of implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan have been reduced to an acceptable level.

I also move that the Regional Planning Commission approve the resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors hold a public hearing to consider and adopt the proposed Bicycle Master Plan and determine that it is compatible with and supports the goals and policies of the Los Angeles County General Plan.

Staff report respectfully submitted by the Department of Public Works, prepared by Allan Abramson, Senior Civil Engineer and approved by John Walker, Assistant Deputy Director. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Abramson at (626) 458-3950 or aabrams@dpw.lacounty.gov

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