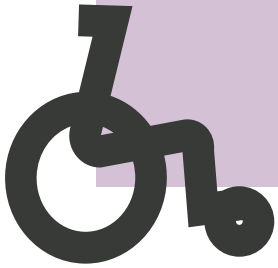


City of Santa Cruz Active Transportation Plan Update

FEBRUARY 2026

SANTA CRUZ

Acknowledgments

City Council & Mayor

Technical Advisory Committee

City Staff

Consultants

Information contained in this document is for planning purposes and should not be used for final design of any project. All results, recommendations, concept drawings, cost opinions, and commentary contained herein are based on limited data and information and on existing conditions that are subject to change.

Existing conditions have not been field-verified. Further analysis and engineering design are necessary prior to implementing any of the recommendations contained herein.

Contents

Executive Summary

The Santa Cruz Active Transportation Plan Update will help the city continue to build safe, comfortable, and convenient biking and walking networks that serve all users for all types of trips.

Building on the solid foundation established by the 2017 Active Transportation Plan, this Plan Update identifies policy and infrastructure recommendations that support the city's liveability and sustainability goals—objectives intended to ensure that Santa Cruz residents and businesses thrive. As redevelopment occurs and more housing is added within the city, it becomes more important than ever to find ways to move people safely and efficiently outside of cars. The ATP Update is the City of Santa Cruz's 10-year playbook to make walking and biking safe, easy, and joyful for everyone.

Active transportation includes walking, biking, or rolling using a personal mobility device, scooter, or skateboard.

Proposed Bike Facilities and Sidewalks

- 37 miles of new or upgraded bike facilities, including 6 miles of multiuse paths
- 3 miles of new sidewalks, filling in gaps within a ¼ mile of key destinations

Program and Policy Highlights

More connected walking and biking networks will allow individuals of all ages and abilities to use active transportation to meet their daily needs. However, supportive policies and programs are critical to aligning the city's internal processes across departments and providing information and support for biking and walking among the general public. Topics addressed by the recommendations in this plan include:

- E-bikes,
- Sustainable funding for sidewalk improvements,
- Operational changes at signalized intersections, and
- Ongoing education and encouragement programs.

Active Transportation in Santa Cruz Today

94 miles of on-street bikeways (> 50% of which are Class II bike lanes)

22 miles of multiuse paths

5.2 % of work commutes are taken by bike[1]

9.9 % of work commutes are taken by foot (walking)[2]

8 % of households do not have access to a personal vehicle[3]

[1]U.S. Census Bureau 2019-2023 ACS 5-year Estimates.
[2]Ibid.
[3]Ibid.

1 Introduction

The City of Santa Cruz Active Transportation Plan (ATP) Update was developed from late 2024 through early 2026 and builds upon the City's 2017 ATP. A result of collaborative efforts between City staff, local advocates, and community members, the Plan Update will continue the City's strong investment in active transportation through informed infrastructure, programming, and policy recommendations.

This chapter introduces the Plan Update's Vision and Goals and describes the community engagement approach during plan development.

Active transportation includes walking, biking, or rolling using a personal mobility device, scooter, or skateboard.

In Santa Cruz today, estimates indicate that people make 34%* of all trips by walking and biking, exceeding the 30% target in the City's 2022 Climate Action Plan.

**Modeled data from Replica; weekday Spring 2024*

Vision and Goals

The vision for Santa Cruz is **a place where people of all ages and physical abilities can access safe, convenient, and enjoyable ways of getting around**. The following goals and objectives, developed by the planning team in conjunction with the Plan's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), will help realize this vision:

- Enhance safety and security for active transportation users.
- Build and maintain comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian networks.
- Continue progress and investments in active transportation.
- Provide education and encouragement.

Progress towards the Plan's goals will be tracked across a variety of performance measures (see Chapter 4 for the full list), including:

- Number of serious and fatal bicyclist and pedestrian crashes.
- Miles of bike facilities and sidewalks.
- Number of bicycle and pedestrian trips as measured by counters located strategically throughout the City.

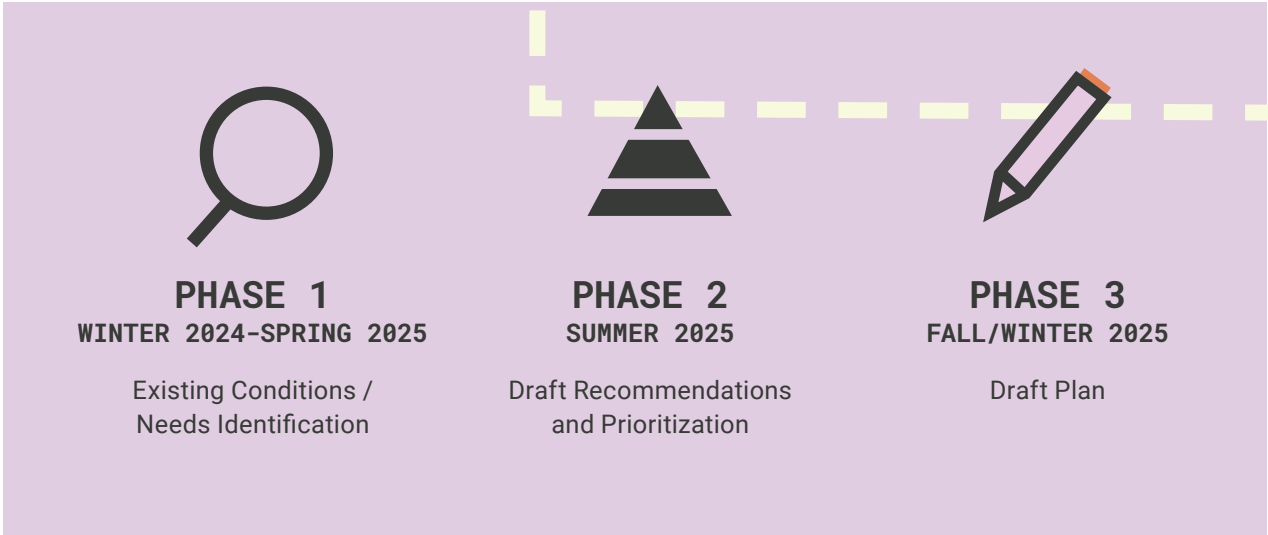


Figure 1: Infographic of the three phases of the ATP Update

Figure 2: Pop-up at the Santa Cruz Bible Church Food Distribution in March 2025

Community Engagement Approach

The ATP Update was developed across three phases as visualized in Figure 1.

Ecology Action, a local nonprofit partner with strong relationships citywide, was instrumental in carrying out the engagement process across all phases of the project. The goals of the community engagement were to:

» Inform the community about the purpose and process of the ATP Update.

Engage and build trust with a diverse array of community members to gather input on the plan. Focus on reaching underserved groups, including the unhoused population, English language learners, low-income residents, people of color, people with disabilities, youth, and older adults.

» Collaborate with local agencies and organizations to reach target populations.

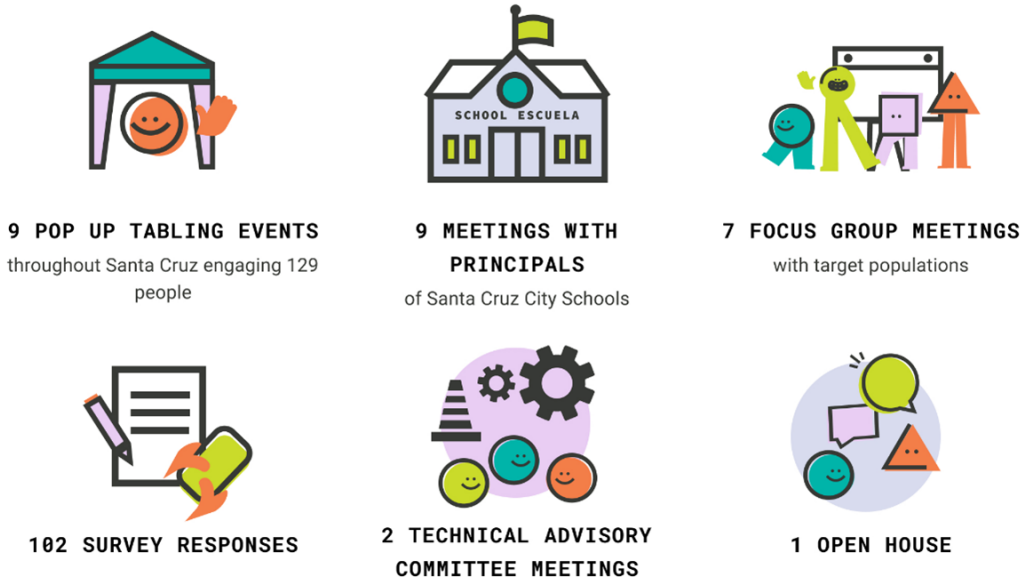


Figure 3: A summary graphic of the engagement methods used during the ATP Update.

» Collect community input on challenges and opportunities using active modes in the city, and suggestions for how the City can improve conditions and better connect people to key destinations via active modes.

» Receive feedback on draft recommendations, project prioritization, and the draft plan.

Figure 3 summarizes the different community engagement methods employed through this planning process. In addition, the City of Santa Cruz and Ecology Action maintained an updated project website throughout the planning process.

Pop-Ups

Pop-ups were conducted throughout the city to meet residents and employees where they already are (in contrast to an open house, which requires someone to travel to a location to participate). As these pop-ups were conducted during Phase 1, the purpose was to get input on challenges and needs related to using active modes or getting to transit. These included:

» A trailside pop-up at Santa Cruz Bible Church food distribution event

» A pop-up at Nueva Vista Beach Flats food distribution event

» A downtown library pop-up at a Minecraft STEAM workshop

» A trailside pop-up on the Westside Rail Trail near Fair Avenue

» A downtown library pop-up during toddler storytime

- A pop-up during a senior walking group outing through Arana Gulch
- A UCSC pop-up at a Slug Bike Life e-bike demo event
- A downtown library pop-up during the Housing Matters drop-in support hours

Principal Meetings

To learn about the top transportation and safety concerns faced by students, the team conducted 30-minute interviews with each of the nine principals of Santa Cruz City Schools.

Focus Groups

During Phase 1, the planning team facilitated six, hour-long focus groups to discuss participants' top challenges and priorities for active transportation. Each group involved a different set of community members: bicycle advocates, UCSC affiliates, business owners, unhoused service providers, pedestrians and transit users, and teens. A follow-up focus group during Phase 2 reviewed draft policy and program recommendations with a combined group of bicycle advocates, pedestrians, and transit users.

Social Media Outreach

The City of Santa Cruz and Ecology Action shared posts and stories on their social media pages encouraging people to visit the project webpage and add comments to the interactive online map.

Figure 4: Phase 2 Open House at London Nelson Community Center, August 2025.

Online Survey and Interactive Map

The planning team hosted an online community survey and interactive map, available in English and Spanish, on the project website throughout March and April 2025. The survey included questions about respondents' primary mode of transportation and factors influencing their travel choices. The interactive online map allowed respondents to comment on specific streets and intersections, with comments organized by biking, walking, and crossing issues. The planning team promoted the survey and map via the pop-ups and social media posts.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The planning team convened a TAC comprised of industry professionals, advocates, and active modes users. The TAC informed the planning process throughout, with meetings held during each of the three planning phases. Their input directly shaped the Plan's goals, recommendations, and prioritization framework.

Open Houses

The planning process also featured two public open houses: one during Phase 2 to review and get input on existing conditions findings, and one during Phase 3 to review and get feedback on the Draft Plan. Both open houses used informational and interactive approaches to engage the public.

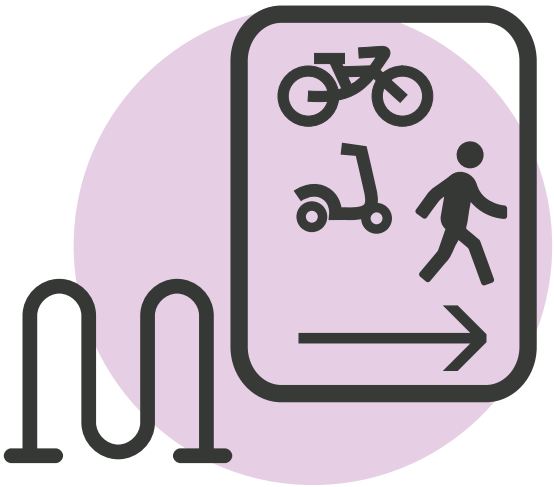
2 Existing Conditions

This chapter provides an overview of existing conditions for people walking and bicycling in Santa Cruz as identified through data, observation, and public input. This information forms the basis for the infrastructure, program, and policy recommendations as well as prioritization in the next chapters.

Active Transportation Networks

Bicycle Facilities

Multiuse paths, including West Cliff Drive, the Westside Rail Trail, and the Riverwalk, along with striped bike lanes along the cross-town arterials and collectors, form the spine of the City's bike network. A network of bike routes and bicycle boulevards on local streets connect to the spine. Other than Ocean Street and Mission Street/US 1, which have posted speed limits of 30 mph, all streets in Santa Cruz have posted speeds of 25 mph and below.



101
Miles of Bike Lanes

87
Miles of Bike Routes

22
Miles of Multi-use Paths

Figure 5: Mileage of Existing Bike Facilities

** On-street bike facilities are presented in lane miles, i.e., a bike lane on both sides of 1 mile of roadway is 2 miles.*

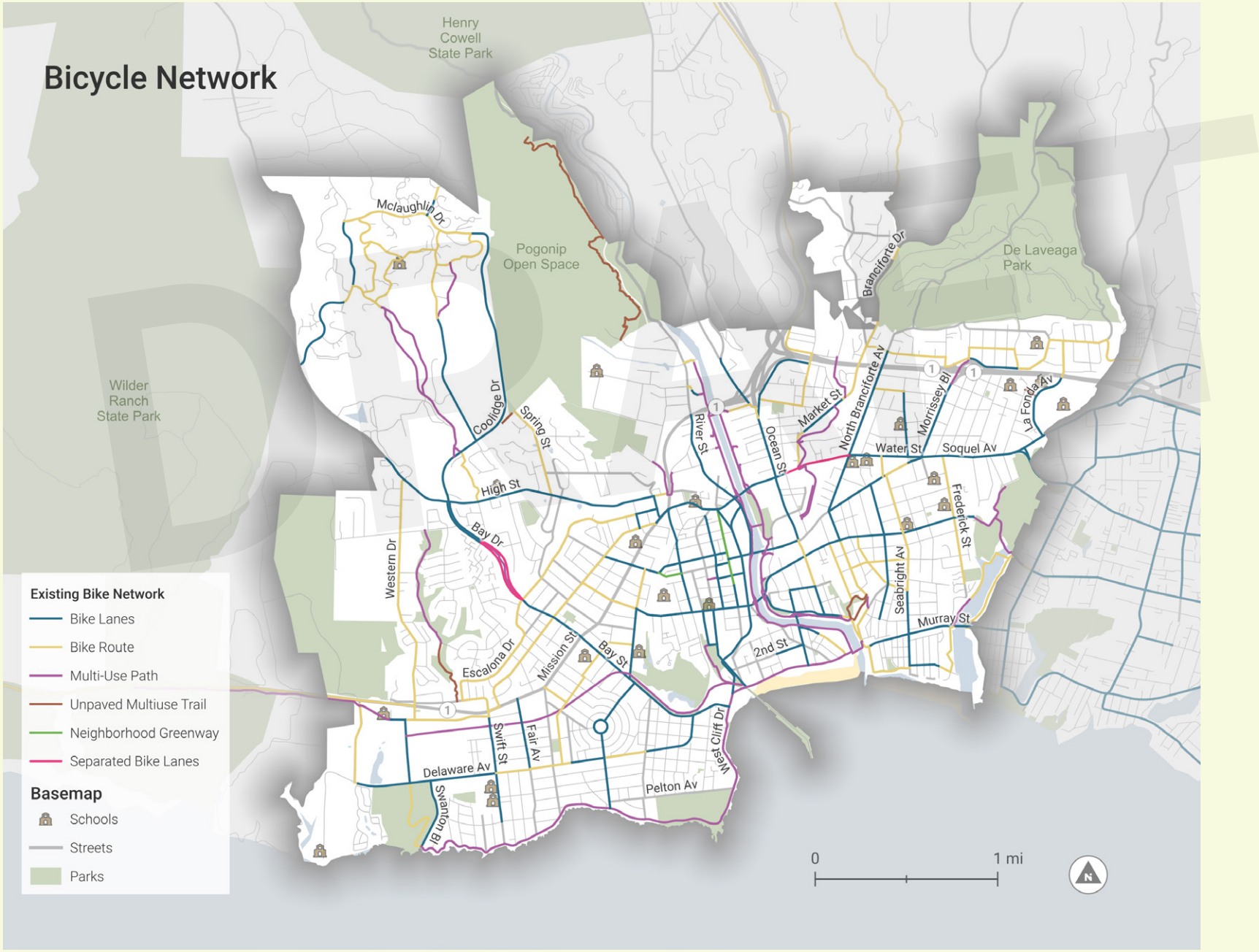


Figure 6: Existing Bicycle Network

The comfort of bicycle facilities can vary widely depending on their context and level of separation from vehicular traffic. To measure the comfort of the existing bicycle network, the planning team conducted a bicycle level of traffic stress (BLTS) analysis, which assigns a score from 1 (lowest stress) to 4 (highest stress) to each street segment. These scores include factors such as traffic speeds and volumes, number of travel lanes, bikeway type/width and parking lane presence/width. Lower stress correlates with increased protection from vehicles and decreased speeds and volumes.

Designing bike facilities that are comfortable for users of all ages and abilities means that more people will be willing to use these facilities.

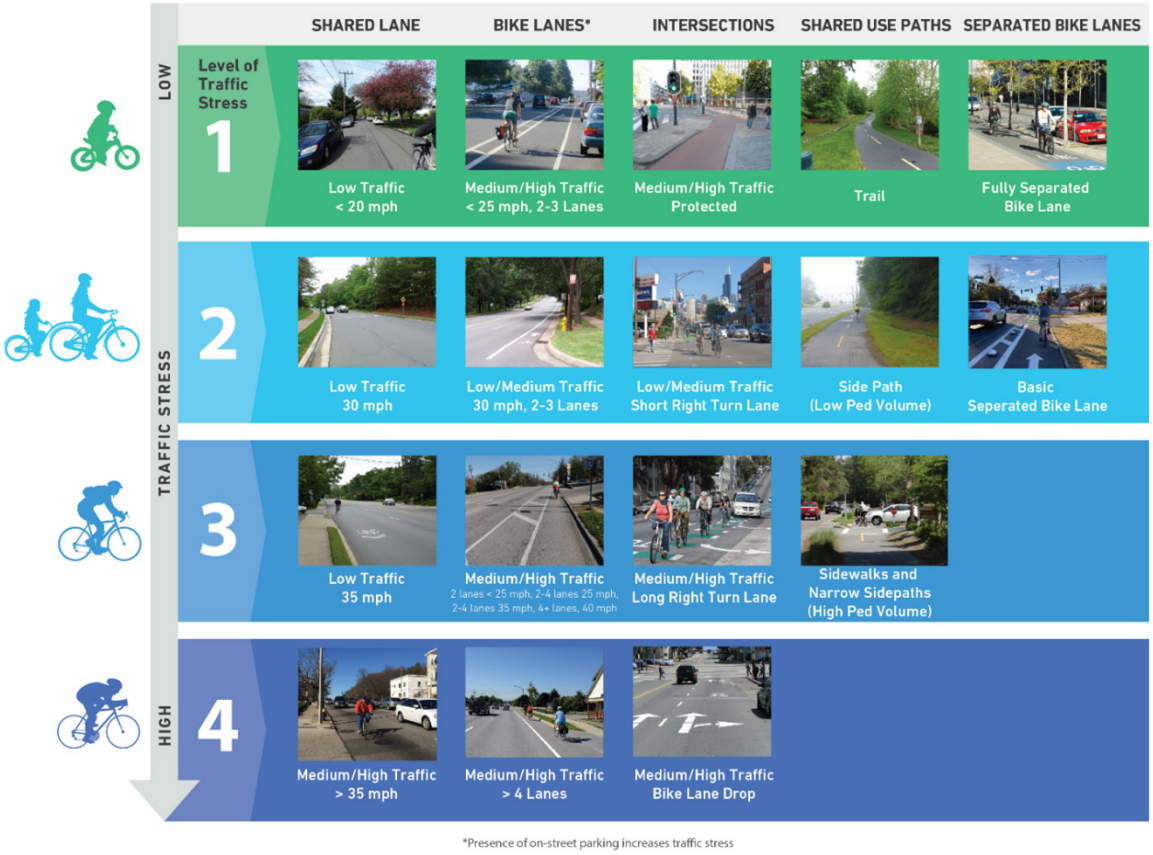


Figure 7 provides visual examples of BLTS.

There were 55 total comments about bikeways on the online and pop-up maps.

Key themes included:

- Biking on arterials feels unsafe due to vehicle speeds and lack of protection from vehicles.
- Bicyclists and pedestrians compete for limited space at the Pacific Avenue roundabout near the Wharf and on West Cliff Drive.

Most local streets, or around 72% of the city's roadway network, are assigned Level 1 or 2, indicating they would be comfortable for most adults to bicycle on. The remaining 28% of the roadway network is assigned Level 3 or 4, indicating it is highly stressful to bicycle on. These high-stress streets include most arterials and collectors in Santa Cruz, as well as most of downtown. BLTS results are summarized in Table 1 and Figure 8. A goal of this Plan is to create a network of BLTS 2 or better through the City of Santa Cruz.

As in many other cities, the arterials and collectors in Santa Cruz offer some of the only continuous routes and are where many destinations are located. Providing greater protection through separated bikeways or multiuse paths would improve BLTS scores, but the constrained right-of-way makes these streets more challenging to retrofit.

LEVEL OF TRAFFIC STRESS SCORE	MILES OF NETWORK	PERCENTAGE OF NETWORK
1	112	63%
2	15	9%
3	34	19%
4	16	9%

Table 1: Segment-level Level of Traffic Stress Summary

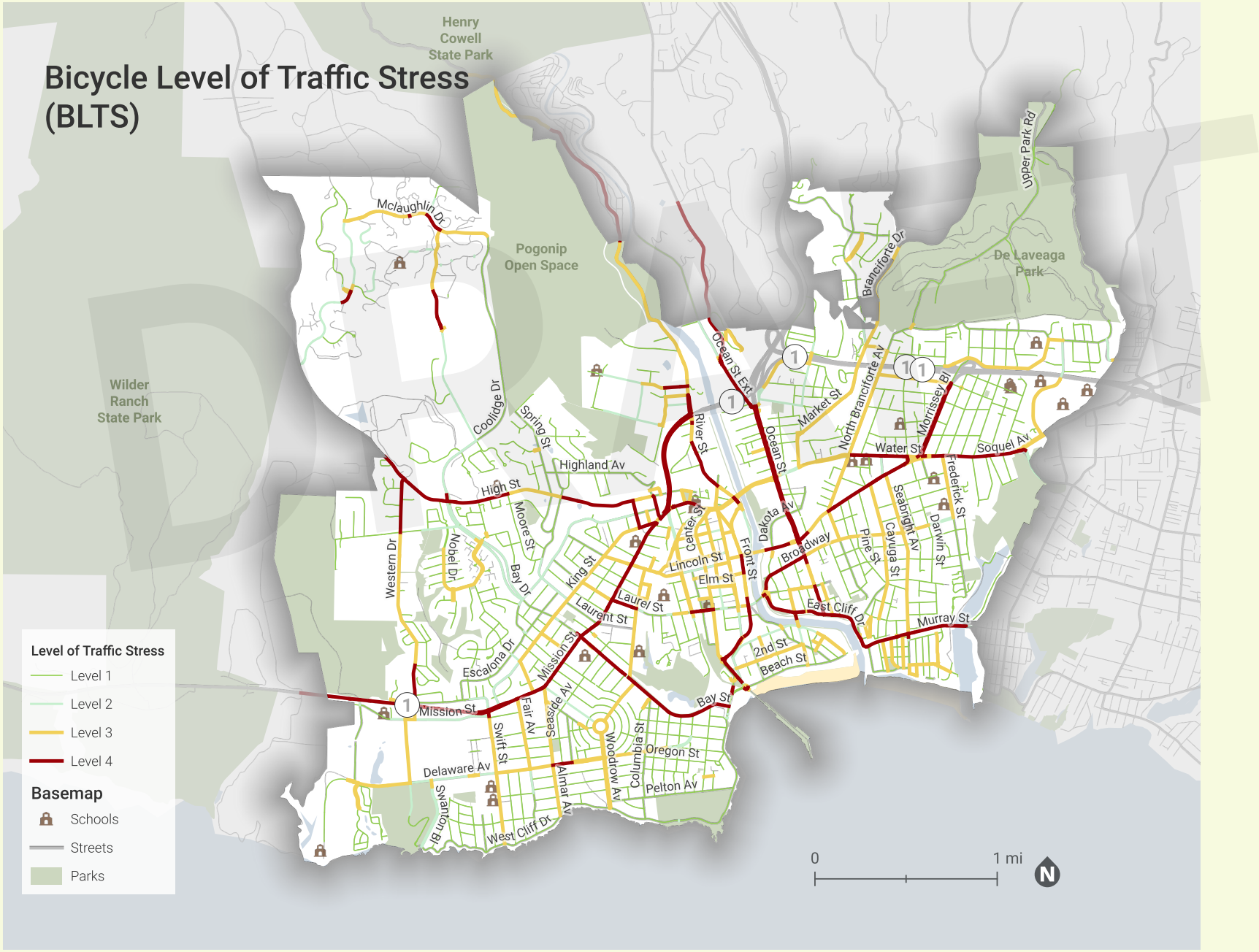
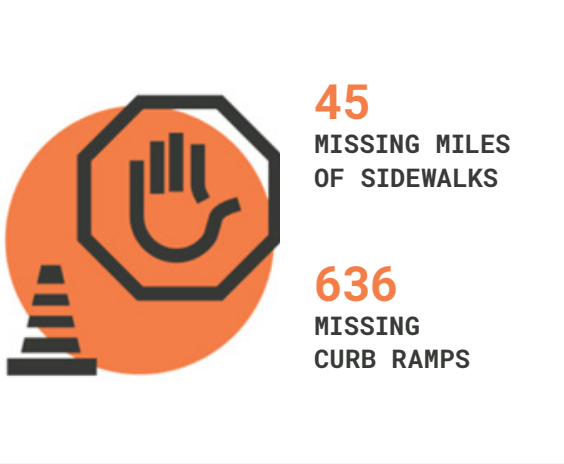


Figure 8: Bicycle level of traffic stress map

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are the foundation of a pedestrian network; their presence and quality dictate how safe, comfortable, and accessible the network is. Downtown and major streets in Santa Cruz have sidewalks, though some need maintenance to meet ADA accessibility standards. Gaps in the pedestrian network exist where streets that are missing sidewalks and where sidewalks are missing curb ramps.

Many of these gaps are concentrated in older postwar residential neighborhoods outside of Downtown Santa Cruz, including portions of the Upper and Lower Westside and Upper and Lower Eastside. These areas are highlighted on a map in Figure 10.



45
MISSING MILES OF SIDEWALKS

636
MISSING CURB RAMPS

Figure 9: Summary graphic of missing pedestrian infrastructure

There were 38 total comments about sidewalks on the online and pop-up maps.

Key themes included:

- **Sidewalks need maintenance and accessibility upgrades.**
- **Sidewalks are too narrow in some places.**

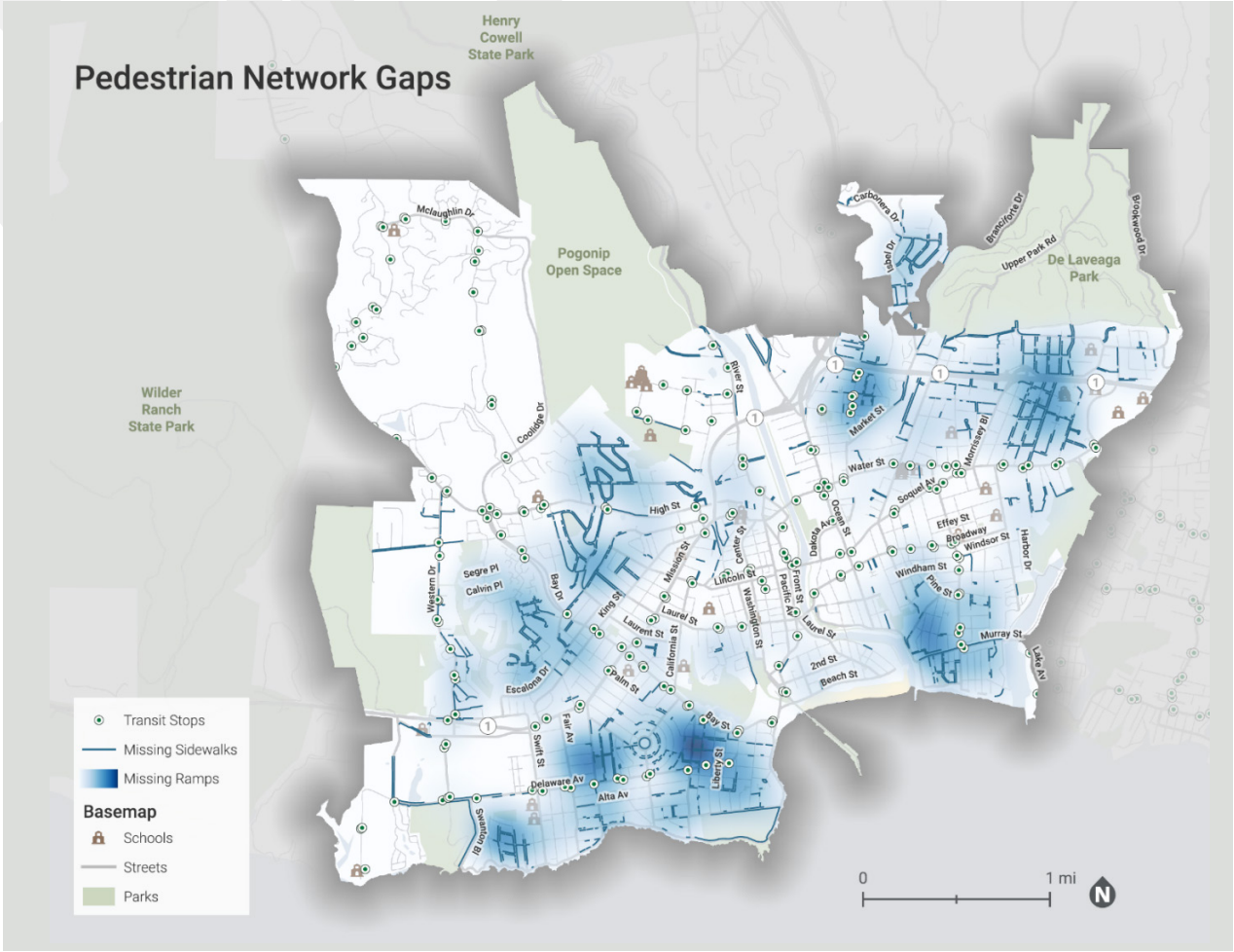


Figure 10: Pedestrian Network Gaps

Crossings

Safe and comfortable crossings are an important part of a complete active transportation network. Even if all blocks within a network offer comfortable facilities for people walking and biking, unsafe crossings are barriers to connected trips and act as conflict points that interrupt otherwise low stress routes.

During the first phase of outreach, unsafe crossings were a frequent concern across groups. Community members commonly cited larger arterial roadways as uncomfortable to cross, due to lack of driver yielding and visibility of pedestrians, especially at night. Community members described crossings along Mission Street, Ocean Street, Water Street, and Rail Trail as unsafe and stressful to cross both on foot and by bicycle.

To assess the challenges presented by uncomfortable crossings, the planning team evaluated pedestrian crossing level of traffic stress (PxLTS) on arterial and collector streets (these are the focus roadways shown in Figure 10). Each intersection was assigned a score based on posted speeds, traffic volumes and presence of traffic control devices. PxLTS scores range from 1 (lowest stress) to 4 (highest stress). Generally, fewer travel lanes, lower posted speed limits and the presence of traffic signals or 4-way stop signs are associated with lower PxLTS scores.

There were 74 total comments about crossings—the most in any category on the online and pop-up maps.

Key themes included:

- Vehicles do not yield to pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the Rail Trail.
- Arterials are challenging to cross due to vehicle speeds and visibility challenges (lighting, parked cars, winding roads, etc.)

Figure 11: Map of Pedestrian Crossing Stress on arterial and collector streets

	TOTAL ANALYZED INTERSECTIONS	LOW STRESS INTERSECTIONS		HIGH STRESS INTERSECTIONS	
		PxLTS 1	PxLTS 2	PxLTS 3	PxLTS 4
All Focus Roadways	214	9	31	100	74
	100%	4%	14%	47%	35%
Within ¼ mile of schools	97	3	20	37	37
	100%	3%	21%	38%	38%

Table 2: Pedestrian Crossing Level of Stress Summary

Table 2 summarizes the PxLTS scores for focus roadway intersections, as well as for a subset of intersections within ¼ mile of a city school. Over 82% of intersections along focus roadways and 76% of analyzed intersections within ¼ mile of schools are high stress (with scores of 3 or 4), indicating the larger roadways in Santa Cruz present barriers for people walking and bicycling.

Destinations Frequented by Focus Populations

Phase 1 of public engagement was designed to get input from members of groups that face physical, age-related, financial, or other barriers to car ownership and rely more heavily on public transit and/or active modes of transportation. These groups included the unhoused population, English language learners, low-income residents, people of color, people with disabilities, youth, and older adults. The planning team and Technical Advisory Committee brainstormed a set of initial destinations frequented by these groups, and the list was refined through focus groups with service providers for the unhoused community and youth.

Figure 12 shows equity destinations for the unhoused community, which include shelters, safe parking lots, food distribution sites, and health centers. Even though many of the key equity destinations are in the Downtown area, they are close to high-stress routes. Shelters and other services for the unhoused population are located further from Downtown, between freeways, lack reliable public transit service, and are far from safe places to cross the street.

Figure 12 also shows destinations where youth and other residents of Santa Cruz go to meet their daily needs, such as schools, parks, libraries, community centers, and grocery stores and are also along or close to high-stress infrastructure, discouraging walking and biking.

Youth in the De Laveaga neighborhood are also particularly impacted by lack of walking and bicycling connectivity to the rest of the city. La Fonda Avenue serves as the only direct route connecting this neighborhood north of the highway to Harbor High School. With narrow right-of-way, this road provides a dedicated bike facility only on the northbound (uphill) side with sharrows on the southbound side, making it challenging for high school students to safely and comfortably travel to school by bike.

An additional challenge for youth is accessing in the Boardwalk area, which offers employment opportunities. While the Riverwalk is a direct, low-stress connection from Downtown to the Boardwalk, youth who participated in the focus group expressed personal safety concerns realted to antisocial behavior, drug dealing, and lighting with this route, relying instead on higher-stress and less direct downtown streets.

Safety and Crash Trends

The 2017 Active Transportation Plan and more recent crash data show that Santa Cruz has disproportionately high crash rates for active transportation users. As of late 2025, the City has also starting developing a Safety Action Plan, which has further highlighted the overrepresentation of active transportation users in crashes throughout Santa Cruz.

Figure 12: Equity destinations and high stress corridors and intersections

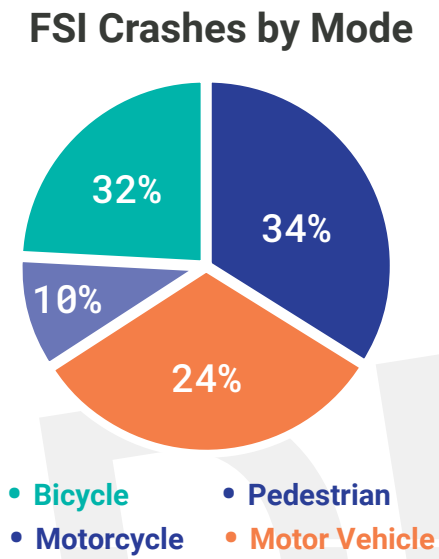


Figure 13: Breakdown of fatal and serious injury crashes by travel mode.

Crashes by Travel Mode

Between 2020 and 2024, there were 626 injury crashes in Santa Cruz. Within that total, there were 110 total fatal and serious injury (FSI) crashes in Santa Cruz – 66% of which involved a person walking or biking. That means that despite most travel being done by motor vehicle, two out of every three fatal or serious injury crashes in Santa Cruz involve a pedestrian or bicyclist. Figure 12 shows the overall breakdown of FSI crashes by mode of travel.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes by Age

As home to UC Santa Cruz and families with young children, almost half of the city's population is under 30 years old. However, residents younger than 30 are relatively underrepresented in bicycle and pedestrian crashes, compared to their share of the population in Santa Cruz. This trend flips for people over 30 years old, as seen in Figure 13, with a significant overrepresentation of adults over 60. Despite only making up 16% of the Santa Cruz population, they are involved in 24% of all FSI crashes while walking and biking in Santa Cruz. It's important to note that these crash statistics don't account for exposure, or the number of trips that Santa Cruz residents are taking. For example, it is unlikely that a 7-year-old is taking the same number of trips as a 50-year-old resident in Santa Cruz. Regardless, these findings highlight a need to ensure that active transportation facilities are designed to meet the unique needs and vulnerabilities of older adults in Santa Cruz.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Locations

The majority of fatal and serious injury bicycle and pedestrian crashes occur on arterial and collector roadways. These corridors – Mission Street, Laurel Street, Front Street, Ocean Street, and Soquel Avenue – which are high stress due to high traffic volumes and vehicle speeds, are also the most dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians. Fatal and serious injury bicycle and pedestrian crashes are mapped in Figure 14.

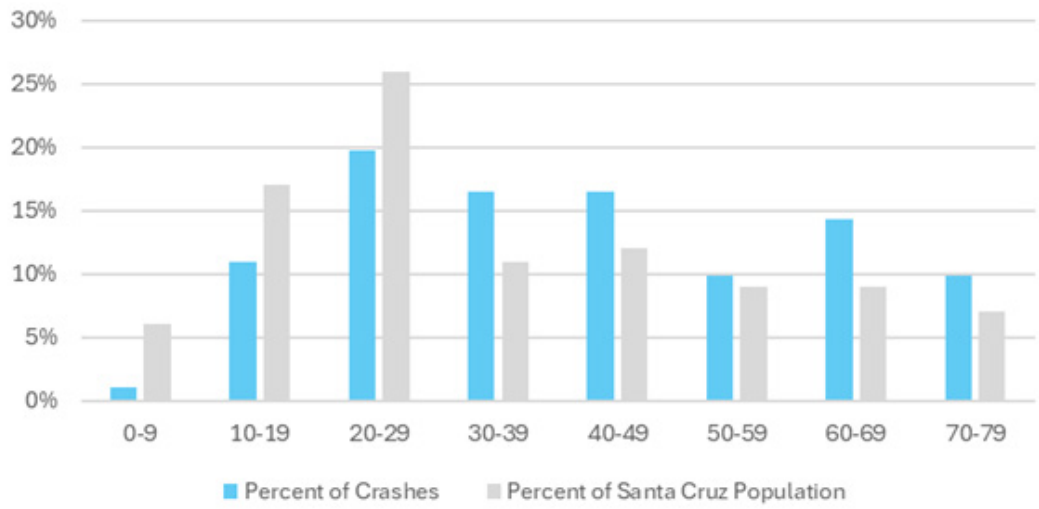


Figure 14: Bar chart of bicycle and pedestrian crash victims by age group compared to their share of the population in Santa Cruz (Source: US Census).

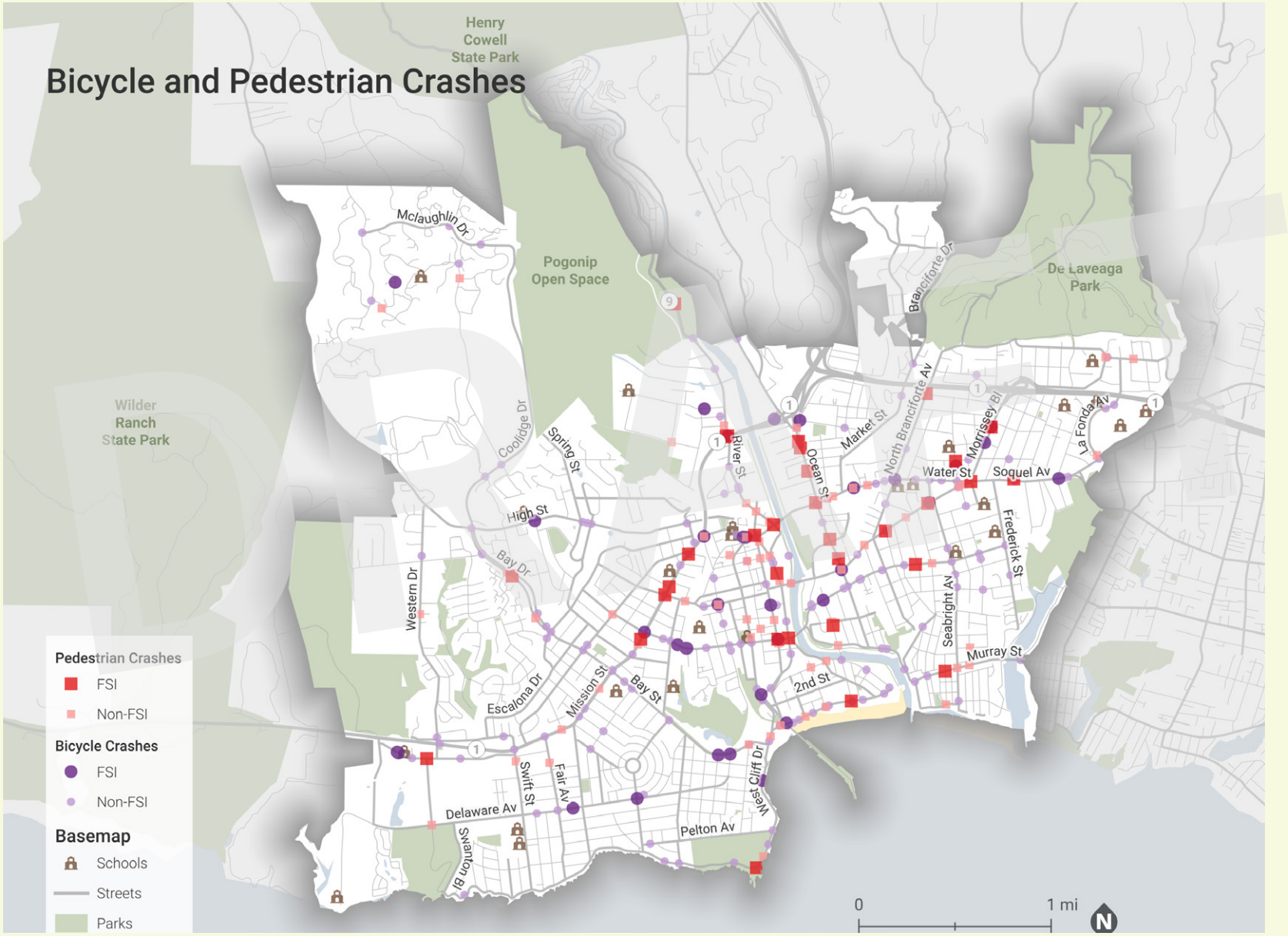


Figure 15: Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes, 2020-2024

Behavioral Challenges

The behavior of people walking, bicycling, taking transit, and driving affects real and perceived safety on streets, trails, and at crossings. Throughout public engagement, community members consistently raised concerns over several types of behavior that impact the comfort levels of people walking and biking.

Community members cited concerns such as distracted driving and drivers failing to yield to pedestrians at crosswalks, contributing to discomfort for active transportation users crossing streets. These concerns were reported to be more pronounced during the summer tourist season.

E-bikes can create challenges due to being heavier and faster than typical bicycles, and they emerged as a top-of-mind concern across groups during engagement. Multiuse path users reported many close calls with e-bike users going too fast or passing too closely. Community members strongly supported the idea of educational campaigns, with specific attention given to youth, to communicate proper behavior when riding e-bikes including when and where e-bikes can be used.

Specific paragraphs on Riverwalk: feedback from every user group that the Riverwalk feels unsafe to them.

Antisocial behavior on the Riverwalk was mentioned in every outreach user group. In speaking with youth, seniors, regular walks and cyclists, homeless service providers, and others, the discussion talked about the great resource that the Riverwalk *could be*, but that the current antisocial issues along the Riverwalk lead people to feel unsafe and to avoid the facility. Key issues included open drug use, aggressive behavior, people blocking the path with belongings, and lack of lighting on segments and under bridges.

3 Recommendations

This chapter presents three general types of recommendations for enhancing and growing active transportation in Santa Cruz: infrastructure, programming, and policy. The infrastructure recommendations make changes to the built environment to provide space for biking and walking. Policies address how the city operates and will lead to increased effectiveness when implementing this plan. Programs focused on safety education and encouragement create a culture of biking and walking. These recommendations – informed by community engagement, the existing conditions analyses, and best practices – will help achieve the Plan Update's vision and goals.

Figure 16: A newly opened (2025) segment of the Coastal Rail Trail in Santa Cruz

MOST SEPARATION FROM CARS

LEAST SEPARATION FROM CARS

CLASS I

Rail Trail

Multi-Use Path
Off-street paths for bicyclists and pedestrians, adjacent to the roadway

CLASS IV

Beach Street

Separated Bikeway
One-way or two-way bike lanes with a physical barrier between the bicyclist and traffic lanes (e.g., curb, bollards, planters, etc.)

Grade-Separated Bikeway
Bike lanes located at sidewalk level or at an intermediate level between the roadway and sidewalk to separate the bicyclists from the pedestrians

CLASS II

Laurel Street

Conventional Bike Lane
A painted lane within the street for one-way bicycle travel

Buffered Bike Lane
Conventional bike lanes with an additional painted buffer separating the bike lane from the vehicle travel lane and/or parking lane

CLASS III

King Street

Bike Route
Streets where bicycles share the road with vehicles, typically designated with sharrows (painted bike symbol with an arrow) and/or signs

Neighborhood Greenway
Local streets enhanced with signage, traffic calming, and/or other treatments to prioritize bicycle travel and reduce traffic volumes and speeds

Figure 17: Bikeway Facility Types

Bicycle Facilities

The recommended bicycle facilities build upon the existing network in Santa Cruz by upgrading existing facilities and installing new facilities where none exist to create a low-stress network. Low-stress facilities on arterials and shared-use paths will form the major corridors of the bikeway network, while low-stress facilities on local roads and collectors will connect these corridors together. This approach ensures that anyone biking does not need to travel more than a few blocks to access a low-stress route.

As posted speed limits and motor vehicle volumes increase, bikeways must offer greater separation from traffic to provide low-stress conditions. The differences between different bicycle facility types are described in Figure 17.

The recommended bicycle facility for each corridor was informed by the FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide matrix shown in Figure 18. However, not every facility recommendation can strictly adhere to these guidelines, and many tradeoffs must be considered when selecting the recommended facility. For example, the planning team studied the Broadway Avenue corridor in detail to assess the feasibility of adding separated bike lanes based on speeds and volumes. However, the constrained right-of-way, frequency of driveways, and potential loss of on-street parking that

What does it mean to be "low stress"?

- A low-stress bikeway is one that scores 1 or 2 using the Bicycle LTS methodology.
- "More separation from cars makes more types of bikers feel comfortable." – West Side Rail Trail March 2025 pop-up participant

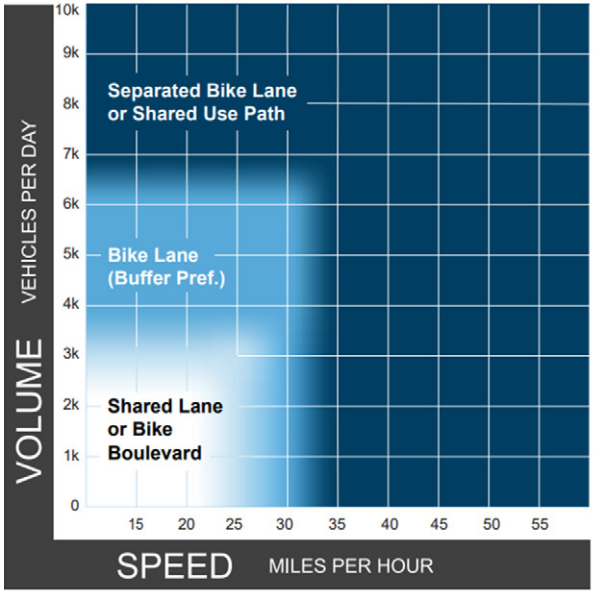


Figure 18: FHWA Bikeway Selection Chart

BIKEWAY FACILITY	MILEAGE	% OF RECOMMENDED NETWORK
Neighborhood Greenway	15.7	43%
Separated Bikeway	9.7	26%
Multiuse Path	6.0	16%
Bike Lanes, including Buffered Bike Lanes	5.6	15%
Connector	<1	<1%
TOTAL	37.0	100%

Table 3: Miles of Recommended Bikeways

residents of multifamily buildings rely on meant that this facility would not be a feasible option. In other locations, where sufficient off-street parking is available, Phase 2 Open House attendees were generally supportive of tradeoffs like removing parking from one side of the street to provide lower-stress bicycle facilities.

Approximately 37 miles of new or upgraded bike facilities are recommended in this Plan Update (Table 3). In addition to the linear bikeways, two "connectors" are recommended to provide ADA-accessible cut-throughs that allow active transportation users to seamlessly connect between adjacent facilities even though the street network doesn't connect (see Figure 19). Ultimately, neighborhood greenways comprise most of the recommended facility mileage, maximizing Santa Cruz's existing network of low-volume, low-speed neighborhood streets. These greenways will calm traffic with treatments like mini-roundabouts, curb extensions, speed humps, and/or partial diverters. Separated bikeways represent the second highest mileage by facility type.

The recommended bike network is shown on a map in Figure 20. The Implementation Action Plan Appendix provides more detailed information for each recommended facility, including extents, feasibility considerations, implementation timeline, and cost estimates.

Figure 19: A connector is recommended at Grandview Avenue where it meets Western Drive.

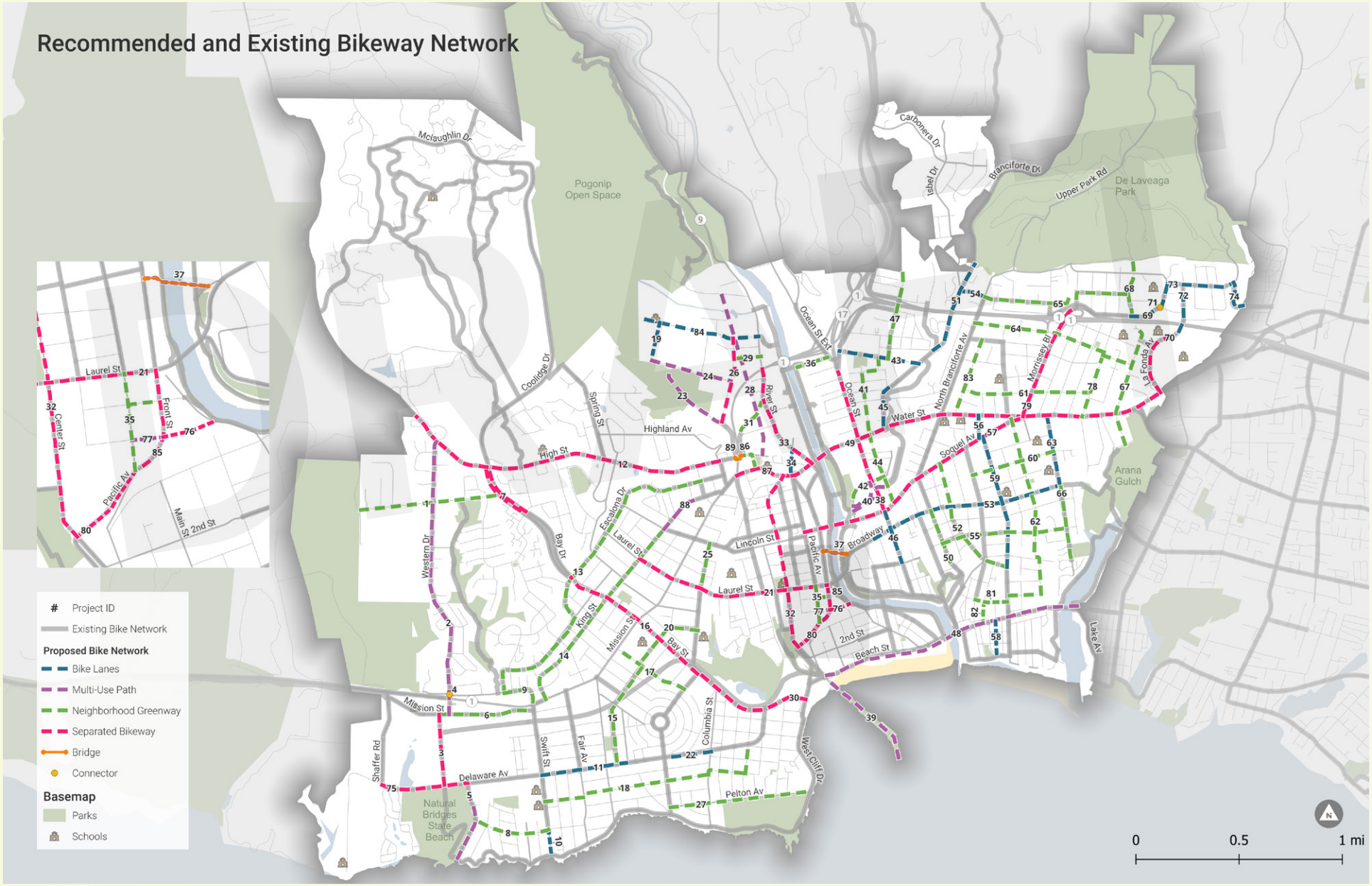


Figure 20: Recommended Bikeway Network

Sidewalks

Recommended sidewalk projects focus on missing sidewalk segments along park frontages or within ¼ mile of equity destinations and schools in order to provide a continuous sidewalk on at least one side of the street. Table 4 and Figure 21 show the recommended sidewalk projects in the City. This list of 23 projects totaling three miles is an achievable list for the City to implement over the next 10 years with local funds. Additional sidewalks are likely to be built over time in conjunction with private development.

ID	STREET NAME (SIDE)	NEAR	MILEAGE
1	Almar Ave (east), Pendegast Ave (south), and Seaside St (west)	Along Garfield Park frontage	0.1
2	Seaside St (either)	Between Laurent St and Acadia Ave	0.05
3	Bradley Drive(south)/Majors St (east)	Along Westlake Park frontage	0.44
4	Chestnut St (west)	From Mission St to Chestnut St Ext	0.15
5	Neary St (north)	Between Felix St and Blackburn St	0.03
6	Grover Lane (either)	Between Towne Terrace and Walnut Ave	0.04
7	Encinal St (south)	Limekiln St	0.02
8	River St (east)	Directly north of Transit District facility (near Golf Course Dr)	0.04
9	Fernside St (south)	Directly west of Emmeline Ave	0.09
10	Lee St (north)	N Plymouth St to Emmeline Ave	0.14
11	Lee St (north)	East of Emmeline Ave	0.07
12	Sutphen St (north); Wendell St (south)	West of Emmeline Ave	0.05
13	Dahlia St (north)	Near N Branciforte Ave	0.01
14	Poplar Ave (west)	Near Fairmount Ave	0.03
15	Harrison Ave (either)	From Parnell St to Chilverton St	0.13
16	San Juan Ave (east), Marnell Ave (east), Fairmount Ave (north), Trevathan Ave (west), and Roxas St (south)	Near John Franks Park	0.18
17	Park Way, west; Carl Ave either	Near Sutter Health Urgent Care	0.22
18	Agnes St/Mentel Ave	Along Arana Gulch Park frontage	0.09
19	Forbes St (south) and Brook Ave (west)	Along Tyrell Park frontage	0.1
20	Frederick St (east)	Along Frederick St park frontage	0.05
21	Almar Ave (east)	Between Delaware and West Cliff Drive	0.08
22	Pelton Ave (south)	West Cliff Dr and Woodrow, north side	0.68
23	Hiawatha Ave (either)	East Cliff to Cayuga	0.11

Table 4: Recommended Sidewalk Projects

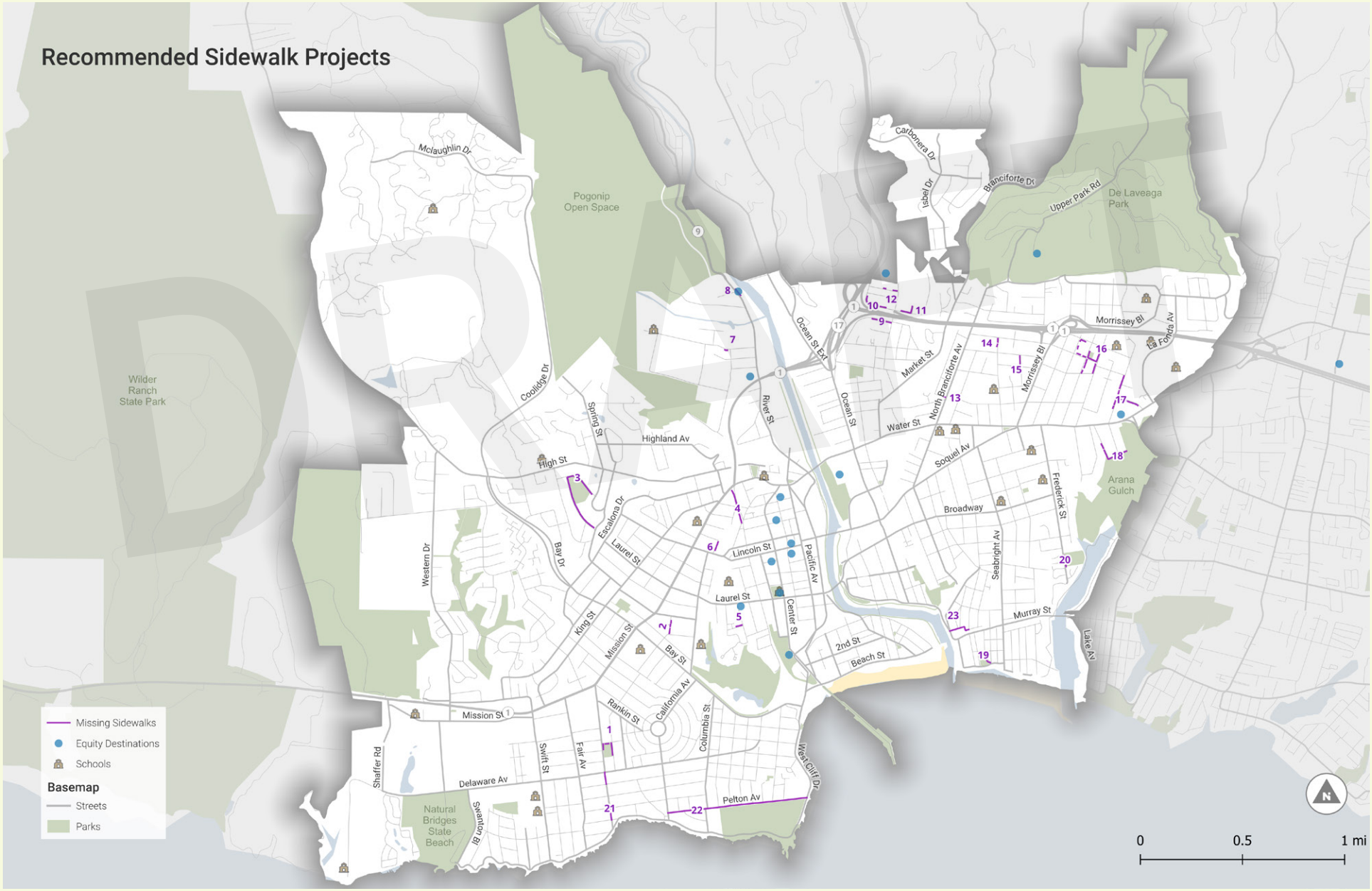


Figure 21: Recommended Sidewalk Projects

Figure 22: Students cross King Street after school dismissal

Crossings

This Plan Update does not include location-specific crossing recommendations like it does for bicycle facilities and sidewalks. Currently there is limited data available on the conditions present at each intersection within the city which makes developing network-wide recommendations challenging. The crossing recommendations below seek to address this gap and give the City additional tools to address the concerns about crossings heard throughout public engagement.

Create and maintain a GIS database for crossings

A robust database on the existing crossing infrastructure is necessary for further planning and analysis. The City currently does not have GIS data identifying the locations of marked crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, or stop signs. While some of this information can be viewed in aerial imagery, that requires a significant investment of time and must be done intersection by intersection. With data in a GIS layer, crossings can be assessed more systematically, by neighborhood or within a search distance of specific destination types like schools or parks. This database could also be used for asset management and include fields for year of installation, types of treatments, and implementation stream (e.g., local funding, grant, private development, etc.).

Establish a guideline for spacing between crossings

A lack of frequent, comfortable crossing opportunities increases potential conflicts between people walking and those driving. When crossings are too far apart, pedestrians are more likely to consider riskier crossings outside of a formal crosswalk to avoid lengthy detours from their desired routes. Relatively frequent crossings at intersections, plus mid-block crossings on atypically long blocks, allow more direct travel.

Typical block lengths in Santa Cruz are between 300 and 500 feet. A spacing guideline of 800 feet — that is, the distance between two marked crossings along a roadway should not exceed 800 feet — would ensure that crossing opportunities exist approximately every two blocks or at mid-block locations on long blocks. Professional planning and engineering judgement will be used to determine whether a new crossing is marked and allow for some discretion to deviate slightly from this guideline, for example, along roadway segments lacking destinations on one side (e.g., segments of High Street), where there are existing crossings marginally beyond the 800-foot distance, or in areas with dense development patterns and heavy pedestrian volumes where more crossings are needed.

Beyond the general guideline of 800 feet, transit stops require supplemental consideration. Transit users' safety benefits from crossing opportunities located in close proximity to stops. A marked crossing should be located within 100 feet of every transit stop.

Standardize the use of crossing treatments that improve safety and comfort for people using active transportation

Well-designed crossings will improve safety and comfort for people walking and biking in Santa Cruz. At a well-designed crossing, users can see one another easily, vehicle speeds are reduced, and pedestrian crossing distances are as short as possible to reduce exposure and crossing time. Recommended crossing treatments, their purpose, and the types of intersections where they may typically be used are listed in Table 5. In addition, treatments for uncontrolled crossings should be selected based on the FHWA *Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations* which recommends appropriate design treatments based on the number of lanes, posted speed limit, and daily traffic volume on a given street.

DESIGN TREATMENT	PURPOSE			INTERSECTION TYPE					
–	Manage Vehicle Speeds	Improve Visibility	Reduce Crossing Distance	Mid-Block Crossing or Uncontrolled Legs of a 2-Way Stop		All-Way Stop	Traffic Signal	Round-About	Rail Trail Crossings
				One Lane in Each Direction	Multiple Lanes in Each Direction				
Lighting	–	1	–	X	X	X	X	X	X
High visibility crosswalk markings	–	1	–	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pedestrian signs and advance yield markings	–	1	–	X	X	–	–	X	X
Raised crossing	1	–	–	X	–	–	–	–	X
Raised intersection	1	–	–	–	–	X	–	–	–
Pedestrian refuge islands/ medians	3	2	1	X	X	–	X	X	–
Curb extensions	3	2	1	X	X	X	X	–	–
Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (on non-stop controlled roadway)	–	1	–	X	–	–	–	X	X
Pedestrian hybrid beacons (on non-stop controlled roadway)	–	1	–	–	X	–	–	–	–
1 – Primary purpose, 2 – Secondary purpose, 3 – Tertiary purpose									

Table 5: Design treatments to improve crossings for people walking and biking. For more information on each treatment type, including graphics, please see the Treatment Toolkit Appendix.

Policies and Programs

The policy recommendations, or "how we do things," provide direction for decision-making, set new requirements, and guide how city staff conduct job duties. They support implementation of low-stress and accessible active transportation infrastructure. The programs are ongoing actions, requiring regular attention, time, and resources, that the City is taking to encourage and support more walking and biking among residents and visitors. The TAC discussed the policy and program recommendations in Phase 2 and helped ensure the recommendations aligned with the plan goals.

Policies Highlights

In addition to normalizing e-bike education, some highlights from the Plan's policies include ensuring bicycle facilities installed or modified attain LTS 1 or 2, prohibiting right turn on red at signalized intersections to protect people crossing the street, and a sidewalk-upon-sale ordinance to complete sidewalks (on at least one side of the street) in residential neighborhoods. The full list of recommended policies is shown in Table 6.

TOPIC	POLICY	IMPLEMENTATION (LEAD AGENCY IN BOLD)
ADA Accessibility	Upgrade all curb ramps, sidewalks, and driveways (commercial and residential) to be ADA compliant over time. Prioritize upgrading curb ramps, sidewalks, and driveways within 0.1 miles of equity destinations and schools.	City of Santa Cruz
Bicycle Facilities	New and modified bicycle facilities must be low-stress, achieving LTS 1 or 2. Any constraints that make a low-stress crossing infeasible must be documented by city staff. Separate bicycle facilities on arterials from motor vehicle traffic or design them as multi-use paths. On all arterials and collectors, implementation of active transportation infrastructure shall have a higher priority than on street parking. On local streets that are part of the bike network, implement neighborhood greenways or bike lanes.	City of Santa Cruz
Bike Parking	Update City code to allow private developers to pay a fee in lieu of providing required bike parking in constrained sites. The fee would fund future public bike parking.	City of Santa Cruz
Crossings and Intersections	Use the guidelines in this Plan, including the toolkit, to reduce level of traffic stress at all new or upgraded crossings. Any constraints that make a low-stress crossing infeasible must be documented by city staff.	City of Santa Cruz
	Apply the recommended 800-foot crosswalk spacing guidance to arterials and collectors to identify where additional crossings are needed.	City of Santa Cruz
	Prohibit Right Turn on Red at signalized intersections. In locations with high pedestrian volumes and few right turns on red, post No Right turn on Red signs (MUTCD R10-11a). At other locations, further study will be required to assess vehicle queuing and signal timing.	City of Santa Cruz
	Add Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI) to signals to provide pedestrians lead time to cross before drivers can begin turning. Under state law, bicyclists and others using active modes (scooters, etc.) may also enter the intersection during Leading Pedestrian Intervals.	City of Santa Cruz
	Implement a nighttime "Rest in Red" policy. This means that traffic signals will automatically be red until a vehicle is detected. Assuming no cross-traffic is approaching, the light will then turn green.	City of Santa Cruz

Table 6: Recommended Policies, continued on page 32

TOPIC	POLICY	IMPLEMENTATION (LEAD AGENCY IN BOLD)
Maintenance	Prioritize pavement rehabilitation and maintenance projects that (a) implement ATP projects, (b) add Complete Streets Elements, or (c) add missing sidewalk and ramps to the network.	City of Santa Cruz
One-way streets	Allow bikes to travel in both directions on one-way streets where space allows. This may be communicated through signs and/or pavement markings.	City of Santa Cruz
Riverwalk	Increase social safety along the Riverwalk through environmental design, social outreach, and enforcement.	City of Santa Cruz
	When new development or substantial redevelopment occurs on parcels with existing connections to the Riverwalk, those connections shall be upgraded to publicly accessible, active modes connections that utilize best practices in environmental design and accessibility.	City of Santa Cruz
Sidewalk Continuity	Ensure continuous sidewalk exists on at least one side of all street blocks (excluding cul-de-sacs). Prioritize installing sidewalks along park frontage and within 1/4 mile of equity destinations and schools.	City of Santa Cruz
Sidewalk Maintenance	Expand existing policy requiring property owners to maintain sidewalks along property frontages to include additional provisions when properties are sold. Develop a Sidewalk Upon Sale Ordinance, similar to the City's Sewer Lateral Ordinance. This new ordinance would state the owner must fix or install sidewalk to meet city standards at the time of sale of a property; if sidewalk cannot be installed at that time, owners may (a) elect to pay fee in lieu for any missing sidewalk along property (assuming a clear nexus is established) to be put towards dedicated sidewalk fund.	City of Santa Cruz
Sidewalk Maintenance Financing	The City will explore financing methods to build out the sidewalk network, including measures such as a parcel tax for sidewalk maintenance and crosswalk improvements to be completed later by the City. To minimize the burden on moderate-to-low-income households, a sidewalk maintenance loan program should be established to provide a matching grant, free financing repayment plan, or other financing tools for those who qualify.	City of Santa Cruz

E-bike use, especially among youth, is a priority issue for school communities and neighbors in Santa Cruz. School administrators would like to see robust e-bike safety education programming, while neighbors would like to see a multiuse path awareness campaign to develop norms and expectations across the various multiuse path users.

Programs Highlights

Some of the recommended programs help ensure delivery of e-bike education and awareness, with Ecology Action continuing to be a key partner in education delivery. Other programs encourage walking and biking with consistent wayfinding and a multiuse path etiquette awareness campaign. Instituting a count program has the dual purpose of helping the City track biking and walking rates over time and encouraging people to use active modes by "being counted" by counters displaying real-time data across the City.

Figure 23: The City offers an all-electric bikeshare system, BCycle.

Table 7: Recommended Programs

TOPIC	PROGRAM	IMPLEMENTATION (LEAD AGENCY BOLD)
Awareness	Launch a multiuse path awareness campaign to develop norms and expectations across the various groups who use these facilities. Topics brought up during community engagement included being courteous on shared paths and clarifying that bicyclists may use the road where multiuse paths are crowded (e.g, West Cliff Dr.)	Ecology Action City of Santa Cruz
Counts Program	Install visible bicycle and pedestrian counters at strategic locations and establish a bicycle and pedestrian count program that includes regular analysis and reporting.	City of Santa Cruz
E-Bike Education	Offer regular, free adult and senior-focused e-bike education.	Ecology Action, City of Santa Cruz
	Include an e-bike focus within middle and high school bicycle education curriculum. Partner with local camps and after-school programs to offer e-bike education.	Santa Cruz City Schools Ecology Action
	Provide educational materials and rules of the road information to e-bike vendors to distribute to customers at point-of-sale. Ecology Action may assist with development of educational materials.	City of Santa Cruz Ecology Action
	Partner with middle and high schools to require parking permits for e-bikes. Students must attend an e-bike safety seminar, and parents/caregivers must have a directed conversation with students and sign off, confirming the model of bike. Conversation topics would be provided in the permit contract and include when and where an e-bike can be used, the number of passengers allowed, helmet requirements, and consequences for breaking the contract. Ecology Action may assist with materials development and distribution.	Santa Cruz City Schools Ecology Action
Youth Biking Encouragement	Partner with local schools to offer bike repair clinics and group bike rides.	Santa Cruz City Schools Ecology Action
Wayfinding Program	Standardize access and wayfinding signage along multiuse paths, e.g., "TO [Location]" (See Figure 24).	City of Santa Cruz Public Works

4 Implementation

At the core of the Plan Update is a commitment to fostering a livable city: a place where people of all ages and physical abilities can access safe, convenient, and enjoyable ways of getting around. To achieve this, the City must be strategic and purposeful in how it builds out low-stress walking and biking networks, implements policies, and invests in supportive programs.

This chapter identifies project priorities and cost estimates, describes implementation strategies, outlines the implementation process, and presents baseline metrics to measure implementation going forward.

Project Prioritization

Even with a commitment to rapidly improving bicycling and walking infrastructure, the whole network cannot be built overnight and the City must decide where to focus near-term efforts.

Sidewalks

The recommended sidewalk projects presented in Chapter 3 represent a subset of all missing sidewalks in Santa Cruz. These projects have already been prioritized to provide better access to key destinations for vulnerable populations (youth, seniors, unhoused), including food distribution sites, libraries, parks, and schools.

Bicycle Facilities

The recommended bicycle facilities were prioritized using a data-driven approach with three primary factors—Safety, Access, and Equity. Each factor includes measurable variables such as crash history, level of bicycle traffic stress, proximity to key destinations, and population data. Based on input from city staff, public engagement, and the TAC, safety received the most weight in scoring, followed by access and equity considerations as detailed in Table 8.

Figure 25 is a map of bikeway projects assigned to one of three categories – High, Medium, Low - based on the project's total score out of 100. West of the river, the corridors with the highest scores include River Street and Center Street through Downtown and Bay Street between California and Beach. East of the river, Ocean Street and the entire length of Soquel Avenue are the highest scoring corridors.

Projects in the High category meet more of the city's stated goals, however the City will consider other factors to determine which projects will move forward, as well as project implementation order. These factors include final cost estimates, feasibility, leveraging cost-sharing opportunities, and more.

FACTOR	VARIABLE / CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	MAX POINTS
Safety	Serious injury and fatal bicycle and pedestrian crashes (2020-2024)	Number of fatal and serious injury Vulnerable Roadway Users crashes from 2020 to 2024 within 250 ft of the project: » Very High (3+ in 5 years) – 20 points » High (3 in 5 years) - 15 points » Moderate (2 in 5 years) – 10 points » Low (1 in 5 years) - 5 points » Very Low (0 in 5 years) – 0 points	20
	Level of Bicycle Traffic Stress	Project receives more points the higher the level of traffic stress on the street: » LTS 4 – 20 points » LTS 3 – 15 points » LTS 2 – 10 points » LTS 1 – 5 points	20
Access	Connections to an Equity Destination	Number of the equity destinations – homeless services, healthcare, food pantry, etc., within 500ft of the project. » 4+ destinations – 12 points » 3 destinations – 9 points » 2 destinations – 6 points » 1 destination – 3 points » None – 0 points	12
	Connections to a School or Park	Number of schools or parks within 500ft of the project: » 4+ destinations – 12 points » 3 destinations – 9 points » 2 destinations – 6 points » 1 destination – 3 points » None – 0 points	12
	Connections to Major Employer	Employment density within 500ft of the project » Highest – 12 points » High – 9 points » Moderate – 6 points	12
Equity	Caltrans Transportation Equity Index (Demographic Overlay)	» Project is located in a low income (<80% statewide median income) Census block – 24 points » Project is outside of low-income Census blocks – 0 points	24
Total			100

Table 8: Bikeway Prioritization Framework

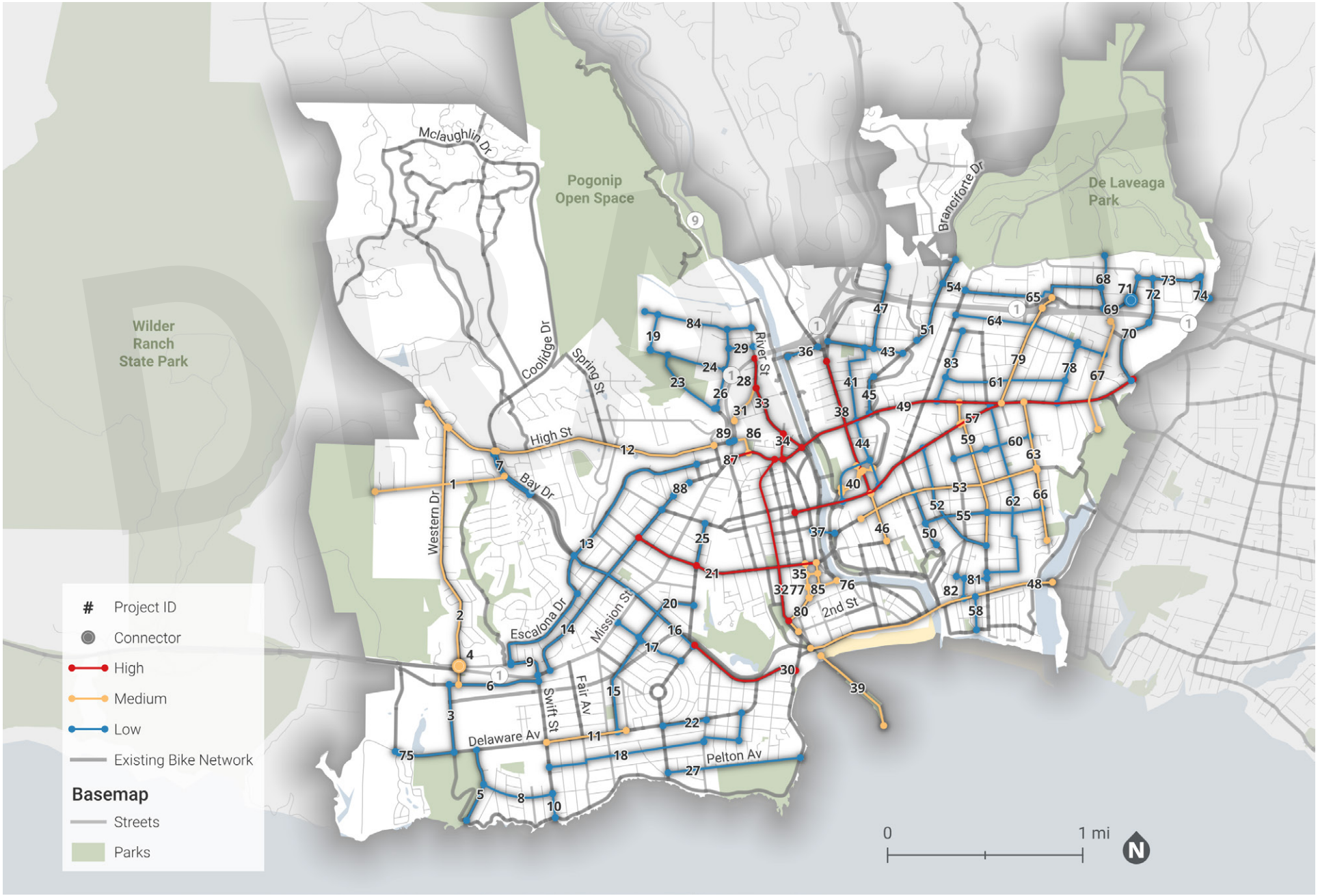


Figure 25: Map of prioritized bikeway projects

FACILITY TYPE	COST ESTIMATE	MILES RECOMMENDED	SUBTOTAL
Sidewalks	$1,072,000	2.9	$3,120,000
Neighborhood Greenway	$746,000	17.8	$13,298,000
Bike Lanes	$664,000	6.0	$3,958,000
Separated Bike Lanes	$1,317,000	12.0	$15,801,000
Multiuse Path	$6,160,000	5.8	$35,510,000
Total Cost			$71,687,000

Table 9: Cost Estimates of Recommended Active Transportation Network

Figure 26: Developer-installed active modes paseo between Center Street and Cedar Street

Project Costs

The implementation of this Plan Update will include the construction of new sidewalks and curb ramps, bike lanes, protected bike lanes, neighborhood greenways and new multiuse path connections throughout the city. The cost for these projects varies based on the facility and whether it can be built as a part of larger complete street reconstructions, stormwater projects, or routine repaving. Projects will be funded through a variety of sources including the city's capital improvement program, grant applications, private development, and existing maintenance programs.

The cost estimate for the full build out of the recommendations in this plan is based on planning-level, cost-per-mile estimates for each type of facility. Planning-level estimates include costs for all of the striping and pavement markings along the corridor, not just for the bike facility striping, with staffing and contingency costs calculated as a percentage of the material costs. Cost estimates are subject to change as projects move into more detailed design.

The estimated build-out cost for the Plan Update is $31.2 million, summarized in Table 9. For individual project costs, please see the *Implementation Action Plan* Appendix.

Figure 27: The City installed a quick-build traffic diverter at Summer Street and Ellery Street

Since the adoption of the 2017 Active Transportation Plan, the City has secured over $60M in grants for active transportation projects. Major projects completed or under construction include:

- Water Street Protected Bike Lanes
- Bay Street Protected Bike Lanes
- Coastal Rail Trail

Implementation Strategies

Rather than relying on a single funding source or timeline, the City will use a combination of policies, redevelopment, maintenance, capital projects, and grant funding to build a safer and more connected active transportation network over time.

Through City Policies and Redevelopment

The City already has several policies and design standards that support walking and bicycling and will continue to strengthen code language and internal practices. This ensures that when streets are planned or redesigned, they will include safe and comfortable active transportation facilities or document exceptions. By including walking and biking in City policies, supportive infrastructure improvements become a routine part of how projects are designed, not an afterthought.

Design standards and code language updates will also ensure new development dedicates adequate right-of-way and pays for certain active transportation improvements. These projects can help fill gaps in the walking and bicycling networks over time and ensures that growth supports multiple travel options for everyone. Figure 26 shows an example of this: a developer-installed paseo that connects active modes users from Center Street to Cedar Street, near Cathcart Street.

Through Ongoing Maintenance and Operations

Some bikeways will be built as part of routine street projects, such as resurfacing or reconstruction. When streets are repaved or rebuilt, the City will look for opportunities to add or upgrade bicycle facilities identified in the Plan Update. This can save staff time during the project development process and save the City money by addressing multiple issues with one construction process. This approach helps stretch limited funding and can speed up implementation.

Figure 27 shows an example of a traffic that the City implemented through routine maintenance processes that maintains connectivity for active modes while limiting vehicle traffic through the intersection.

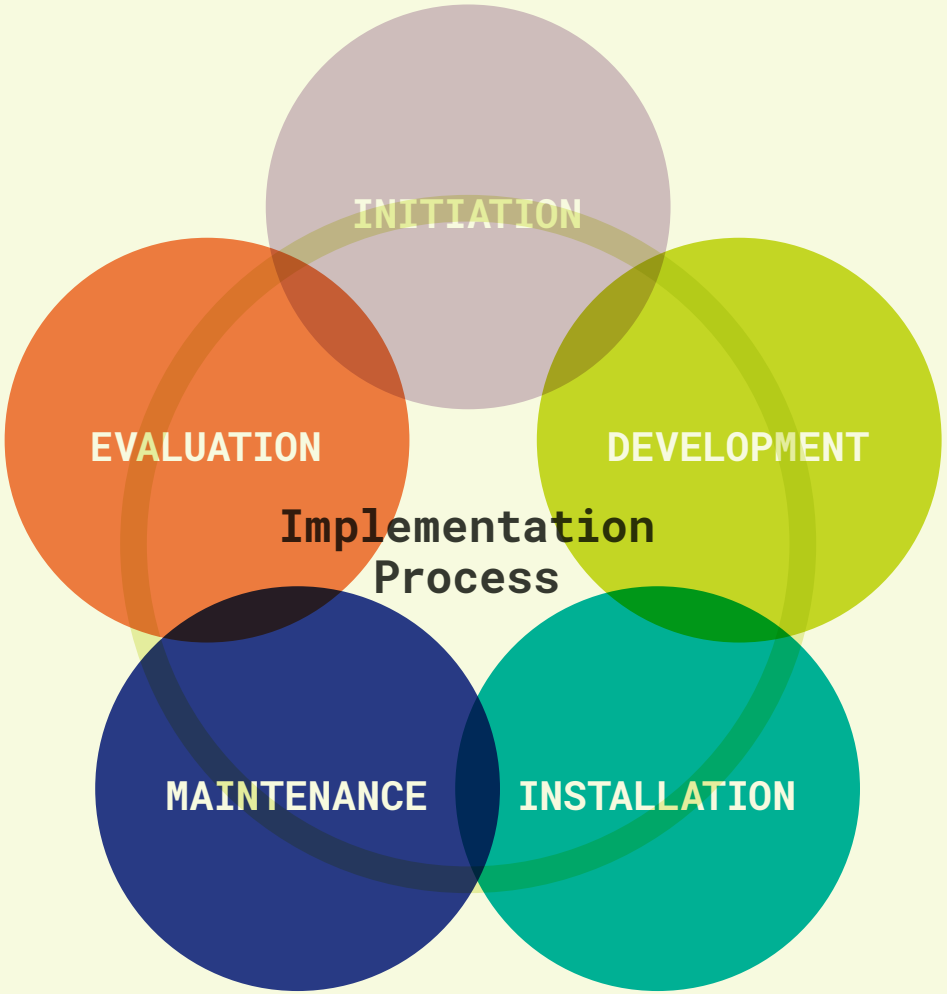
Keeping bicycle facilities and sidewalks in good condition is just as important as building new ones. The City will maintain bike lanes, sidewalks, and paths through regular pavement upkeep, repainting faded markings, clearing debris, and addressing safety concerns.

Through Grants and Partnerships

The City of Santa Cruz has a history of success securing grant funding and will continue to actively seek state and federal grants to help fund active transportation projects. The City Having an adopted ATP Update helps the City compete for these funds. Because the application and program requirements for this type of funding are among the most time-consuming and rigorous, these funds are typically used only on multiyear, high-cost projects.

The City will also work with partner agencies like CalTrans and the County of Santa Cruz to deliver projects more efficiently and reach shared goals.

By using these strategies together, the City can steadily improve bicycling conditions and move toward a safer, more connected bicycle network for people of all ages and abilities.



Implementation Process

Every project in this plan must be studied for feasibility, go through a design process, and have funding before it can be constructed. For some projects, this can take several years and involve extensive public engagement. Others can be implemented more quickly, but all projects will go through the general five-step process described below.

Project Initiation

What is it? During this phase, the City is evaluating the feasibility of the project. This involves conceptual design review, data collection, and initial discussions with City Council members and community leaders.

What to expect: Data collection activities during this phase provide a better understanding of activities on the street. This may include traffic counts, which can be performed with tubes stretched across the roadway, cameras, or City staff manually counting activities on the street. In addition, field visits or geographical surveys are used to confirm existing conditions of the site.

Project Development

What is it? The project development phase involves extensive outreach, design work, and revisions based on detailed site conditions and community input. Revisions can often take several rounds and this can be the longest and most publicly visible phase of the project.

What to expect: During this phase, community members will be invited to specific meetings about the project, and City staff members may attend regular community meetings and events to hear from the public. Council approval will happen at this stage.

Installation

What is it? City staff and construction contractors are busy during this phase coordinating the installation of the project.

What to expect: This is the exciting phase of the project where changes to the built environment take place! Updated project information and possible street closures will be communicated with nearby residents and businesses and updated frequently on the city's website.

Maintenance

What is it? Maintenance includes street sweeping, refreshing striping and markings, and replacing damaged infrastructure.

What to expect: The City leverages its broader pavement maintenance program to install bike facilities, so upgrades to its existing bikeways (like adding separators) or building new ones may occur during schedule street paving projects.

Evaluation

What is it? Following the installation of a bikeway project, City staff will continue to monitor the success of the project. This can include surveying and additional data collection. The City may make small adjustments to the design during this phase based on site observations, community feedback, and collected data.

What to expect: There might be counting equipment in the new bikeway, as well as the street and the sidewalk. Although engineers make most of the adjustments to the design during the Project Development phase, there may be small adjustments to signal timing, striping, or other project geometries during this phase.

Measuring Progress

Monitoring plan implementation is an important step to evaluate whether the City is on track and will help identify additional resources or needs along the way. City staff will monitor progress toward the Plan Update's goals through the performance metrics listed in Table 10. These metrics measure both inputs – additional mileage of bicycle facilities and grant awards – and outcomes – number of bicycle and pedestrian involved crashes and user counts – of plan implementation. Metrics should be reviewed and reported every two to five years, depending on project implementation and data availability. Additional measures may also be considered in the future as new data sources become available.

Table 10: Performance Measures

ATP GOAL	MEASURE	TARGET	2025-2026 BASELINE DATA / NOTES
Enhance safety and security for active transportation users.			
S1	Number of serious injury and fatal bicycle crashes	By 2030, zero serious injuries or fatalities Annually: reduction in serious injuries and fatalities	California Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS) 2020-2024 baseline data: » Fatal crashes: 0 » Serious injury crashes: 35
S2	Number of serious injury and fatal pedestrian crashes	By 2030, zero serious injuries or fatalities Annually: reduction in serious injuries and fatalities	California Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS) 2020-2024 baseline data: » Fatal crashes: 7 » Serious injury crashes: 31
S3	Number of publicly available secure bicycle parking spaces, including bicycle lockers, cages, indoor bike rooms	Increase total number and monitor usage	Historical Bike Link data
S4	Number of illegal e-bikes (e-moto) impounded	Monitor (goal is to decrease due to fewer illegal e-bikes on the road)	Police Department data
Build and maintain comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian networks.			
N1	Miles of comfortable (BLTS 2 or better) roads	By 2036, increase by 10%	City baseline data: » 127 miles
N2	Miles of missing sidewalks and number of missing curb ramps	By 2036, decrease by 10%	City baseline data: » Missing sidewalks: 45 miles » Missing curb ramps: 636
N3	Number of intersections with curb extensions or other physical daylighting measures	Increase by two per year on average	HSIP grant » Flexposts – 22 intersections

ATP GOAL	MEASURE	TARGET	2025–2026 BASELINE DATA / NOTES
Continue progress and investments in active transportation.			
P1	Track grant awards for bicycle and pedestrian projects	Monitor	City data
P2	User counts on multiuse pathways and new separated bike lanes	Increase and report annually to TPWC	City count data
Provide education and encouragement.			
E1	Number / percentage of students reached by in-school bicycle and pedestrian safety education classes	Increase and facilitate sustainable ongoing funding	School and Ecology Action data
E2	Number of bicycle parking permits with signed contracts issued at middle and high schools	Pilot program at middle schools and expand to high schools based on program success	School data
E3	Number of adults reached by Ecology Action bicycle and pedestrian safety education classes	Increase and facilitate sustainable ongoing funding	Ecology Action data