



PROJECT	Caltrans Bay Area Bicycle Superhighways	ORGANIZER	Caltrans Bay Area
SUBJECT	Working Group Meeting #1	DATE	November 6, 2020
VENUE	https://zoom.us/j/96469205868?pwd=Y3NzamI3MWU5Y1QrLy9yWlVoOWN2Zz09 Passcode: BayArea1	TIME	9:00 – 10:30 am

Meeting Overview:

This meeting was the first in a series of stakeholder meetings convened by Caltrans Bay Area to solicit input at key intervals of the planning process for its Bicycle Superhighways Concept Study (the project). The focus of the first meeting was to receive input from bicycle advocacy and transportation organizations on the bicycle superhighway name, definition within Bay Area context and how it will be used, possible locations, how to communicate with communities of concern and enlist them as ambassadors, and define constraints and opportunities of the project. This meeting was also intended to familiarize attendees with the project in order to enlist their help in engaging their cohorts and constituents in future outreach phases. The following document provides a summary of comments received throughout the meeting. It is complemented by feedback received via ConceptBoard which was developed by the Project Team to allow participants to share ideas and feedback on topics at hand. The ConceptBoard can be found under <https://app.conceptboard.com/board/o7nb-805x-di0d-xm64-ycoa#>

Project Team

- Mauricio Hernández, Project Manager. Alta Planning + Design
- Libby Nachman, Assistant Project Manager. Alta Planning + Design
- Regina Merrill, Circlepoint

Caltrans Bay Area

- Elliot Goodrich, Caltrans Bay Area, Project Manager, Associate Transportation Planner
- Sergio Ruiz, Caltrans Bay Area, Complete Streets Coordinator
- Gregory Currey, Caltrans Bay Area, Active Transportation Branch Chief
- Jake Buffenbarger, Caltrans Bay Area
- Erik Alm, Caltrans Bay Area District Office Chief – Transit & Community Planning
- Jake Freedman, Caltrans Bay Area
- Michelle Matranga, Caltrans Bay Area

Working Group

- Lola Torney, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)
- Lauren Ledbetter, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)
- Emma Shales, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (SVBC)
- Mikaela Hiatt, City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG)
- Bjorn Gripenburg, Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC)
- Chris Marks, Alameda CTC
- Eris Weaver, Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition (SCBC)
- Lee Huo, Bay Trail Project
- Laura Cohen, Rails to Trails Conservancy
- Janice Li, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC)
- Kara Oberg, Metropolitan Transportation Commission / Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC / ABAG)
- Susie Hufstader, Bike East Bay
- Mike Pickford, San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA)
- Diana Meehan, Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTA)
- Colin Clarke, Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA)

1. Agenda Review

No changes were made to the agenda.

2. Welcome & Introductions

Alta provided instructions on how to use Conceptboard, announced the Zoom meeting would be recorded, and asked attendees to record their name and organization on a post-it on the Conceptboard to show how the process worked.

Attendees provided their name, organization, title, and an overview of why they are excited about the possibility of a “bicycle superhighway” in the Bay Area. These reasons included:

- The completion of long-term goals identified in other master transportation plans
- Shared vision / goals with other bicycle mobility projects currently in development
- Opportunity to help inform a national discussion of designing more ways to increase bicycle transportation
- An opportunity to improve safety and attract more people to bicycling
- Being transformative for the Bay Area
- Providing an alternative form of transportation to travel long distances
- A major opportunity given the rising popularity of e-bikes
- Providing connectivity to other existing trails
- Providing economic development opportunities
- Allow people who ride bikes to enjoy the same privileges as car drivers and provide a bike route that is as logical, direct and easy to navigate as car networks are
- Allow people to ride longer distances and provide safer and easier routes to encourage people to also bike shorter and mid-length distances
- Transpose county lines and provide greater connectivity within a region
- Provide an opportunity for all ages and abilities to bicycle via a fully dedicated facility for bicyclists

3. Project Goals

Caltrans provided an overview of its policy-level goal for the project, which is to evaluate the potential opportunities to develop bicycle superhighways along State Highway System (SHS) corridors in Caltrans Bay Area (District 4). The project is in line with larger strategic initiatives as identified by local and statewide plans:

- In 2015, Caltrans’ Strategic Management Plan set the aggressive goal of tripling bike, doubling walking and transit by 2020, which it is not yet close to
- In the Statewide Active Transportation Plan completed in 2017, one strategy that is part of the larger mobility strategy is creating connective and comfortable networks, with the suggestion to explore opportunities to creating connected bike highways to support regional and interregional travel
- The 2018 District 4 Bike Plan also referenced bicycle highway opportunities, which include using Bay Area trails or creating separated bikeways on conventional highways, which are two very

different visions of a bicycle superhighway, thus, another goal of this project is to figure out where the intersection of these two visions is

Attendees suggested the following goals for the project:

- Focus on connectivity, safety
- Improve travel time and safety
- Reduce GHGs by encouraging people to walk/bike, especially for distances less than 5 miles
- Increase micromobility / connection to other transport forms and existing networks
- Look at possible corridors from a regional perspective and examine how these can connect the Bay Area using existing infrastructure
- Create consistency and best practices of high-quality bicycle infrastructure between jurisdictions
- Establish regional guidelines for bike superhighways
- Ensure the bicycle superhighway is accessible for those who are not avid cyclists
- Provide clear, logical and direct routes to key destinations

The Project Team is currently reviewing how other countries define bicycle superhighways and developing a list of best practices: Common features include a high-quality, uninterrupted bikeway that includes separation from other vehicles.

VTA suggested developing a regional funding strategy, e.g., if MTC were to lead a regional funding strategy rather than Caltrans and different organizations banded together as a region, this could create more opportunities for funding. Significant funding will be needed to actually build out a bicycle superhighway

- MTC noted there are plans to identify funds through their active transportation plans
- There is lots of momentum on different projects with similar goals

The Project Team asked if the facility should be only for bicyclists or also pedestrians. Attendees discussed the pros and cons of each:

Pros of including space for pedestrians in design:

- Increase micro-mobility / connection to other transport forms
- Provide more equitable access, whereas creating a modally exclusive highway perpetuates issues of access
- Expand constituency of stakeholders this project is trying to target from just bicyclists

Marin County Bicycle Coalition representative notes “I’m against prohibiting peds as a blanket policy. We have many sections of MUP along 101 in Marin that are popular with people on foot and bike, especially within and between neighboring cities. Let’s try to provide adequate width to separate modes/speeds.”

Cons of including space for pedestrians in design:

- Potential danger to pedestrians due to high speed travelling by bicyclists (20-25 mph) as the term “highway” connotes
- Potential limiting of speed at which bicyclists can travel if pedestrians are present, which seems counterintuitive to purpose of a bicycle superhighway

4. Terminology & Project Branding

A robust discussion was held on the connotations of the name “bicycle superhighway” (used throughout this meeting summary to refer to the project). A final name has not yet been determined, as additional stakeholder input will be gathered throughout the coming months.

San Francisco Bicycle Coalition representative noted that the name of new bike infrastructure is incredibly important to the politics of constructing it in order to gain buy-in (both fiscally and at the concept level) from the public and elected officials. Representatives suggested that the word “highway” could connote an expensive, overbuilt system and that quick build projects that are more “infrastructure-light” have received more support in SF.

Marin Bicycle Coalition representative noted the term “highway” can also connote visions of a “concrete monstrosity” that will tear through natural spaces. The Project Team also added that it may also be reminiscent of the destruction of the construction of highways caused to communities.

Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition representative noted whether including “bike” in the name would exclude other modes, such as scooters and pedestrians. However, if this project is truly designed to create greater bicycle connectivity, then it should be named as such. This does not mean it has to be bike exclusive, but the name should reflect that it is primarily designed for biking. There seems to be a general consensus that the bicycle superhighway should also allow micro-mobility options that are of similar sizes/speeds, such as scooters. Perhaps it is possible to use “bike” as shorthand for e various micro-modes.

Bay Trail Project representative added that the more inclusive and understandable the project name is, the more funding/support it will garner. This infrastructure will be difficult to design and find an appropriate location for, and the project may lose support if a clear name and definition is not provided from the onset.

Marin County Bicycle Coalition representative noted experiencing similar issues with branding, and has previously branded a bike path as a “linear park with access.” Other names discussed included:

- Greenway – Suggests more integration with natural landscaping, but can also imply trails that feature trees, dirt, and nature, which may be misleading
- Bikeway – clearly defines what it is and who it’s for, without being reminiscent of cars
 - Peninsula Bikeway and Central Bikeway are already being used in SMC and SCC
- Regional Bikeway – Has benefits of the above name and implies greater connectivity

Alameda CTC representative suggested it may be worthwhile to create a survey that asks stakeholders for their input on possible names.

As many attendees at this meeting are approaching this discussion from a technical lens, it is noted that possible names for this project may be different than what will resonate with the general public. There was also a chicken/egg issue as a name is being discussed before the actual concept and design has been fully developed.

5. Community Engagement with Communities of Concern

The Project Team provided an overview of their data-driven approach, which focuses first on feasibility and then on suitability. First, they will identify corridors in which this project is physically feasible, and then in the suitability phase, they will identify where it would be equitable to build such a project while keeping in mind where there is demand for it. It is during the suitability phase that public input will be solicited. The Project Team will also work with community members in selected areas to gather feedback on building a bicycle superhighway in their community. The Project Team asked attendees to share what practices have helped them successfully engage with communities of concern. These included:

- Paying CBO partners, including those not traditionally included in bicycle planning processes, for their input (Caltrans notes funding cannot be used for this purpose on this particular project)
- Employing paid ambassadors from target communities who can spread the work among their networks
- Going to existing CBO meetings/events to share information
- Coordinating Facebook Live events with CBOs
- Doing pop-ups in target areas (on the street/trail, etc.) to talk about the project (Alta notes this is particularly successful, but there are limited opportunities for this due to COVID, so consultant team is reviewing opportunities for digital engagement)
- Drafting and distributing surveys

Attendees were highly in favor of engaging CBOs early in the process to gain support, particularly because highways have historically been damaging to these communities, and bike lanes/bikeways may also be perceived as a sign of gentrification/displacement. As previously discussed, the naming of this project will be important and community input on the name will be highly valuable.

SFCTA cautions that they have heard that many CBOs are experiencing outreach fatigue recently, so this is something to be sensitive to.

6. Preliminary Brainstorming

Design Features

Attendees discussed preliminary design features they would like to see as part of this project, while noting that the target user will have a large impact on the overall design.

Bay Trail Project representative raised several important questions: *“We also have to ask ourselves are we just designing this for fast and confident bicyclists? Is that a significant enough crowd to put the resources that it will take to build this? Or do we want to build this project in a way that will attract a broader user group and different skill levels that may create for a more significant shift in modes in the long wrong? We have an opportunity to design a place that people want to use and be versus creating another paved transportation corridor.”*

It was noted that there will be higher usage if the project is incorporated/connected to existing local trail/bike/street networks.

Aesthetic Considerations:

- Include vegetation/landscaping – creation of this highway potentially presents an opportunity to provide greenspaces in communities where there are none
- Create a wayfinding/sign program for key locations – this project will only work if people know where it is, where it goes and how to use it. The wayfinding program should include a time estimate as well as distance to be more user-friendly.
- Make the path wide enough for two-way traffic and passing
- Create visual and sound barriers as necessary from vehicle traffic
- Incorporate ways to make this a low-stress experience
- Avoid blocking views of natural landscape

Safety Considerations:

- Fully separate path from cars
- Ensure there are safe crossings,
- Ensure spaces are well-lit
- Have bike signals
- Create protected intersections
- Integrate ITS/Signal Timing
- Create ability for emergency access if necessary
- Provide space for occasional pull outs / bike repair stations
- Provide water/restroom access
- Create wind protection
- Incorporate exit ramps to encourage slower speed

There are also suggestions to review existing designs, including:

- Bay Trail Design Guidelines
- Best design practices from other superhighways around the world

VTA has also been working on a definition of a bicycle superhighway, as follows: *High quality, uninterrupted, long-distance bikeways separated from motor vehicles that traverse across the county. As envisioned, the bicycle superhighway network will consist of a network of trails connected by high-quality, low-stress, on-street bikeways. The bicycle superhighway network is intended to serve “strong and fearless,” “enthused and confident,” and “interested but concerned” bicyclists. Most sections of the network, especially the trails, may be used by students and families but the bicycle superhighways are primarily focused on providing a high-quality transportation option for commuters, people who want to run errands by bike, and recreational or weekend bicycle riders.*

Reception to this definition was positive, as it included 95% of the public. It was suggested that Caltrans can strengthen it by shortening the definition and including other modality forms.

Although brainstorming on selection criteria and potential routes was limited due to time constraints, the following suggestions were recorded on Conceptboard:

Selection Criteria:

- Balance between rural and urban communities
- Prioritize sections where existing/parallel alternatives are not available
- Safety - where are there more crashes as well as barriers (like freeways, rail lines, etc.)
- Equity
- Selection criteria should be based on goals. Could be mode shift potential, equity, safety, etc., but each of these goals would show a different map. Also sub goals would be important - shovel ready to give us a quick win, etc.

Potential Routes:

- A route that crosses the Bay
- Include the North Bay in planning
- San Pablo Ave and several Bay Crossings if possible
- Dumbarton Corridor
- El Camino Real from Daly City to San Jose

7. Constraints and Opportunities

This portion of the agenda was skipped due to time constraints, but the following opportunities / constraints were listed on Conceptboard:

Opportunities:

- Existing facilities
- Coordination with other planning efforts in the region

Constraints:

- ROW availability
- Inconsistency of region-wide geospatial data

8. Next Steps

- Attendees were encouraged to leave additional feedback on Conceptboard, which will remain live for several more days.
- The Project Team will use Conceptboard and meeting recording and notes to summarize the meeting.
- The Project Team and Caltrans Bay Area will be developing an interactive website which will provide more information on the project.
- The Project Team and Caltrans Bay Area are exploring ways to conduct outreach to different communities within COVID-19 constraints.
- Attendees will be enlisted to help share information, surveys, and other outreach materials with their communities once these are developed.