



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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January 5, 2017

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Negative Declaration ND 04-12 and recommend that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the draft Bicycle Master Plan as a technical appendix to the Mobility Element of the Long Beach General Plan. (Citywide)

APPLICANT: City of Long Beach
Department of Development Services
333 West Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90802

DISCUSSION

The City of Long Beach has committed to the aspirational goal of making Long Beach 'the most bike-friendly city in the United States' and is a regional and national leader in designing innovative bicycle facilities. Since the first Bicycle Master Plan was adopted in 2001, the City has installed over 78 miles of bikeways to reach the current 141 miles of bikeways. These signature bicycle facilities include the downtown parking-protected bicycle lanes, Second Street green lane sharrows and Vista Bike Boulevard. The City aims to see 10 percent of all trips made by bicycle in 10 years, 20 percent in 20 years, and 30 percent in 30 years. This update to the Bicycle Master Plan reinforces this commitment and provides a clear path forward to increase bicycle ridership by residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

The draft Long Beach Bicycle Master Plan (Plan) establishes policies, programs and design guidelines intended to make bicycling in Long Beach safe, comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable for all bicyclists (Exhibit A - Draft Bicycle Master Plan). The ultimate goal of this effort is to increase the number of persons who bicycle in Long Beach for transportation to work, school, errands, and for recreation. The benefits of increased bicycling include improved air quality, reduced emissions that contribute to global warming, improved traffic conditions, reduced dependence on non-renewable fuel, lower transportation costs for citizens, improved physical fitness, stress reduction, and reduced health care costs. The Plan outlines a 20-year plan for bicycle infrastructure and policies developed based on national best practices and public input.

The Bicycle Master Plan is one of several supporting documents that will implement the

Mobility Element of the Long Beach General Plan. The Mobility Element establishes a citywide vision and the policies necessary to achieve a balanced mobility system by implementing improvements on making the existing mobility network more efficient by facilitating the use of non-private automobile modes of transportation – primarily walking, bicycling, and public transit. One of the objectives of this multi-modal access policy is to facilitate increased use of bicycling as a viable option for both work and non-work trips. The Plan is consistent with and furthers multi-modal policies and projects from recently approved planning documents, including the Downtown and TOD Pedestrian Master Plan, CX3 Pedestrian Plan, the West Long Beach Livability Plan and Midtown Specific Plan. As such, once adopted, the Plan will serve as a technical appendix to the Mobility Element.

The Bicycle Master Plan update was prepared in accordance with the State of California Bicycle Transportation Act. The Bicycle Transportation Act (BTA) requires that local agencies complete a Bicycle Master Plan in order to qualify for bikeway grant funds issued by the California Department of Transportation. The Plan also implements the State's complete street's policy, which requires cities to adopt policies that support the design and construction of roadways to serve all users of streets regardless of their age, ability and mode of travel.

The Bicycle Master Plan was developed through a comprehensive and collaborative process that included community outreach, an analysis of existing conditions, City departmental coordination meetings and stakeholder interviews. Public outreach was organized around fun, innovative, and meaningful community events to solicit input from Long Beach residents, visitors, and business owners. Moreover, the project team took a thorough approach to reach parts of the City and population groups that are often absent from the planning process. To that end, community engagement included meeting these stakeholders where they were, at grocery stores, transit stops, and on their way to school, where a few moments could be spared in between destinations.

The goal of this outreach approach is to develop a community supported vision for a comprehensive bikeway network and program that will facilitate biking for transportation and recreation purposes. This vision is achieved by enhancing bicyclist safety, comfort, and convenience. In total, the Plan team held a kickoff event, attended nine community activities or festivals, set up eight pop-up mapping exercises, and held nine focus group meetings. Additionally, a survey was administered online and in person in four different languages (English, Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog). Of the 469 people that responded, 57 percent stated that they typically use a car to get around town. Most respondents identified exercise as the main reason they ride a bicycle, and over half stated that they did not feel safe currently riding a bicycle in Long Beach. Lastly, study sessions on the Plan with the Planning Commission were held on September 1, 2016 and November 17, 2016.

The plan provides the vision for bicycling in Long Beach conceptualized by the following goals:

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- Design bicycle facilities that are accessible and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities
- Increase awareness and support of bicycling through programs and social equity
- Identify, develop, and maintain a complete and convenient bicycle network

The Plan calls for a comprehensive bicycle network of “8 to 80” bicycle facilities across the City, made up of a variety of bicycle boulevards and cycle tracks. The “8 to 80” network was designed to appeal to bicycle riders of different ages and abilities, with emphasis on providing protected, low-stress bicycle facilities for more inexperienced riders. The Plan also includes bicycle strategies that identify specific measures that the City should undertake to achieve its vision and goals. The recommended bikeway network is shown in Figure 6-5 of the Draft Plan.

The Plan recommends the installation of bikeway projects in four phases: pipeline, next steps, gap closure and vision. The pipeline phase includes funded projects that are in the community outreach phase and/or final engineering/design phase. The next steps phase are “shovel ready” projects that staff is actively seeking funding for. Pipeline (funded) and next steps (shovel ready) phases should be implemented within five years from Plan adoption. The Gap Closure phase would complete a citywide backbone network of “8 to 80” facilities within a 10-year time horizon. The Vision phase represents projects to fulfill the City’s long-term aspirational goal to be the ‘the most bike-friendly city in the United States’.

The Plan has been made publicly available and posted online for comment since December 22, 2016. Staff has not received any written comments on the Plan, as of the preparation of this staff report. If adopted by City Council, the Plan positions the City to secure funding to implement the programs and projects in the Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A public hearing notice was published on Thursday, December 23, 2016. This notice included the date, time and location for this meeting. Notice was also provided via eNotify announcements on the City’s web page.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, a Negative Declaration was prepared for the Plan. The Negative Declaration was posted on the City’s website and has been circulated for comment. Staff received positive feedback from Caltrans on the Plan’s approach to implementing the State’s complete streets policy and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) provide constructive feedback on bike parking, which was incorporated into the plan. The Negative Declaration (Exhibit B - Bicycle Master Plan Negative Declaration ND 04-16) will be considered for acceptance by the Planning Commission at this hearing.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Exhibit A – Draft Bicycle Master Plan
Exhibit B – Bicycle Master Plan Negative Declaration (ND 04-16)