Santa Maria General Plan

imagine

Circulation Element

Final Draft | February 12, 2026

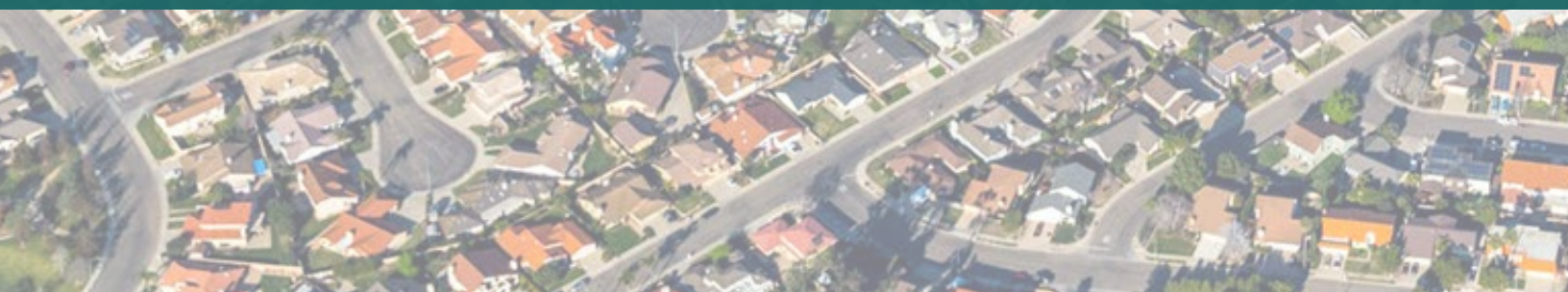

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Table of Tables

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Introduction

California law mandates the development of a Circulation Element as part of the General Plan. The Circulation Element must contain the "general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, any military airports and ports, and other local public utilities and facilities," all correlated with the land use element of the General Plan per California Government Code Section 65302(b).

Santa Maria's Circulation Element focuses on the street, bicycle, and pedestrian networks, safety, parking, transit, rail, and aviation facilities. Utility-oriented facilities, such as water and storm drainage, are addressed within the Public Facilities and Services Element.

This Element consists of three main sections: Background, Issues and Opportunities, and Circulation Policies. The *Background* section introduces existing conditions and trends related to priorities addressed in this Element. The *Issues and Opportunities* section describes the key issues and opportunities that shaped the Element. Finally, the *Circulation Policies* section establishes regulatory standards and diagrams and outlines the City's Circulation goals, policies, and implementation actions.

The Circulation Policies focus on establishing and maintaining a citywide mobility network that meets the needs of users of all ages and abilities, including people walking, riding bicycles, using micromobility devices like e-scooters, riding on transit, and driving and riding in vehicles, as well as for trucking and goods movement. In support of that mobility network, policies also prioritize safety, parking, land use compatibility, equitable sharing of costs and benefits, and the mitigation of traffic and vehicle usage impacts.

Cyclists use a multi-use path.

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Background

This section introduces existing conditions and trends related to priorities addressed in the Circulation Policies.

Regulatory Setting

Regulations that affect the policy direction of this Element include:

AB 1358. Assembly Bill 1358 (AB 1358), the California Complete Streets Act, requires the City of Santa Maria to focus the update of the Circulation Element of the General Plan on a multimodal transportation system that accommodates all users, including motorists, transit vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and people of all ages and abilities. A few features of Complete Streets include sidewalks, bikeways, safe crossings, transit amenities, traffic calming, and universal accessibility elements.

SB 743. Senate Bill 743 (SB 743) took effect July 1, 2020, and fundamentally changed the way Transportation Analysis is conducted as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Automobile Level of Service, although permitted as a local policy threshold, is no longer considered an impact on the environment. Instead, Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) is now the primary transportation metric for evaluated projects under CEQA.

Measure A. Santa Barbara County's Measure A, approved by voters in November 2008 and scheduled to sunset in 2040, will provide more than $1 billion of estimated local sales tax revenues for road repair, congestion relief, and transportation safety projects. Measure A also funds a portion of major regional transportation improvements, including interchange and highway projects throughout Santa Barbara County Current programs in Santa Maria being funded by Measure A are Roadway Maintenance, Specialized Transit for Elderly and Disabled Program, Interregional Transit Program, Safe Routes to School, and the Clean Air Express.

AB 98. Assembly Bill 98 (AB 98) seeks to address environmental justice issues associated with the rapid expansion of warehouse uses in the state. AB 98 requires local agencies to update the circulation elements of their general plans to establish specific travel routes for the transport of goods and materials, avoiding sensitive land uses.

Existing Roadway Network

The City of Santa Maria is served by an extensive network of freeways, arterials, collectors, and local roads. The network provides a high level of north-south/east-west connectivity with adjacent counties (i.e., San Luis Obispo, Ventura, and Kern Counties) by way of United States Highway 101 (US-101), Broadway (SR-135) and Main Street (SR-166) that traverse the city. Broadway and Main Street both intersect with State Route 1 (SR-1) to the south and west, respectively, of the city.

Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The condition of Santa Maria's existing bicycle and pedestrian networks varies widely. Some locations have a comprehensive network, while infrastructure is limited in other locations. Network and spot improvements will help improve access, safety, and comfort, including crossing improvements, shared-use paths, and trails. These needs and priorities are addressed in the City's Active Transportation Plan (ATP), which provides a long-term framework for expanding and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the city.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are also used by people operating micromobility devices. Micromobility refers to all small, lightweight personal vehicles, including those powered or featuring power-assistance from motors, usually electric-powered. These include electric bicycles (e-bikes), electric scooters (e-scooters), electric skateboards, one-wheelers, and other new devices.

Santa Maria Regional Transit

Santa Maria is primarily served by the Santa Maria Regional Transit (SMRT) agency. The City of Santa Maria operates SMRT's local fixed route, regional bus service, and on-demand Microtransit and ADA paratransit bus services. SMRT ridership demographics reflect a broad cross-section of the service area, including seniors, persons with disabilities, K-12 students, college students, working professionals, tourists, and riders who choose to use transit instead of driving. Private transit companies, though not operated by the City, provide additional services, such as Smooth's Senior Dial-A-Ride. Transit ridership is rapidly growing and is expected to continue to grow in the years to come.

Santa Maria Transit Center.

Truck Routes

Santa Maria has two designated Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) truck routes, which are on US-101 and Broadway. US-101, Broadway (SR-135), Main Street (SR-166), and Betteravia Road carry the vast majority of STAA truck traffic in terms of absolute volumes. US-101 carries the highest percentage of STAA-sized vehicles, relative to the overall traffic on the route, followed by Main Street and Broadway. On average, STAA-sized trucks make up 5 percent of the overall truck traffic on the segments of State Highways within Santa Maria according to data from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic in 2018.

Aviation Facilities

Santa Maria Public Airport

The Santa Maria Public Airport, owned and operated by the Santa Maria Public Airport District, is the only public-use airport within the Santa Maria Valley. As defined by the FAA, the Santa Maria Public Airport is a primary commercial service airport, which serves the aviation needs of the local community and the region by providing support to commercial, aerial firefighting, military, and private aircraft. The Airport is also a hub for the City of Santa Maria's commercial and industrial sector, as a majority of the City's industrial land uses are located at or near the airport.

Heliports

The City of Santa Maria has four heliports: Marian Medical Center, Platform Harvest, Platform Hermosa, and Platform Hidalgo. The authority to regulate their development and use is shared among the heliport owners, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the State of California.

Santa Maria Public Airport. Credit: Santa Maria Chamber of Commerce

Railway Facilities

Passenger Railway Facilities

The Guadalupe Amtrak Station (GUA) is the closest passenger rail service to Santa Maria. There is a thruway bus service that connects passengers from GUA to the Santa Maria Amtrak Bus Stop (SAT), served by a curbside bus stop located next to the northbound off-ramp of US-101 and East Main Street.

Santa Maria Valley Railroad

The Santa Maria Valley Railroad (SMVRR) is a short line or Class III carrier service consisting of 14 miles of main line track interchanging with the Union Pacific Railroad tracks in Guadalupe. The railroad also operates transloading facilities located at 1599 A Street and the Betteravia Industrial Park on Betteravia Road. The SMVRR provides access to long-haul rail lines for commercial and agricultural customers in the Santa Maria Valley.

Guadalupe Amtrak Station (GUA). Credit: Amtrak.

Issues and Opportunities

This section describes the issues and opportunities that informed the policy direction of the Circulation Policies. More information and technical details can be found in the *Transportation and Mobility Existing Conditions Report* included in Appendix A.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). VMT measures the amount of travel by motor vehicles to and from residences, jobs, and other destinations. Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction targets are based on achieving a reduction in per capita VMT. With a compact land use pattern and a transportation system that provides improvements for all modes of transportation, the efficiency of the existing street system is increased.

Traffic volumes and Level of Service (LOS). US-101 interchanges with Santa Maria streets have level of service deficiencies. Interchanges at Main Street, Betteravia Road, and Stowell Road need operational and capacity improvements. Betteravia Road is the most congested corridor in the city, with several intersections and segments experiencing excessive or unacceptable delays. Main Street, Broadway, and Stowell Road also have many congested segments and intersections.

Travel time reliability. There is some travel time unreliability on US-101 around the Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo County border that extends to the Broadway off-ramp. Other study segments on Broadway, Main Street, and Betteravia Road have unreliable travel times due to congestion in the AM and PM peak hours.

Excess capacity. In contrast, several street segments are below traffic volume thresholds and have low delay given the excess roadway capacity. Reclassifying streets with excess travel lanes relative to actual volumes, and/or overly wide travel lane widths, provides opportunities to reallocate space in a manner that better serves all modes of travel. Such measures will also help to reduce motor vehicle speeds in many cases.

Entrances to US-101, a major thoroughfare for Santa Maria residents.

Pavement system management. Per the 2023 Pavement Management Report, the overall average pavement condition index (PCI) for the city is 69, and 58.9 percent of the city's pavement is in very good to good condition. However, with the current level of funding at approximately $4 million annually, pavement quality is forecasted to deteriorate over time.

Walkability. Downtown is the most walkable part of the city due to its proximity to retail, services, employment, and civic destinations. However, residents in most other areas of the city have less convenient walking access to schools, parks, and/or retail. Improving walkability via improved pedestrian connections and public realm design could improve health, reduce vehicle dependency, and improve the visual appearance of the city's streets.

Safety. Speeding and automobile right-of-way violations are the top violation categories for the past five years of city collisions.

Transit service. The City has a population of residents who are designated as "at-risk" that struggle with low income, high and persistent poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, linguistic isolation, high housing costs, substandard housing, distressed neighborhoods, high transportation costs with low transportation access. The City's public transit system is a vital lifeline service and is expected to continue to grow over the years to come.

Aviation facilities and services. The Santa Maria Public Airport has seen a decline in passenger travel over the last two decades as the number of enplanements was 23,008 in 2018, down from 47,741 in 2010 and 77,738 in 2000. In 2025, the Santa Maria Public Airport had nonstop service with Allegiant Airlines to Las Vegas, Nevada, and with American Airlines to Phoenix, Arizona.

Downtown Santa Maria. Downtown has a diverse mix of land uses and housing types, and as the heart of the city, it has many of Santa Maria's historic, civic, and cultural resources. Implementation of the General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan could create opportunities for job and population growth and transformational improvements to the public realm.

Wide roads and limited pedestrian crossings limit walkability.

Downtown Multimodal Streetscape Plan. In 2015, the City updated its Downtown Specific Plan and identified the need for a multimodal streetscape plan. The goal of the plan was to address beautification in Downtown by transforming Broadway and Main Street into corridors that accommodate all users—from cyclists to transit riders to pedestrians—while also accommodating existing freight traffic until alternative truck routes become available. Since Main Street and Broadway are State highways, the transformation of these corridors must occur in partnership with Caltrans. The Downtown Multimodal Streetscape Plan was adopted by the City Council and is utilized as a part of the City's Downtown redevelopment efforts. Its goals are to accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicycles, transit riders, automobiles, and trucks. This Plan helps to define and rebrand Downtown into a community gathering place and a great place to live and visit. The Plan includes proposed roadway improvements, including raised cycle tracks, wider sidewalks, and on-street parking.

Santa Maria Active Transportation Plan. The 2020 Santa Maria Active Transportation Plan (ATP) was adopted in January 2021. Its goal is to "facilitate the design and implementation of a connected bicycle and pedestrian network to provide safe, affordable, and accessible transportation choices in the community."

Safer Streets for Santa Maria Plan. The City's Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP), adopted in 2022, identified, analyzed, and prioritized roadway safety improvements around the principles of what are referred to as the "4Es" of traffic safety: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Emergency Services. The LRSP has been instrumental in securing State Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding awarded by Caltrans. In addition to citywide or systemic strategies, the plan identified three priority corridors for transportation safety grants:

- Broadway Corridor (US-101 to Betteravia Road)
- Main Street Corridor (Blosser Road to US-101)
- Miller Street Corridor (Donovan Road to Betteravia Road)

Community engagement for the City Active Transportation Plan at Open Streets Santa Maria (2019).

Short- and long-range transit plans. Every five to seven years, SMRT develops and adopts Short- and Long-Range Transit Plans. The plans include performance improvement, service enhancement, and innovation and technology recommendations. These plans serve as general business plans outlining the growth of the transit system. These indicate areas for the creation of new transit lines along with regional connectivity opportunities throughout Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Bus rapid transit and autonomous shuttles. SMRT is planning to introduce new and enhanced forms of public transit to Santa Maria. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors are in development along Broadway, the city's busiest transit corridor, and conceptual plans are in place to expand BRT lines on Main Street, Betteravia Road, and future high-intensity corridors. Similarly, work is underway to develop Autonomous Shuttle corridors for the implementation of driverless buses with an initial focus of connecting Allan Hancock College with the Transit Center as an initial pilot project.

Parking. The City's 2018 parking ordinance allows developers to credit parking in the paved front setback and utilize tandem parking toward the required parking. The ordinance only affects medium- or high-density developments by allowing more flexibility for the development of infill lots with limited space available. In addition, the Downtown Specific Plan allows for shared/off-site parking, allowing for higher-density residential development.

Roundabouts. Roundabouts improve safety by reducing vehicle speeds and avoiding conflicting movements. In the past twenty-five years, modern roundabout designs have grown in popularity in the U.S. due to their safety, their ability to move more vehicles through intersections with less delay, and their lower long-term costs compared to signals that require electricity, maintenance, and replacement over time. When designed properly, roundabouts can easily accommodate large vehicles like fire service ladder trucks and freight trucks. It is important for the City to collaborate with local communities to be engaged and involved in the design and implementation of local roundabouts.

Landscaped roundabout at the intersection of S. College Drive and E. McCoy Lane. Credit: Google

Circulation Policies

The Circulation Policies address the key issues and opportunities identified above and establish a comprehensive roadmap for establishing and maintaining a citywide mobility network that meets the needs of users of all ages and abilities.

The *Standards and Diagrams* section establishes regulatory standards and diagrams. A standard is a rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. Likewise, a diagram is a graphic expression of the text of a particular policy.

The *Policy Framework* section outlines Circulation goals, policies, and implementation actions. A goal describes the community's desired future. A policy is a specific statement of intent that guides decision-making. An action is an activity, procedure, program, or project that carries out a policy.

Policy Summary

The Circulation Policies are focused on establishing and maintaining safe and convenient travel options throughout Santa Maria with a citywide mobility network that meets the needs of all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists, transit riders, and people of all ages and abilities. These goals and policies ensure that future land use, transportation, and transit planning are consistent with that focus on complete streets and a balanced network (Goals CIR-1 and CIR-6). Policies require that other City policies and plans related to transportation are consistent with this Element (Goal CIR-2) and that the funding for transportation improvements and maintenance are managed responsibly and shared equitably (Goal CIR-3). Policies also mitigate the impacts of traffic noise and heavy vehicles (Goal CIR-4) and seek to provide adequate parking options (Goal CIR-8). Together, these policy priorities should result in improved safety (Goal CIR-5) and reduced VMT (Goal CIR-7).

Standards and Diagrams

Street Classifications

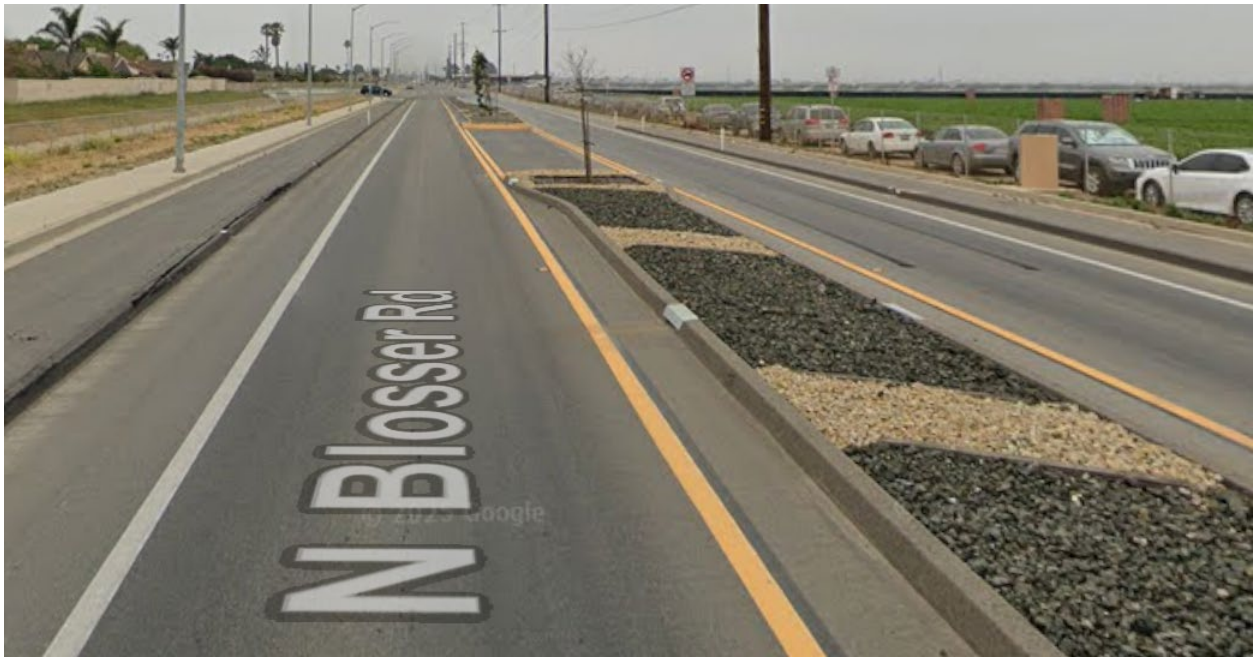
The Santa Maria Street Network comprises freeways and four main street classifications, as described below:

- Freeways are designed for high-speed vehicular traffic with controlled/limited access.
- Primary Arterials serve as major routes for vehicular traffic, connecting freeways with secondary arterials, collectors, and local streets.
- Secondary Arterials serve to distribute vehicular traffic from primary arterials to collector and local streets and neighborhoods. They support moderate-distance travel and provide access to commercial and residential areas.
- Collector Streets provide connections for all modes of travel within and between residential areas and activity centers. They serve travel between arterial and local streets, within and between neighborhoods and major activity centers, and provide direct access to abutting properties.
- Local Streets provide direct access to abutting properties and for localized travel within residential, commercial, and industrial areas, and include both public and private streets.

Street Network

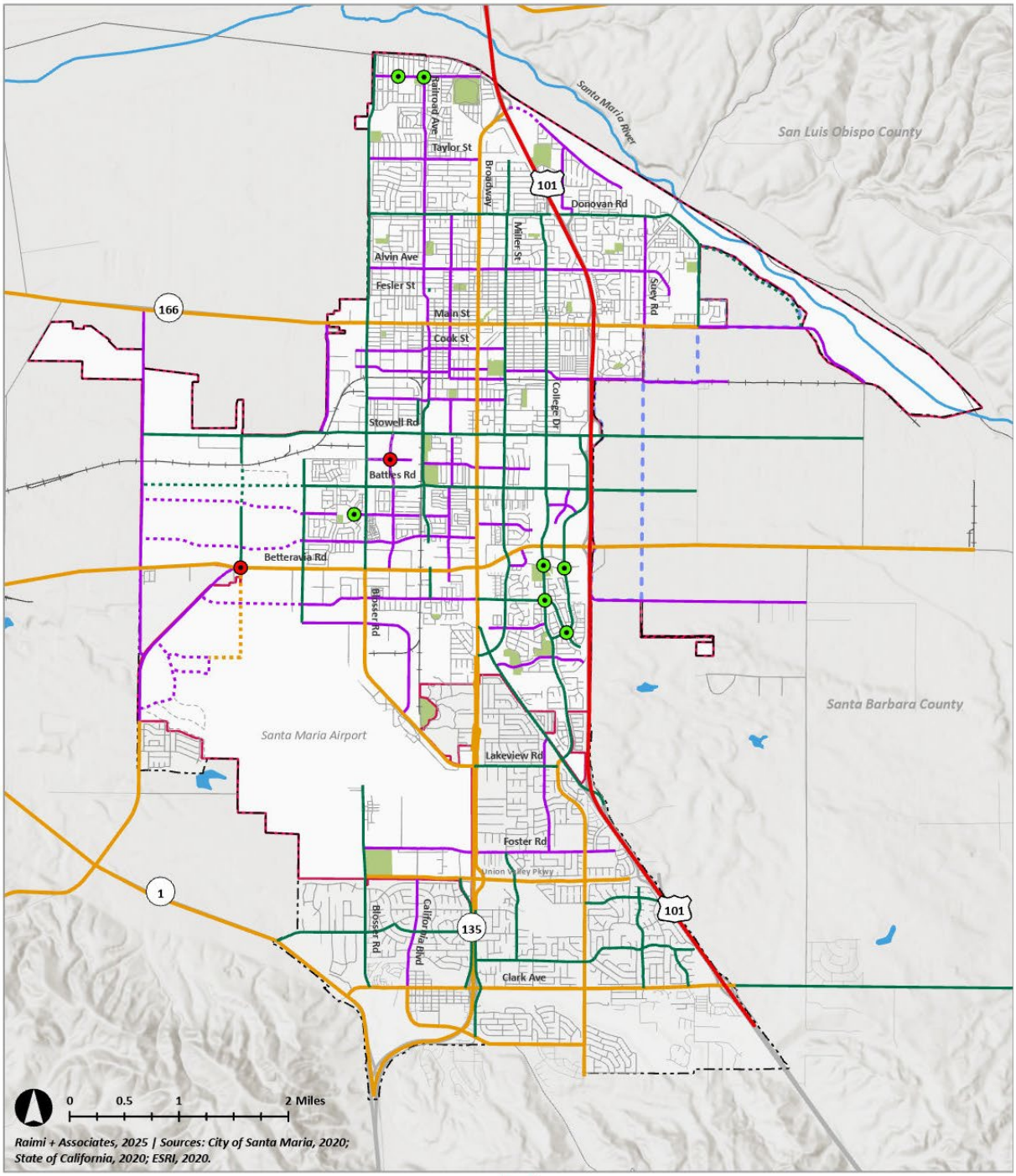
Figure CIR-1 presents the street classifications for each roadway segment. The figure also identifies proposed roadways within the planned annexation areas.

Protected bike lane installed on Bloser Road in 2023.



Roadway on Blosser Road with center landscaped median and bike lane.

Figure CIR-1: Street Network



Traffic Level of Service

Traffic Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of traffic operating conditions, whereby a letter grade "A" through "F" is assigned to an intersection, or roadway segment, representing progressively increasing traffic congestion, as detailed below in Table CIR-1. LOS "A" represents free-flow operating conditions and LOS "F" represents over-capacity conditions. LOS calculation methods are documented in the Transportation Research Board, most recently in the publication Highway Capacity Manual, Sixth Edition, A Guide for Multimodal Mobility Analysis, 2016 (HCM 6).

Table CIR-1: Traffic Level of Service (LOS)

LOS	Type of Flow	Delay	Maneuverability	Stopped Delay per Vehicle—Signalized*	Stopped Delay per Vehicle—Un-signalized*
A	Stable Flow	Very slight delay. Progression is very favorable, with most vehicles arriving during the green phase not stopping at all.	Turning movements are easily made, and nearly all drivers find freedom of operation.	≤10.0	≤10.0
B	Stable Flow	Good progression and/or short cycle lengths. More vehicles stop than for LOS A, causing higher levels of average delay.	Vehicle platoons are formed. Many drivers begin to feel somewhat restricted within groups of vehicles.	>10.0 and ≤20.0	>10.0 and ≤15.0
C	Stable Flow	Higher delays resulting from fair progression and/or longer cycle lengths. Individual cycle failures may begin to appear at this level. The number of vehicles stopping is significant, although many still pass through the intersection without stopping.	Back-ups may develop behind turning vehicles. Most drivers feel somewhat restricted within groups of vehicles.	>20.0 and ≤35.0	>15.0 and ≤25.0

LOS	Type of Flow	Delay	Maneuverability	Stopped Delay per Vehicle—Signalized*	Stopped Delay per Vehicle—Un-signalized*
D	Approaching Unstable Flow	The influence of congestion becomes more noticeable. Longer delays may result from some combination of unfavorable progression, long cycle lengths, or high volume-to-capacity ratios. Many vehicles stop, and the proportion of vehicles not stopping declines. Individual cycle failures are noticeable.	Maneuverability is severely limited during short periods due to temporary back-ups.	>35.0 and ≤55.0	>25.0 and ≤35.0
E	Unstable Flow	Generally considered to be the limit of acceptable delay for most drivers. Indicative of poor progression, long cycle lengths, and high volume-to-capacity ratios. Individual cycle failures are frequent occurrences.	There are typically long queues of vehicles waiting upstream of the intersection.	>55.0 and ≤80.0	>35.0 and ≤50.0
F	Forced Flow	Generally considered to be unacceptable to most drivers. Often occurs with over-saturation. May also occur at high volume-to-capacity ratios. There are many individual cycle failures. Poor progression and long cycle lengths may also be major contributing factors.	Jammed conditions. Back-ups from other locations restrict or prevent movement. Volumes may vary widely, depending principally on the downstream back-up conditions.	>80.0	>50.0

**Seconds per vehicle.*

Bikeway Classifications

Santa Maria utilizes the four classifications of bikeway facilities defined by Caltrans:

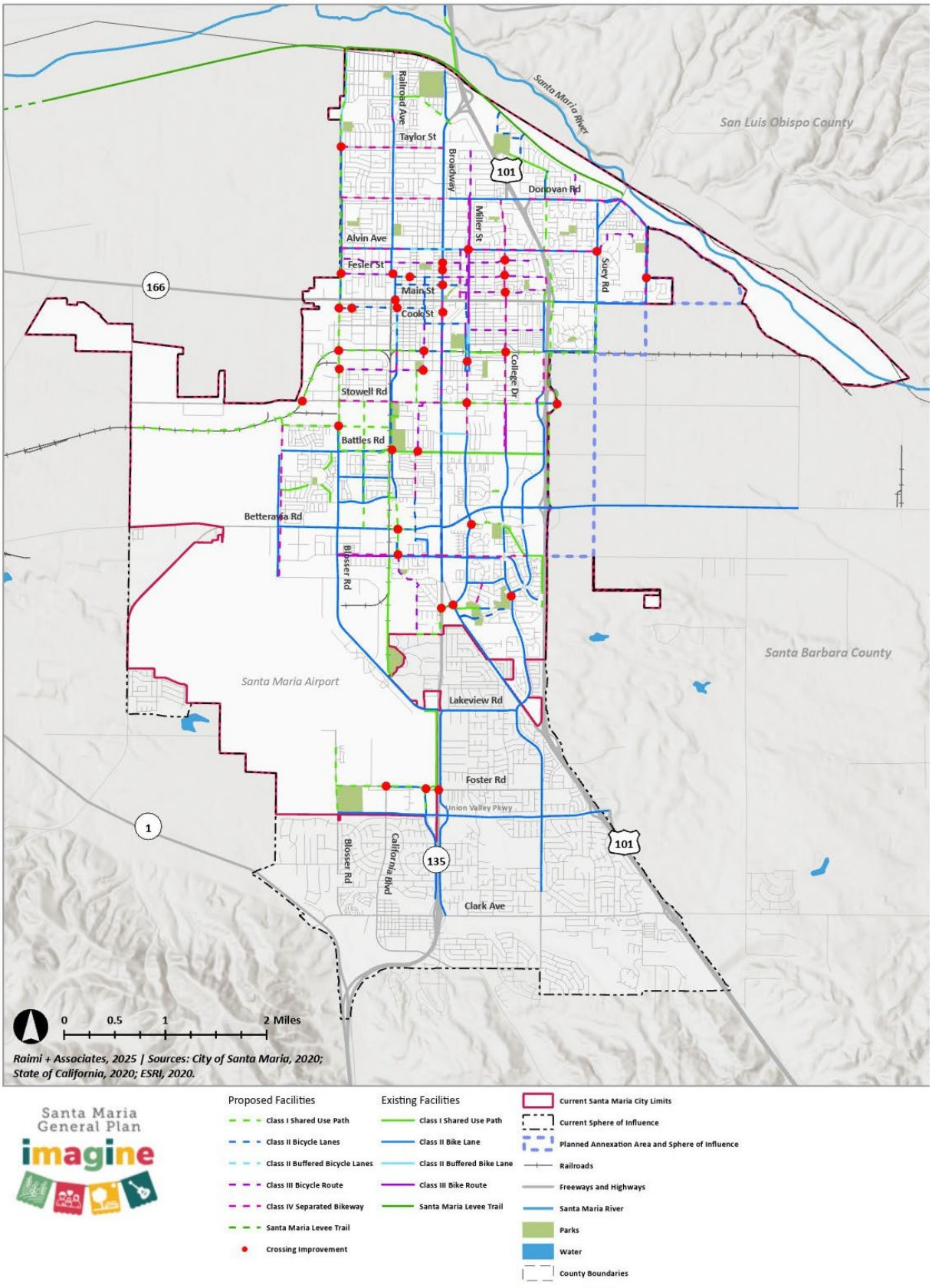
- Multi-Use Paths (Class I Bikeways). A path physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier, used by bicyclists, pedestrians, joggers, skaters, and other non-motorized travelers. They can provide recreational opportunities and serve as a direct connection to key destinations.
- Bicycle Lanes (Class II Bikeways). A portion of a roadway that has been set aside by striping and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Bicycle lanes are intended to promote an orderly flow of bicycle and vehicle traffic. This type of facility is established by using the appropriate striping, legends, and signs.
- Bicycle Routes (Class III Bikeways). Class III bicycle routes are facilities where bicyclists share travel lanes with motor vehicle traffic. Bike routes must be of benefit to the bicyclist and offer a higher degree of service than adjacent streets. Class III bikeways are often located on residential streets.
- Separated Bikeway (Class IV Bikeways). A Class IV Bikeway is for the exclusive use of bicycles and includes a separation between the bikeway and adjacent vehicle traffic. The physical separation may include flexible posts, grade separation, inflexible physical barriers, or on-street parking. Separated bikeways operate in the same direction as vehicle traffic on the same side of the roadway, while two-way separated bikeways can also be used in some cases.

Bikeway Network

Figure CIR-2 presents the proposed Bikeway Network, which builds upon the foundation established by the City's previous planning efforts, including the 1994 Circulation Element, the 2009 Bikeway Master Plan, and the 2020 Active Transportation Plan (ATP). This updated network reflects a comprehensive strategy to enhance bicycle infrastructure citywide by integrating existing facilities with newly proposed routes.

Credit: Janene Scully

Figure CIR-2: Bikeway Network



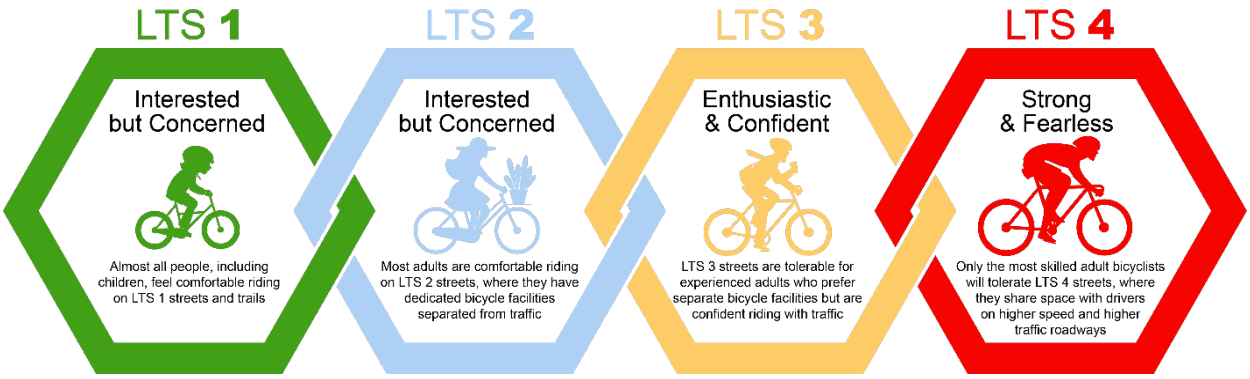
Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Like Vehicular LOS, Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) is a qualitative measure based on quantitative factors, calculated for roadway segments, intersection approach segments and intersection crossings. However, instead of measuring operating conditions, this method is based on roadway and bike facility conditions.

LTS is calculated using methods documented in Oregon Department of Transportation's Analysis Procedures Manual, most recently in Version 2, 2025, pages 10-41. Bicycle LTS quantifies the stress level of a given roadway segment by considering a variety of criteria, including traffic volumes, street width (number of lanes), speed limit or prevailing speed, presence and width of bike lanes, and the presence and width of parking lanes. Bicycle LTS quantifies the stress level of intersection approaches and crossings by considering those factors as well as the intersection controls, presence and length of right-hand turn lanes, presence of bicycle detection technology, and the positioning or loss of bicycle lanes approaching the intersection.

As illustrated in Figure CIR-3, bicycle LTS scores roadway facilities into one of four classifications or ratings for measuring the effects of traffic-based stress on bicycle riders, with 1 being the lowest stress or most comfortable, and 4 being the highest stress or least comfortable. An LTS score of 1 indicates the facility provides a traffic stress tolerable by most children and less experienced riders, such as multi-use paths that are separated from motorized traffic, or neighborhood streets with observed speeds under 25 mph. An LTS score of 4 indicates a stress level tolerable by only the most experienced cyclists who are comfortable with high-volume and high-speed, mixed traffic environments. LTS 3 and 4 represent high stress conditions for bicyclists and reflect the need for visibility and safety improvements. The figure below presents the four scoring classifications.

Figure CIR-3: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress



E-Bikes and Other Micromobility Devices

E-bikes and other micromobility devices are legally allowed to be operated in Class 2, 3, and 4 bike facilities. Jurisdictions may limit micromobility use to certain speeds or certain features may be restricted when using Class 1 multi-use paths. E-bikes are defined in the California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 312.5 as "a bicycle equipped with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power." Any electric-powered two-wheeled device, with or without pedals, which exceeds 750 watts or is capable of speeds over 28 mph is not legally allowed to be operated on public roads. These should be referred to as e-motos.

E-bikes are divided into three classes:

- Class 1 E-Bikes are equipped with a motor that only provides assistance while the rider is pedaling, and ceases to assist when the bicycle reaches 20 mph.
- Class 2 E-Bikes are equipped with a motor that can exclusively propel the bicycle (often activated by a thumb throttle), and ceases to propel when the bicycle reaches 20 mph. Some jurisdictions may restrict throttle assistance on multi-use paths or trails.
- Class 3 E-Bikes are equipped with a motor that only provides assistance while the rider is pedaling and ceases to assist when the bicycle reaches 28 mph. Riders must be at least 16 years old, and helmets are mandatory for riders of all ages. Passengers are not allowed on Class 3 e-bikes.

Other micromobility devices include:

- E-Scooters are defined by CVC Section 407.5 as "a two-wheeled device with handlebars, a floorboard or seat, and powered by an electric motor. E-scooters are not legally allowed to exceed 15 mph or be ridden on sidewalks. The rider must have a valid driver's license and follow the same traffic rules as a bicycle rider.
- E-Skateboards are defined by CVC section 313.5 as "any wheeled device that has a floorboard designed to be stood upon when riding." E-skateboards must meet certain size restrictions, are limited to speeds of 20 mph or less, and limited to roadways with posted speed limits of 35 mph or lower. Riders must be 16 years of age or older, and riders of any age must wear a helmet.

E-scooters parked in a designated e-scooter parking area.

Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network

Figure CIR-4 presents the Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network which depicts the existing and proposed pedestrian facilities and highlights the corridors and intersections prioritized for pedestrian improvements. The Improvement Network reflects the targeted recommendations for enhancements along key corridors and intersections that were identified in the 2020 Santa Maria Active Transportation Plan. Not all streets lacking sidewalks are recommended for improvement, due to constraints related to right-of-way availability and limited implementation resources. These priority locations are listed below:

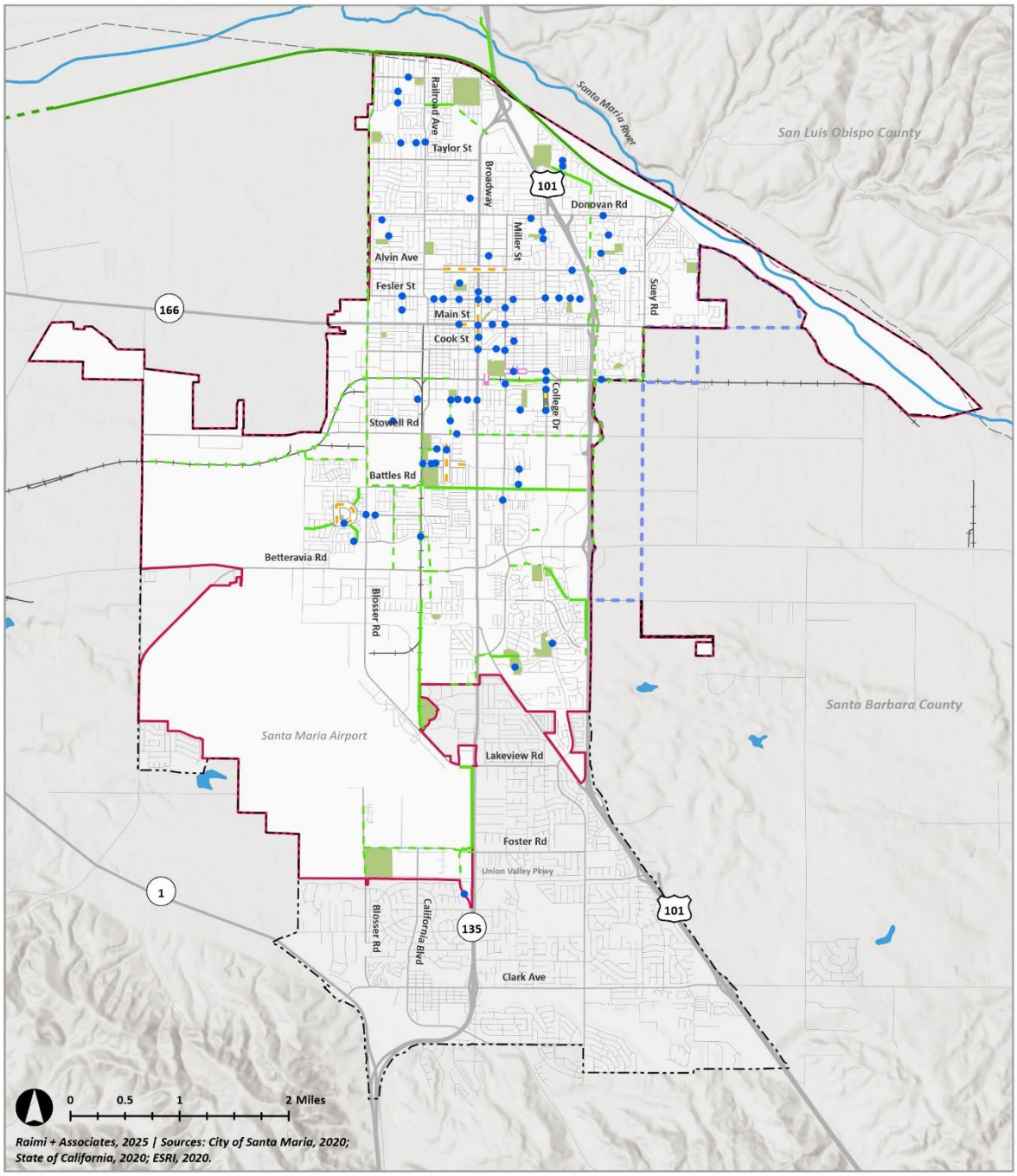
Priority Corridors

- Alvin Avenue
- Battles Road
- Betteravia Road
- Blosser Road
- Broadway
- College Drive
- Curryer Street
- Dena Way
- Depot Street
- Donovan Road
- Enos Drive
- Fesler Street
- Foster Road
- Hidden Pines Way
- La Brea Avenue
- Jones Street
- Main Street
- McClelland Street
- McCoy Lane
- Miller Street
- Morrison Avenue
- Pine Street
- Seaward Drive
- Stowell Road
- Suey Road
- Thornburg Street
- Western Avenue

Priority Intersections

- Pine Street and Fesler Street
- Fesler Street and McClelland Street
- Smith Street and Fesler Street
- College Drive and Fesler Street
- Fesler Street and Concepcion Avenue
- Fesler Street and Lucas Drive
- Fesler Street and Lucas Drive/Scott Drive
- Newlove Drive and Miller Street
- SMVRR Trail Extension and Battles Road
- Carmen Lane and SMVRR tracks
- College Drive and Camino Colegio
- College Drive and Jones/Boone Streets
- Morrison Avenue and Thornburg Street
- Thornburg Street midblock between Morrison Avenue and Stowell Road
- Morrison Avenue Lincoln Street
- Main Street and Broadway
- Boone Street and School Street
- Blosser Road and Sonya Lane
- Alvin Avenue and Curryer Street
- Cook Street and Miller Street
- Cook Street midblock between Miller Street and McClelland Street
- Morrison Avenue and Broadway
- El Medio Drive and Bethel Lane

Figure CIR-4: Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network



Policy Framework

Goal CIR-1: Complete Streets. Safe and convenient travel is provided throughout the community with a citywide network of complete streets that meet the needs of all users, including motorists, transit vehicles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and people of all ages and abilities.[1]

Policy CIR-1.1: Complete Street planning and design. Ensure that complete streets infrastructure improves transportation choices for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation riders of all ages and abilities.

Action CIR-1.1.1: Pursue funding to retrofit existing public streets into complete streets.

Action CIR-1.1.2: Implement the improvements identified in the Downtown Multimodal Streetscape Plan, including raised cycle tracks, wider sidewalks, and on-street parking, incorporating input from recent Caltrans studies and further coordination with Caltrans where needed.

Action CIR-1.1.3: Educate the public on the importance of traffic safety in a multi-modal system through online resources, workshops, and webinars.

Policy CIR-1.2: Complete Streets construction. Construct City streets and private streets to be constructed and maintained, to the extent feasible, in accordance with the Street Network, Bikeway Network, and Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network diagrams, the Active Transportation Plan, and standards established by the City Engineer that should be consistent with accepted standards such as the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) street design guidelines.

Policy CIR-1.3: Complete Streets in new development. Condition approvals of new development with street improvements and access provisions, to the extent feasible, that would be necessary to maintain multimodal operating standards and require complete street amenities consistent with the General Plan and accepted standards for new public and private streets.

Action CIR-1.3.1: Update the Santa Maria Municipal Code to establish active transportation infrastructure standards for new development, such as minimum requirements for bicycle storage/lockers and requiring integration with existing nearby bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure.

Policy CIR-1.4: Bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Consistent with the Bikeway Network and Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network diagrams, develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities to meet the transportation and recreational needs of the residents throughout the city, and where possible, provide separate bikeway access to major destinations (e.g., schools, parks, and commercial and employment centers) to ensure safety.[2]

[1] Complete Streets as defined by AB 1358. See *Regulatory Setting* section for additional information.
[2] Please see the Conservation and Open Space, Recreation and Parks, and Health and Environmental Justice Elements for additional policies and actions focused on trails, infrastructure for physical activity, and multi-purpose open spaces and public lands.

Action CIR-1.4.1: Implement the bicycle and pedestrian projects identified in the Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network diagram above and the Active Transportation Plan.

Action CIR-1.4.2: Pursue all applicable revenue sources for the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Policy CIR-1.5: Bicycle and pedestrian facilities in new development. Require pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly facilities consistent with the Bikeway Network and Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network diagrams and the Active Transportation Plan when reviewing and approving private development applications, General Plan or zoning changes, and specific plans.

Policy CIR-1.6: Multimodal street standards. Maintain and update street standards that serve not just automobile operations, but also multimodal movement and adjacent land uses, including pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities, in a form that is compatible with and complementary to adjacent land uses, and promotes connectivity between uses and areas.

Action CIR-1.6.1: Review current arterial, collector, and local street standards and update as necessary to conform to best practice classification standards (see Street Classifications standards above), including National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) street design guidelines. Alternatively, adopt and regularly update a City Engineering Design Manual to formalize roadway standards.

Policy CIR-1.7: Transportation network completion. Strive to complete the planned build-out of the street network as illustrated on the Street Network diagram and the bicycle and pedestrian improvements identified in the Bikeway Network and Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network diagrams and the Active Transportation Plan.

Action CIR-1.7.1: Review annually the functioning of the street system to identify problems and actively pursue implementation of improvements identified as needed in a timely manner.

Action CIR-1.7.2: Engage the community and transportation stakeholders to identify opportunities to add roundabouts to the street system.

Policy CIR-1.8: Transportation network completion in new development. Require new developments to align new streets with existing or approved streets wherever, in the opinion of the City Engineer, such is feasible.

Action CIR-1.8.1: Evaluate new developments to ensure that the safety, comfort, and convenience of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users are given an equal level of consideration to motor vehicle operators.

Policy CIR-1.9: Transportation studies. For all new larger developments or substantial improvements to existing development, require a transportation study to evaluate the potential effects on the transportation system associated with the proposed project prior to approval, including ensuring that the proposed project provides transportation amenities consistent with the

General Plan. The requirement of transportation studies for new developments is at the discretion of City staff and determined on a case-by-case basis.

Policy CIR-1.10: Acceptable Traffic Levels of Service. Maintain an acceptable peak hour level of service (LOS) of D or better, as determined using the most current edition of the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) or other methodology formally adopted by the City Engineer, on all arterial and collector roadways and at all signalized intersections, except where achieving the LOS standard would result in unacceptable conditions for bicyclists, pedestrians, or transit users (see the Traffic Level of Service standard above). Deficiency plans shall be required for developments that cause intersections to cross the LOS threshold.

Traffic Impact Analyses: Traffic impact analyses (TIAs) shall be prepared using HCM-based methodologies or other methodology formally adopted by the City Engineer, consistent with the City's adopted traffic study guidelines.

Methodology: Where multiple methodologies are available to determine LOS, the City Engineer shall determine the appropriate analysis method based on facility type, context, and study purpose, including, as applicable:

- Control delay (seconds per vehicle) for signalized and unsignalized intersections; and
- HCM-defined performance measures for roadway segments, roundabouts, and other facilities.

Long-Range Planning Flexibility: For long-range planning horizons, area-wide planning efforts, or cumulative growth scenarios, LOS D need not be strictly maintained where the City determines that:

- Temporary or localized degradation of LOS is unavoidable; and
- Overriding transportation, land use, environmental, or community benefits justify the impact, supported by appropriate findings.

Such determinations shall be made using HCM-based analysis or other methodology formally adopted by the City Engineer and documented in the applicable planning or environmental review documents.

Downtown / Specific Plan Areas: Within designated specific plan areas or activity centers, including the Downtown Specific Plan area, projects that exceed City-established vehicle trip thresholds shall prepare a traffic impact analysis using HCM methodology or other methodology formally adopted by the City Engineer in accordance with City standards. Where the City determines that strict application of LOS D would conflict with adopted plan objectives, the City may approve alternative or equivalent transportation mitigation measures, including but not limited to multimodal improvements, transportation demand management strategies, or deficiency plans prepared consistent with State law.

Conditions of Development Approvals: Development approvals shall include conditions necessary to maintain or achieve LOS D unless alternative mitigation is approved pursuant to City policy.

Action CIR-1.10.1: Periodically review roadway and intersection performance using HCM metrics or other methodology formally adopted by the City Engineer and prioritize capital improvements to address identified deficiencies.

Policy CIR-1.11: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress: Provide low-stress travel conditions for bicyclists that achieve Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) 2 or better on arterial and collector streets (see the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress standard above).

Action CIR-1.11.1: Develop access standards regarding new driveways and other encroachments to arterial and collector streets to optimize multimodal site access and minimize conflicts that are detrimental to safe and efficient operating conditions.

Action CIR-1.11.2: Plan the spacing between traffic signals to enhance pedestrian and bicycle crossings, optimize interconnection, and strive to implement signal timing that will result in fuel conservation while avoiding unnecessary delays to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Goal CIR-2: General Plan consistency. Local, regional, State, and private transportation plans, facilities, and services are consistent with the General Plan.

Policy CIR-2.1: Preservation of right-of-way. Require appropriate right-of-way dedications or public access easements of all new developments to facilitate the construction of transportation facilities shown in the Street Network, Bikeway Network, and Pedestrian Priority Improvement Network diagrams as well as the bicycle and pedestrian projects recommended by the Active Transportation Plan, including protection of right-of-way for future streets and trails.

Policy CIR-2.2: Transportation planning. Update and implement transportation plans to be consistent with the General Plan.

Action CIR-2.2.1: Continue to participate in circulation and transportation planning with Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), and the State of California.

Action CIR-2.2.2: Seek inclusion in federal, state, and regional transportation improvement plans that support local capital improvements. These include the Federal Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), the Santa Barbara County Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), and the County Regional Transportation Program (RTP).

Action CIR-2.2.3: Prepare an annual update to the Santa Maria Capital Improvement Program. This shall include a list of infrastructure improvements intended to be implemented by the City over the next five-year period, a priority ranking of those projects, and identification of the available sources of funding to finance the implementation of each improvement project.

Policy CIR-2.3: Air transportation. To support air transportation, ensure that circulation improvements surrounding the Santa Maria Public Airport are compatible with existing and future airport operations.[3]

[3] Please see the Land Use and Safety Elements for related policies and actions.

Action CIR-2.3.1: Coordinate master plans with the Santa Maria Public Airport District (SMPAD), the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), and SBCAG to facilitate consistency between the Santa Maria Circulation Element and the Airport Master Plan.

Goal CIR-3: Funding transportation improvements. The City's existing and future transportation needs are met through cost-effective operation and equitable distribution of funding for transportation improvements.[4]

Policy CIR-3.1: Distribution of costs. Equitably distribute the costs for transportation improvements among property owners/developers who benefit from new development and transportation system users.

Policy CIR-3.2: New development share of costs. Ensure that each new development, whether its impacts are individual or cumulative, pays its proportional share of the costs for any improvements or expansions needed on local or regional roadways when the City's existing revenue sources are not enough to fund those improvements. Any such street assessment district shall generate sufficient revenue to fund the long-term maintenance of the roadway at a target PCI of 80 in perpetuity.

Policy CIR-3.3: New private and public roadways: For each roadway that is constructed as part of new development, the City shall determine whether it (1) remains privately owned and privately maintained, (2) remains private but is included within a roadway maintenance district to be maintained by the City or its designee, or 3) is dedicated to the City and publicly maintained.

Policy CIR-3.4: Funding for pavement management system. Continue to secure adequate funding for the City's Pavement Management System (PMS) that identifies the required maintenance to maintain pavement quality through surface treatments, light rehabilitation, heavy rehabilitation, or reconstruction. Minimize asphalt pavement to be maintained by reducing existing paved areas or repurposing areas to be utilized for active transportation or transit.

Goal CIR-4: Land use compatibility. Transportation facilities and roadway improvements are compatible with land uses and minimize impacts on adjacent land uses.[5]

Policy CIR-4.1: Location of noise-sensitive land uses. Locate noise-sensitive land uses such as residences, hospitals, and schools away from heavily traveled arterials whenever possible. However, these uses may be located along heavily traveled arterials within the Downtown Specific Plan when designed in accordance with the Noise Element of the General Plan and City Ordinances. (Resolution 2008-163)

[4] Please see the Land Use and Recreation and Parks Elements for additional policies and actions related to development impact and mitigation fees.
[5] Please see the Recreation and Parks, Land Use, Noise, and Health and Environmental Justice Elements for policies and actions related to land use conflicts.

Policy CIR-4.2: Heavy vehicle traffic. Provide adequate facilities for heavy vehicle traffic for the transport of goods and materials that avoid sensitive uses and reduce the impact of such traffic on local circulation and residential environments.[6]

Action CIR-4.2.1: Regulate on-street parking of large vehicles such as trucks and RVs where necessary to discourage truck parking on public streets or in other locations where they are incompatible with adjacent land uses and cause visibility and safety problems.

Action CIR-4.2.2: Maintain a truck route plan identifying streets to be posted as designated truck routes to avoid sensitive uses, and to be posted with weight limit restrictions and accompanied with street design elements where possible to discourage their use by heavy vehicles.

Policy CIR-4.3: Coordination of transportation planning. Coordinate land use planning with existing and future transportation facilities so that transportation movement is neither impeded nor significantly impacts adjacent land uses.

Goal CIR-5: Safety. The transportation system is safe and eliminates traffic-related fatalities and reduces injury collisions.[7]

Policy CIR-5.1: Vision Zero. Advance efforts to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries attributable to collisions on City streets by developing and implementing a "Vision Zero" strategy to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries to zero while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all.

Action CIR-5.1.1: Monitor collision data and implement countermeasures to address identified collision patterns.

Action CIR-5.1.2: Implement safety improvements, including improvements consistent with those recommended by the Santa Maria Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP).

Policy CIR-5.2: Safe Routes to School. Promote pedestrian safety and connectivity between homes and schools by implementing infrastructure improvements (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and bike lanes) to ensure safe, accessible pathways for students.

Goal CIR-6: Public transit. Public transit service is frequent, efficient, cost-effective, and responsive to the needs of residents, workers, and visitors.

Policy CIR-6.1: Public transit service and financial stability. Maintain and enhance convenient, safe, and reliable transit services.

[6] Please see the Health and Environmental Justice Element for policies and actions to mitigate the impacts of truck routes.
[7] Please see the Health and Environmental Justice Element for additional policies and actions focused on transportation safety.

Action CIR-6.1.1: Maintain the current level of bus services and expand such services as required when demand levels increase, covering new developments and underserved areas. This may include implementing flexible transit service (also known as microtransit) for off-peak hours, or providing night and weekend services where feasible.

Action CIR-6.1.2: Promote public transit to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips. Identify and evaluate long-term transportation improvements including exclusive bus lanes, bus stop enhancements, bus rapid transit (BRT) and light rail facilities.

Action CIR-6.1.3: Ensure transit services are affordable and accessible for people of every age, ability, or income. Serve disadvantaged communities, transit-dependent individuals, and major employment centers, ensuring that all stops and stations are ADA compliant.

Action CIR-6.1.4: Deliver frequent and reliable service with minimal wait times and direct routes to key destinations. Provide real-time transit information through various channels (apps, digital signs) and integrate modern fare payment options.

Action CIR-6.1.5: Collaborate with regional transit agencies on coordinated scheduling to ensure seamless transfers, facilitating inter-city travel and access to regional employment centers and attractions.

Action CIR-6.1.6: Identify and secure stable funding sources for transit operations, maintenance, and capital projects. Explore federal, state, regional, and local funding opportunities, including potential value capture mechanisms from Transit-Oriented Development.

Policy CIR-6.2: Rights-of-way. Preserve railroad and utility rights-of-way to provide for future transportation system and facilities improvements.

Policy CIR-6.3: Integrated multimodal infrastructure. Develop a multimodal transit system that works for walking, biking, and shared mobility.

Action CIR-6.3.1: Develop mobility hubs that facilitate transfers between different local and regional transit modes (local buses, BRT, and/or future light rail) and other options such as shared micromobility and active transportation.

Action CIR-6.3.2: Invest in transit infrastructure such as bus lanes, and signal prioritization to make transit more attractive. Upgrade transit stops and stations to be universally accessible with comfortable seating, shelters, lighting, and real-time information.

Policy CIR-6.4: Transit-supportive land use and urban design. Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) by encouraging and incentivizing mixed-use, compact developments around existing and planned transit stops and corridors.

Action CIR-6.4.1: Adopt accessible citywide street design standards that support transit operations and active transportation. Plan new developments with direct pedestrian and bike connections to transit stops and ensure building frontages are accessible to transit users.

Action CIR-6.4.2: Integrate transit planning and City planning efforts, including land use, housing, economic development, and environmental plans for a holistic approach to development. Require new development and redevelopment sites to provide transit stops consistent with Santa Maria Regional Transit Standards and documents.

Action CIR-6.4.3: Adopt comprehensive transit design guidelines that provide clear direction for planners and developers on designing new developments and redevelopments that integrate transit. These guidelines should:

- Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle connections to transit stops, for safe, direct, and comfortable routes.
- Promote building orientation and entrances that face the street and transit stops, rather than being set back behind parking.
- Incentivize mixed-use development that places residential, commercial, and civic uses within easy walking distance of transit.
- Incorporate streetscape elements that enhance the pedestrian experience and encourage transit use, such as wide sidewalks, street trees, inviting public spaces, and appropriate lighting.
- Provide guidance on integrating transit stops directly into development sites for maximum convenience and visibility.
- Encourage human-scaled architecture and design that contributes to a vibrant and active public realm around transit facilities.

Goal CIR-7: Vehicle miles traveled. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are reduced.

Policy CIR-7.1: Reduce VMT. Reduce VMT below regional averages on a "per resident" and "per employee" basis.

Action CIR-7.1.1: Maintain VMT thresholds consistent with State guidelines for use in evaluating potential traffic impacts from projects subject to CEQA.

Action CIR-7.1.2: Encourage large regional employers to provide subsidized public transportation or shuttle services for commuting employees.

Policy CIR-7.2: Prioritize land use development patterns that reduce VMT. In existing and future planned areas of the city, prioritize infill and mixed-use development and encourage new development near existing employment, housing, schools, commercial centers, and other services and amenities.

Goal CIR-8: Parking. Convenient on-street and off-street parking facilities are provided for motor vehicles and bicycles (including charging stations for electric vehicles).

Policy CIR-8.1: Parking. Require new developments to provide parking to meet their needs on-site or within proximity to their sites, except within the Central Business District. Required parking should meet demand without resulting in excess or underutilized parking supply.[8]

Action CIR-8.1.1: Develop parking and traffic control plans, including neighborhood parking districts, for those neighborhoods that are adversely impacted by increased density, spillover parking, and traffic from commercial areas.

Action CIR-8.1.2: Periodically review the Santa Maria Municipal Code parking requirements for vehicles, electric charging stations, and bicycles to ensure that adequate parking is provided.

Action CIR-8.1.3: Allow for the joint use of parking facilities to support mixed-use development (i.e., light commercial and residential) by reducing the need for separate facilities.

Action CIR-8.1.4: Review the design of new parking facilities to ensure that pedestrian circulation is adequately accommodated and pedestrian or bicycle access is not negatively affected or impeded.

Action CIR-8.1.5: Encourage safe and accessible bicycle and micromobility device parking for both short-term and long-term parking. Short-term parking is best provided by conveniently located, inverted U-shaped structures, securely attached to the ground, which provide for locking a bicycle or e-bike at two points on the frame. Long-term parking should be secure, have controlled access, be well-lit, well-maintained, and easy to access while rolling a bicycle or e-bike.

[8] Please see Housing Element Program 3.E. to reduce the impacts of parking requirements on the production of housing by updating parking standards.