Improvement to Transit Access for Cyclists and Pedestrians

Final Report

Submitted to the San Bernardino Associated Governments

by Alta Planning+Design

with Gruen Associates

November 2012

Governments SANBAG Working Together

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

COMPASS BLUEPRINT

alta PLANNING + DESIGN

GRUENASSOCIATES

This page intentionally left blank

alta PLANNING + DESIGN
GRUENASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTURE PLANNING INTERIORS

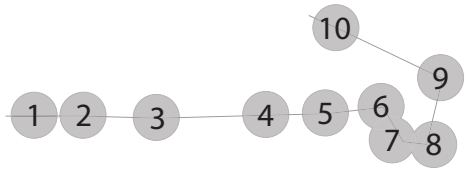
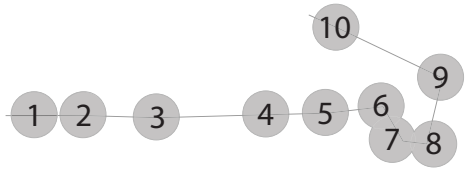
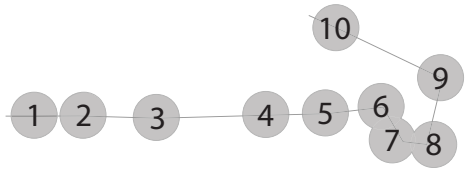
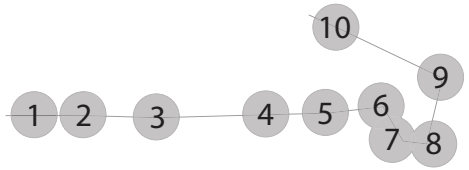


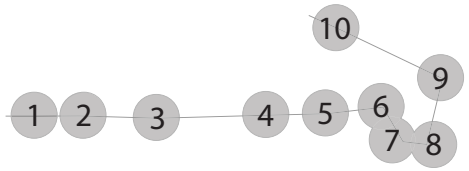
Table of Contents

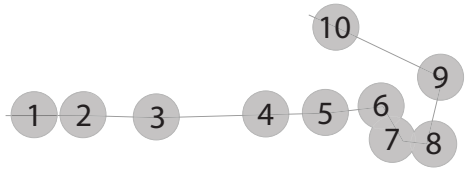




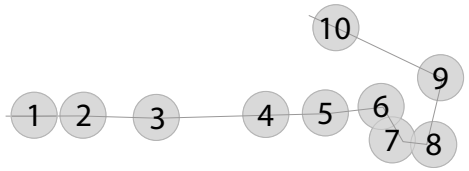
List of Figures

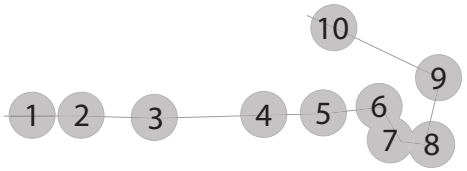




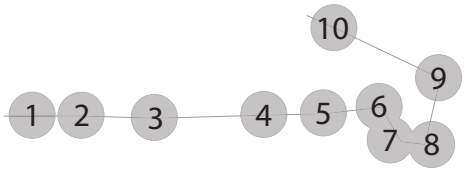


List of Tables





This page intentionally left blank



Executive Summary

Plan Process

San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) undertook an effort to examine the ability of non-motorized users to access its regional transit network, including the six existing Metrolink Commuter Rail stations along the San Bernardino Line, and four under construction sbX Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Stations in the cities of San Bernardino and Loma Linda. This year-long project sought to identify existing barriers to access, inform stakeholders of industry best practices relating to improving non-motorized circulation, and propose planning-level improvements in and around the selected stations. These improvements were based on existing conditions documentation, including fieldwork and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis, industry research, extensive stakeholder consultation, public outreach efforts, and financial feasibility.

The project is designed to serve as a guiding document for cities looking to secure funding for transit station area improvements, implement the goals of the SANBAG Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and improve access to and from these stations for local residents and commuters, thereby reducing parking demand and increasing transit ridership. A Project Development Team (PDT) was convened at the beginning of the project, and consisted of over three dozen members, ranging from City staff, SANBAG and SCAG representatives, local cycling advocates, community members, representatives from Metrolink and Omnitrans, and major employers in the region such as Cal State San Bernardino. The PDT met every two months for the duration of the project, and members were kept abreast of project progress via regular e-mail and phone communication.

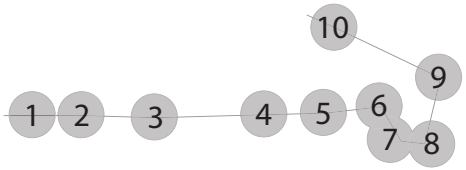
Existing Conditions

San Bernardino County has long been an auto-dominated environment. Roadways are typically laid out in a grid network, topography permitting, with a standard hierarchy of classifications. The Cities in the study area vary widely in their approach to implementing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, owing to a number of factors relating to circulation priorities, land use patterns, and transit station built environments. SANBAG completed its countywide Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, updated in Spring of 2011, which quantified the existing non-motorized network in the region. While it is difficult to generalize, the existing non-motorized network typically consists of a number of disconnected facilities for both cyclists and pedestrians. On-street facilities face challenges from vehicle speeds and volumes, substandard infrastructure, while off-street facilities (such as walking trails and bike paths) face challenges of a lack of funding for creating amenities and providing maintenance.

Despite these challenges, walking, bicycling, and transit usage throughout the study area remains high, and connecting non-motorized facilities to one another and to the people that use them is a key objective of this project.

Best Practices

Chapter Three presents a number of industry best practices from throughout the country designed to improve access to and from transit stations. These examples served to inform the public and the PWG, and formed the basis of a series of recommendations in and around the transit station areas under study, including use of innovative new traffic control devices, bicycle facilities, wayfinding concepts, and other hardscape improvements.



Public Outreach

This project featured a number of events and exercises designed to engage the public and solicit their opinions. An initial survey effort was conducted at each of the ten stations under study, designed to identify transit users' issues, challenges, and preferences relating to accessing their respective transit stations. These surveys took place over the course of two weeks, and resulted in over 200 completed surveys.

In addition, a total of four public workshops were held over the course of the project, which helped to solicit additional comments and educate the public about the proposed improvements found in Chapter Four.

Lastly, SANBAG maintained a project webpage on its website, which featured project materials such as deliverables and public notices for review and comment by the public. In addition, the webpage featured a project-specific e-mail address for community members to provide their comments on the project. This e-mail address was checked daily, and resulted in a number of unique suggestions which have been taken into consideration in the recommended improvements.

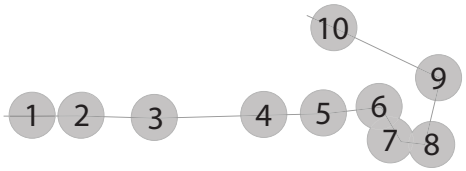
Recommended Improvements

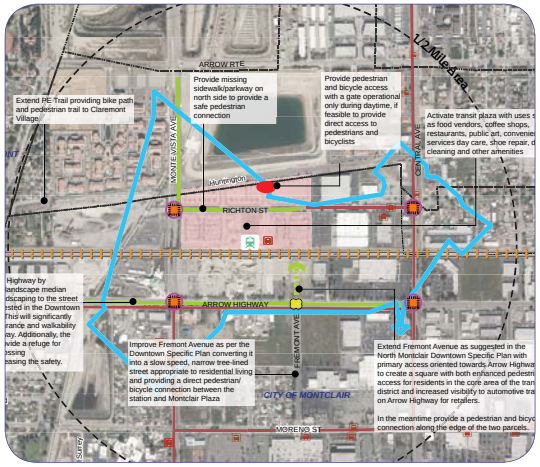
The project study area includes approximately 140 square miles of project catchment area, and recommends an "outside-in" approach, whereby the scale and scope of the proposed improvements become more specific and more detailed as they approach the respective station areas.

This methodology allows participating cities to use this project to identify priority non-motorized transit access corridors within their jurisdictions, helping them to implement the regional bicycle network in a manner that simultaneously improves direct, logical connections to transit facilities, closes gaps in the regional bicycle network, and improves cyclist safety and mobility.

Closer to the station, the recommendations become more specific and detailed, proposing improvements such as new sidewalks, enhanced pedestrian crossings, additional bicycle parking, street trees, or lighting elements, as well as general recommendations designed to help to create a "sense of place" in and around the station area. Highlights of the recommendations include:

- Over 70 miles of high-priority bicycle corridors providing safer, more direct access to transit stations
- Nearly 50 new or improved pedestrian crosswalks for commuters and residents
- Over 23 miles of new, ADA-compliant sidewalks





- Over 2,300 new pedestrian-scale lighting elements in and around station areas
- Over 1,700 new trees for shade and improved aesthetics

In addition to these specific improvements, the following general recommendations are proposed:

- Develop comprehensive wayfinding plan(s) for local residents, commuters, and visitors
- Prioritize roadway resurfacing on designated bikeways
- Increase the quality and amount of bicycle parking at stations and surrounding destinations

Phasing of the improvements identified will be site-specific and dependent on the goals and objectives of each of the participating cities, however, it is recommended that implementation measures occur in concert with not only one another, but with those of neighboring cities to maximize cost effectiveness, non-motorized network activity, and public enjoyment of the facilities.

Funding and Implementation

The consultant team understands the financial challenges currently facing the cities that participated in this project. Despite the difficult funding and implementation for non-motorized improvements, federal, state, local, and private grant funds are available from a number of targeted accounts. In addition to transportation funds, public health, air quality, and various grant sources allow for the design and construction of facilities like those identified in this report.

Chapter Five presents a listing of these sources and identifies the application process for cities and other governmental agencies to follow in order to secure monies for implementation.

Lessons Learned

Over the course of the project, the effort was informed by a diverse stakeholder group, which was an invaluable resource in project development and overall knowledge of the various land use and transportation planning efforts underway throughout the study area cities and among transit operators. Future projects of this nature should make every effort to include as many agency and City stakeholders as possible, and should not exclude cycling and pedestrian advocates and organizations, such as the Friends of the Pacific Electric Trail.

From a technical standpoint, when confronted with applying the 3-mile bicycle travel shed guideline developed by the FTA, municipalities should explore using FTA funds to implement their proposed bicycle network, particularly high-demand corridors and segments which directly serve transit facilities.