

Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants

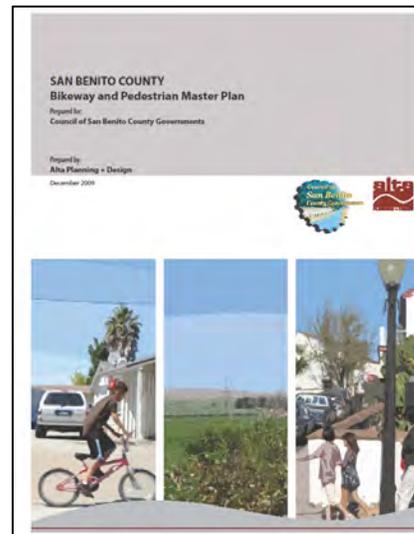
San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan

- **Grant Amount:** \$36,000
- **Grant Recipient:** Council of San Benito County Governments
- **County:** San Benito

Project Area – located in San Benito County which is comprised of two incorporated cities, Hollister and San Juan Bautista, and several unincorporated areas.

Project Focus – This project updates the San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan previously adopted in 2002. The previous plan did not address the need for convenient access to community services, jobs, and businesses. Identifying appropriate bikeway and pedestrian infrastructure has the potential of enhancing economic development in San Benito County. In addition, there is a growing segment of the population that does not have access to a car, such as school-aged children and low-income families. This plan was designed to address the need for improved accessibility for the whole community. The document expands existing networks, connects gaps, addresses constrained areas, provides greater connectivity, educates and encourages the public, and maximizes funding sources. In addition, preparing the San Benito Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan satisfies the requirements of the California Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA), and other state and federal funding programs that Caltrans oversees and reviews.

Project Goals – The following goals lay the foundation for the long-term vision of the plan. One goal is to increase bicycle and pedestrian access by identifying existing and future needs and by expanding facilities in and between neighborhoods, employment centers, shopping areas, schools, and recreational sites. The plan also sets goals to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety and to ensure that all residents are knowledgeable about the topic. Lastly the plan sets a goal to increase bicycle and pedestrian trips by implementing and maintaining a quality network for short-travel needs, particularly for those distances less than 5 miles, and to provide educational programs that promote bicycling and walking as a healthy means of transportation.



Community Outreach – The public outreach for this project included two public meetings, with 44 and 30 attendees, respectively, and the formation of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). The public and BPAC identified needs and recommendations, which have been incorporated into the plan. In addition, over 100 community members

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participated in a bicycle and pedestrian survey administered to gather public use and preferences in the area. The final product was developed with input from the Council of San Benito County Governments (COG), the County of San Benito, the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista, Caltrans, BPAC, and members of the public.

Environmental Justice Community Involvement- The community outreach included two meetings and a survey. A Spanish translator was available at both community workshops. English and Spanish flyers and surveys were distributed to the public. The survey was available online or in hardcopy at the first community meeting.

Project Outcome- The San Benito County Bikeway and Pedestrian Master Plan guides the future development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the County and seeks to meet the County's needs and desires for pleasant

and safe places to bicycle and walk. The updated plan gives a range of recommendations that reflect public input, existing conditions, and future needs for bicycling and walking. The final recommended network includes a system of bikeways that will connect residential areas of San Benito County with schools, parks, community centers, downtowns, and other destinations. A unique feature of the plan is showing graphically the safest routes to each school. It also identifies locations for pedestrian improvements such as sidewalk gap infill projects, installation of crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signals, curb extensions, and curb ramps. Overall, the Plan seeks to provide good connectivity between cities and develop consistent design standards.

Challenges

- The existing pedestrian facilities reflect the rural nature of the county and are often lacking and incomplete. The plan aimed to develop a strategy to connect and expand the existing network.
- To the extent feasible, existing local plans and priorities need to be included as part of the recommendations.

Successes

- The San Benito County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan describes how the networks of bicycle and pedestrian facilities will continue to be developed to make it easier for bicycling and walking in the area. The design guidelines included in the plan illustrate San Benito's preferred approach as to how a balanced transportation network will develop that safely