

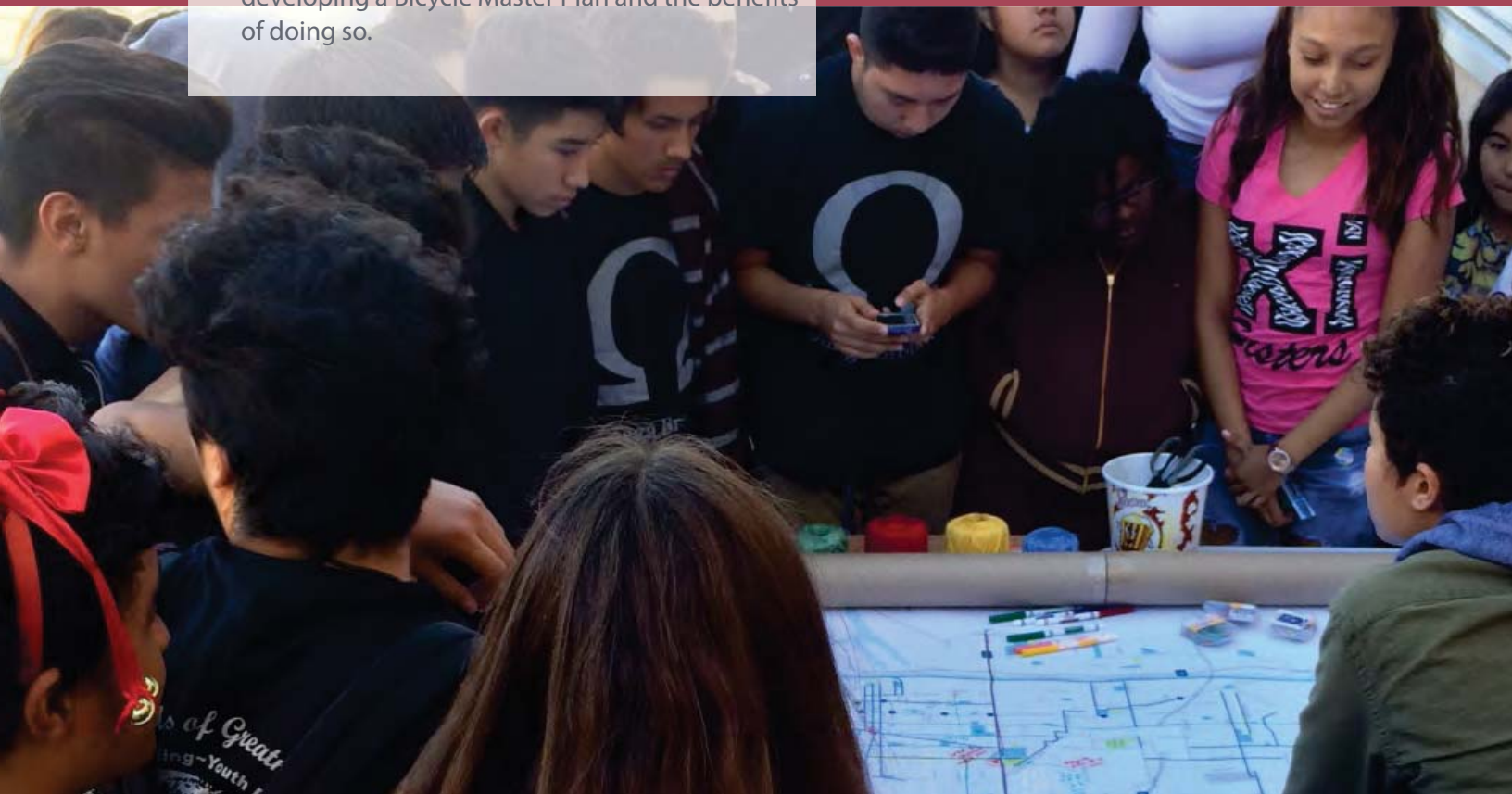


Introduction:

Why Develop a Master Plan?

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This chapter provides the reasoning behind developing a Bicycle Master Plan and the benefits of doing so.



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Introduction: Why Develop a Master Plan?

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Plan Purpose

This Plan continues to build upon a long-standing effort to make Long Beach a city known for its bicycle-friendliness and as an active, healthy, and prosperous (i.e., “livable”) place to live, work, and play. It is compliant with California law Assembly Bill 32 and the Complete Streets Act. This Plan expands upon the Mobility Element of the Long Beach General Plan by providing further details on bicycle planning and design. It also recommends a series of projects and programs to be implemented by Long Beach in the next few decades. Over ten years has passed since the City of Long Beach completed its first Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) in 2001. Since then, many more bicycle-related projects have been completed, including:

- » Separated bikeways and dedicated bike signals along 3rd Street and Broadway in the Downtown core;
- » Separated bikeways along Artesia Boulevard in North Long Beach;
- » An expanding bike share system in downtown and adjacent neighborhoods;
- » A lane reconfiguration along Alamitos Avenue, creating buffered bike lanes from 7th Street to Pacific Coast Highway;
- » A bike lane and signal added to Shoreline Drive, at the beach access lot entrance. A grooved bike ramp was also installed along the staircase at the north end of the lot, allowing cyclists to push their bike up and down the staircase to Ocean Boulevard;
- » A renovated beach path, separating pedestrian and bicycle traffic along the beach;
- » Installation of first bike counter at beach bike path
- » Shared-lane markings (“sharrows”) along Pacific Avenue and several designated bike routes around the City;
- » Bike lanes and sharrows along Seaside Way, between Golden and Pine Avenues; and
- » Beach Streets open street events



Building upon this momentum, the City is looking to develop an updated, innovative, and inspiring Bicycle Master Plan. The state of bicycle planning has greatly advanced in the past decade, and we now have a much wider variety of permitted bikeway types enabling the City to better serve a broader variety of riders. As more people cycle, there is increased demand for improved and additional facilities; as the City builds out more facilities, more people will feel comfortable bicycling. The Bicycle Master Plan will advance the City's notoriety as a great community in which to bicycle.

The purpose of this Plan is to update the former plan, taking advantage of new innovative bicycle planning and bikeway design solutions, to guide City staff in prioritizing resources when implementing future projects and programs, and finally, to make the City eligible for more outside funding for these pursuits.

Benefits of Bicycling

Bicycling is a healthy, non-polluting, low-cost, quiet, and fun form of transportation that is ideal for many trips, including commuting and shopping. Long Beach's residents and visitors, even those who choose not to ride bicycles, could greatly benefit from the improvements recommended within this Plan. A more bicycle-friendly Long Beach will contribute to resolving issues like traffic congestion, poor air quality, climate change, poor public health, and diminishing quality of life.

Efficient, convenient, and affordable transportation options like bicycling can make life easier, better, and more enjoyable for both residents and visitors. The benefits of connected bicycle networks go beyond accessibility, safety, and comfort. This mode of transportation can deliver environmental and health benefits for communities.

At their best, well-designed bicycle networks can provide a variety of benefits. See the chart to the right to review the various benefits of bicycling.

Benefits of Bicycling

Safety



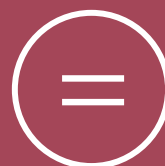
Conflicts between bicyclists and motorists result from poor riding and/or driving behavior as well as insufficient or ineffective design. Encouraging development and redevelopment in which bicycle travel is fostered improves the overall safety of the roadway for all users – an official goal of the City of Long Beach stemming from its Vision Zero initiative to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2026. Designated bike facilities reduce the risk of crashes and injuries compared to biking alongside traffic without facilities or off-road with pedestrians.

Public Health



Physical inactivity is now widely understood to play a significant role in the most common chronic diseases in the United States, including heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, and approximately 280,000 adults in the U.S. die prematurely due to obesity-related illnesses every year. A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine in 2004 by Frank et al., reported that for each extra 60 minutes spent in a car, there was a six percent increase in the chances of being obese. Creating a better physical environment that encourages bicycling is a key strategy to fighting obesity and inactivity and has been shown to have substantial impacts with relatively limited public investment.

Equity



Bicycling is an inexpensive and broadly accessible form of transportation. The average annual operating cost of a bicycle is \$308, compared to \$8,220 for the average car. Bicycling is an affordable means of transportation for the urban poor who are disproportionately people of color. Bicycles provide added freedom and independence for youth and parents (who are otherwise transporting their children) as well as for some people who cannot drive and those who have chosen not to drive.

Economic



Bicycle programs and projects encourage more bicycle riding, which leads to better quality of life. According to Richard Florida, better quality of life attracts more diverse and creative people, leading to higher economic growth for a city and region. Additionally, the annual operating costs for bicycle commuters are 1.5% to 3.5% of those for automobile commuters. Cost savings associated with bicycle travel expenses are also accompanied by potential savings in health care costs. On a community scale, bicycle infrastructure projects are generally far less expensive than automobile-related infrastructure.

Environmental



Replacing vehicular trips with bicycle trips has a measurable impact on reducing human-generated greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere that contribute to climate change. Fewer vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) translate into fewer mobile source pollutants released into the air, such as carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons.

Quality of Life



Creating conditions where bicycling is accepted and encouraged increases a community's livability from a number of different perspectives that are often difficult to measure but are nevertheless important. The design, land use patterns, and transportation systems that comprise the built environment have a profound impact on quality of life issues. The aesthetic quality of a community improves when visual and noise pollution caused by automobiles is reduced and when green space is reserved for facilities that enable people of all ages to recreate and commute in pleasant settings.

