

# CHAPTER 2 Mobility Element

## Introduction

The Mobility Element guides the maintenance, enhancement, and development of the transportation network within the unincorporated communities in West San Gabriel Valley Planning Area (WSGV Planning Area), including automobile, pedestrian, bike, transit, and equestrian facilities. The purpose of the Mobility Element is to provide a safe and multimodal transportation system that addresses challenges and meets the needs of all mobility users in WSGV communities.

The Mobility Element includes a high-level summary of mobility issues and opportunities in the Planning Area. These issues and opportunities provide the foundation for the development of this element's goals and policies. In addition, the Mobility Element works alongside the Land Use Element to provide safe, efficient connections to various land uses and seeks to meet the transportation needs that align with the comprehensive land use vision for the WSGV.

## 2.1 Existing Conditions

### A. EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

An analysis of existing transportation conditions for the Planning Area and each unincorporated community, including street system, injury collision history, public transit system, bicycle facilities, pedestrian facilities, travel patterns, and mode share, combined with extensive community input, provides a foundation to identify the common areawide challenges and opportunities in mobility described below in Section 2.2, *Issues and Opportunities*.

## 2.2 Issues and Opportunities

### A. TRAFFIC CALMING

In WSGV, major and secondary highways consistently experience higher traffic volumes, leading to increased frequencies of injury collisions in nearly all communities. Certain streets exhibit collision hotspots, posing significant safety concerns for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists within the WSGV communities. Among these streets are Altadena Drive and Mendocino Street in Altadena, as well as Ramsdell Avenue in La Crescenta-Montrose. Addressing safety challenges is essential to enhance the overall safety and well-being of community members.

The *Vision Zero Los Angeles County*<sup>1</sup> identified six Collision Concentration Corridors in the WSGV communities. Three of these corridors have witnessed fatal and severe injury collisions between 2013 and 2017. Instances include two killed or severe injury (KSI) collisions on Lake Avenue in Altadena, one KSI collision on Live Oak Avenue in South Monrovia Islands, and five KSI collisions on Rosemead Boulevard in Whittier Narrows. This indicates an opportunity to prioritize safety enhancements and traffic calming measures on these roadways.

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<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles County, *Vision Zero Los Angeles County: A Plan for Safer Roadways 2020-2025*. Assessed on 11/13/2023: <https://pw.lacounty.gov/visionzero/>

## B. ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SERVICE

Geographically, over half of the WSGV communities are currently served by existing transit services. However, the transit mode share for commute trips remains below three percent across the entire area as of 2022, according to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This can be attributed to factors such as low bus frequency, transit services not aligning with commuter travel patterns, and limited access to transit in specific neighborhoods—particularly notable in the northern regions of Altadena and La Crescenta-Montrose, as well as the western part of South San Gabriel. Moreover, the communities face challenges related to limited first/last mile connectivity, impeding commuters from adopting transit as their primary mode of transportation.

In addition to serving major employment hubs, community stakeholders have expressed a need and interest in establishing circulatory micro transit systems that aim to expand transit accessibility to retail districts and commercial corridors in the community and nearby incorporated areas.

Despite the abundant natural resources and conservation areas within the Planning Area, significant gaps in transit accessibility to these recreational areas and community facilities remain. Additionally, residents residing in hillside neighborhoods have voiced the need for micro-transit options to address the difficulty of walking or biking on streets with steep grades.

## C. COMPREHENSIVE BICYCLE NETWORK

The existing bicycle network exhibits gaps within the majority of WSGV communities and along jurisdictional boundaries. Notably, South San Gabriel lacks any bicycle facilities, and Kinneloa Mesa and South Monrovia Islands have only one segment with bikeways. Despite the presence of some bicycle facilities in Altadena and East Pasadena-East San Gabriel, the absence of connectivity among these partial networks and to other recreational areas (regional parks, trails, and local parks) makes biking less pleasant and comfortable along these streets.

To address these deficiencies, the County has proposed bicycle facilities to bridge gaps in the Bicycle Master Plan (BMP), last updated in 2012. The overarching vision of the plan is to create a bicycling

environment that is safe, convenient, and accessible for individuals of all ages and abilities in Los Angeles County.

To best meet this initiative, a thorough examination of existing bikeway gaps is needed within the unincorporated area and in collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions. Bicycle collision data review and community input is necessary when proposing new bikeways. The design process for new facilities should consider factors such as street grade and other safety concerns to ensure a comprehensive and effective network. Due to the higher level of comfort and safety associated with separated or protected bicycle lanes (Class I or IV), prioritizing the selection and implementation of such facilities is recommended to promote biking, wherever feasible.

## D. SAFE AND CONNECTED PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

A shared concern across all eight communities, as highlighted by community input and surveys, is the absence of a safe and connected walking environment. Residents in Altadena, Kinneloa Mesa, La Crescenta-Montrose, South Monrovia Islands, and South San Gabriel have expressed a strong desire to enhance pedestrian safety in their respective communities. The pedestrians in these areas face higher levels of traffic stress while walking, attributed to factors such as high travel speeds, narrow sidewalks, sidewalk gaps, unsafe crossings, and a lack of pedestrian amenities along the primary main roads.

Furthermore, the shortage of shade compounds the challenges, contributing to an unpleasant walking experience. The distribution of tree canopy is uneven across the WSGV communities. The northern communities of the Planning Area, including Altadena, Kinneloa Mesa, and La Crescenta-Montrose, have a higher percentage of tree coverage than the southern communities, with over one-third of their communities shaded. In contrast, communities to the south of Planning Area, such as South San Gabriel and South Monrovia Islands, have less than 20% of their area covered by tree canopy. The average for Los Angeles County (including cities and unincorporated communities) is 18% tree canopy coverage. While many of the communities in the WSGV area meet or exceed this average, there is room for improvement to address the disparity.

## E. ALTERNATIVE MODES FOR COMMUTERS

Data from the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates reveals that over 90% of WSGV commuters used automobiles for their daily commute, either by driving alone or participating in carpools, indicating a higher reliance on auto transportation compared to the average in the broader Los Angeles County Unincorporated area. This high automobile dependence is due to the absence of direct transit services to major job centers. For instance, there are limited high-quality transit routes serving Altadena and South San Gabriel that directly connect to Downtown Los Angeles. To foster a shift toward sustainable transportation choices, it is essential to establish transit services with improved peak period frequency that align with the travel patterns of commuters and the frequencies of other connecting transit services. This proactive approach would encourage residents to explore alternative, car-free modes of transportation for their daily commutes.

### 2.3 Mobility Goals and Policies

#### VS 1 – A Safe and Accessible Transportation System for All Users.

**Goal M-1:** Maintain a transportation network with street design that incorporates the needs of users of all ages and abilities.

**Policy M-1.1: Roadway Safety.** Ensure that streets are safe and accessible for all users, including vulnerable populations such as seniors, children, and people with disabilities.

**Action:**

- Implement safety countermeasures that are aligned with primary factors identified in collision reporting, including hotspots and Vision Zero Collision Concentration Corridors.
- Annually review the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list for opportunities to incorporate roadway safety improvements into upcoming projects.

**Policy M-1.2: Complete Streets Guidelines.** Develop comprehensive complete streets design guidelines.

**Action:**

- Apply the Los Angeles County Model Street Design Manual for Living Streets to WSGV communities whenever planning roadway improvements.
- Design residential streets to minimize traffic volumes and/or speed, as appropriate, without compromising connectivity for emergency first responders, bicycles, and pedestrians. This could be accomplished through management and implementation of complete streets strategies, narrow streets, traffic diverting, and/or traffic calming measures.
- Use traffic-calming tools to assist in implementing complete streets guidelines; possible tools include roundabouts, curb extensions, high-visibility crosswalks, and separated bicycle infrastructure.

**Goal M-2: Provide improved access to regional and local transit service for all residents and people working in WSGV area.**

**Policy M-2.1: Local Service.** Pursue more comprehensive and efficient transit service to reduce automobile dependence.

**Action:**

- Evaluate the potential of integrating micro-transit or on-demand transit to connect residential areas to retail districts, shopping streets, community facilities, recreational areas, and other community destinations.

**Policy M-2.2: Regional service.** Continue to work with LA Metro and other transit agencies to advocate and provide for reliable, safe, and high-quality service that are connective to unincorporated communities in the West San Gabriel Valley.

**Action:**

- Work with SGVCOG, LA Metro, and other transit partners to promote the implementation of bus rapid transit routes proposed in San Gabriel Valley Transit Feasibility Study, which would provide new major transit stops serving WSGV communities.

**Policy M-2.3: First/Last Mile.** Encourage convenient and safe transit, pedestrian, and bicycle linkages to/from transit service and mobility hubs to facilitate first/last-mile connectivity.

**Policy M-2.4: Bus Stops.** Partner with regional transit operators and other local operators to provide attractive and convenient bus stops, including shade/weather protection, bus shelters, seats, and other amenities, as appropriate.

**Policy M-2.5: Community Engagement in Transportation Planning.** Engage community members and ensure the participation of potentially affected communities in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

## VS 2 – Connected and Walkable Communities.

**Goal M-3:** Provide a safe, convenient, and comfortable active transportation network and foster pedestrian and bicycle travel as healthy and sustainable modes.

**Policy M-3.1: Active Transportation Safety.** Provide safe transportation corridors/networks that accommodate pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists, and reduce motor vehicle collisions.

**Policy M-3.2: Bicycle Networks.** Continue to build out, close gaps, and expand the existing bike network.

**Action:**

- Prioritize the selection of separated or protected bicycle facilities (Class I or IV) that are associated with a higher level of comfort and safety, when and where feasible.

**Policy M-3.3: Pedestrian Networks.** Provide safe pedestrian networks that are mindful of users, roadways, surrounding land uses and community characteristics.

**Action:**

- Develop Community Pedestrian Plans for WSGV communities for inclusion in Step by Step Los Angeles County: Pedestrian Plans for Unincorporated Communities<sup>2</sup> with the aim of promoting healthy and active lifestyles.

**Policy M-3.4: Neighborhood Greenways.** Support the planning and construction of greenways that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists along community corridors to create neighborhood-friendly spaces lined with commercial establishments to encourage foot traffic, reduce parking demand, and support local businesses. Greenways are linear public corridors for walking and biking that can connect parks, nature reserves, cultural features, historic sites, and retail areas.

**Policy M-3.5: Pathways to Open Space.** Explore the development of off-street pathways with wayfinding signage to facilitate access to parks, nature preserves, and open space trails.

**Policy M-3.6: Tree Canopy.** Promote the planting of locally native trees in the public right-of-way, including street trees and park trees, to provide neighborhood cooling, enhance livability, and other benefits.

**Policy M-3.6: Crosswalk Enhancement.** Enhance pedestrian crossing efficiency and safety.

**Policy M-3.7: Accessibility Standards.** Evaluate proactively adopting PROWAG<sup>3</sup> through an ADA transition update that reflects the latest version of the guidelines and creates a prioritization and funding strategy for addressing ADA deficiencies in WSGV communities to ensure accessibility for vulnerable users.

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<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Step by Step Los Angeles County: Pedestrian Plans for Unincorporated Communities, Adopted 2019. [Available](http://www.stepbysteplacounty.com) online at <http://www.stepbysteplacounty.com>

<sup>3</sup> In August of 2023, the US Access Board published the final rule making for the Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) which will update the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that address access to sidewalks, streets, crosswalks, curb ramps, pedestrian signals, on-street parking, and other components of the public right-of-way. The guidelines cover the minimum scoping and technical requirements for various spaces and elements in the public right-of-way, such as pedestrian access routes, which ensure the accessibility of sidewalks, including alternate access routes when the main route is closed for maintenance or construction.



**Policy M-3.8: Marketing and Promotion.** Effectively market active transportation amenities and promote roadway safety to ensure community members are aware of the facilities and resources available to them.

**Action:**

- Wayfinding. Develop a comprehensive wayfinding signage system that promotes designated routes for biking and walking and celebrates the unique identities of unincorporated communities in the West San Gabriel Valley

**Goal M-4: Promote other transportation demand management (TDM) strategies.**

**Policy M-4.1: TDM Strategies for Schools.** Work with schools, parents, and students to develop TDM strategies that encourage active and transit modes of travel to and from school.

**Action:**

- Active School Transportation. Explore innovative active school transportation, such as bike bus and walking school bus. Evaluate school pick-up/drop-off area to manage traffic congestion and conflicts.

**Policy M-4.2: TDM Strategies for Residents and Employees.** Work with the community and local businesses to develop TDM strategies for commuting that meet the needs of WSGV residents and employees.

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Other highlights in the requirements include accessible pedestrian signals, curb ramps and blended transitions, detectable warning surfaces, crosswalks at roundabouts, on-street parking, transit stops, and street furniture. In addition, the guidelines address shared use paths, which are designed primarily for use by bicyclists, pedestrians and other authorized motorized and non-motorized users for transportation purposes and recreation purposes. Accessed in January 2024 on: <https://www.access-board.gov/news/2023/08/08/u-s-access-board-issues-final-rule-on-public-right-of-way-accessibility-guidelines/>

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