

1.1 Purpose and Need

The development of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) for the City of Placerville (City) was generated by the need to address several issues related to non-motorized transportation in the City. The scope of the plan approved by the City Council on September 23, 2003 includes the following components (see also Appendix A):

- The NMTP will comply with the Caltrans Streets and Highways Code – California Bicycle Transportation Act, Section 891.2, A - K.
- The primary emphasis of the NMTP will be on planning for the facilities used by the “Bicycle Commuter” (as defined in the Streets and Highways Code Section 890.3).
- The plan will be more than just a bicycle transportation plan so that it may be adopted as part of the City’s General Plan, Circulation Element.
- The plan will include an inventory of the existing sidewalks in the City of Placerville to the following extent: The sidewalk or pathway provides a significant transportation benefit for either pedestrian or bicycle travel and provides connectivity between activity centers; i.e. schools, commerce, parks or employment centers.

The City has never had a formal plan for non-motorized transportation, and this document could ultimately serve as a component of a future General Plan Circulation Element update. The NMTP will also provide a blueprint for the development of an ultimate bikeway system throughout the City, as well as providing for compliance with Caltrans Streets and Highways Code (sections 890-894.2), enabling the City to be eligible to apply for Bicycle Transportation Account funds.

Since bicycling and pedestrian travel are the two primary modes of non-motorized travel in the City, the emphasis in this plan is on those non-motorized modes. Many of the facilities designed for these two modes are readily usable by other forms of non-motorized transportation, such as equestrians, wheelchair users, in-line skaters and skateboarders.

The Pedestrian Element of the plan provides an inventory of the City’s sidewalks and identifies some missing links in the pedestrian system. The plan also includes pedestrian friendly and traffic calming concepts that can be utilized to improve the conditions of pedestrian travel in the City.

In late 2002, the Placerville City Council approved plans for operational improvements on US 50 from Placerville Drive to Bedford Ave. The planned construction will utilize a portion of the Southern Pacific right of way which parallels US 50 on the Main Street (south) side of the highway. El Dorado County, the City and the community group “Trails Now” have been working toward the development of a Rail-Trail along the Southern Pacific abandoned rail corridor since the early 1990’s. Much of the Southern Pacific right of way through the City of Placerville, especially in the downtown area, is owned by Caltrans. The City, El Dorado County, Trails Now, and some community members would like to see the “El Dorado Trail” become a continuous non-motorized trail that spans the entire length of the County. The NMTP includes a strategy for a bikeway or trail alignment of the El Dorado Trail through the City of Placerville.

1.2 Previous Planning Efforts

Prior to this effort, the City has not developed a formal bicycle plan or non-motorized transportation plan.

1.3 Definition of Bikeway Facilities

The most commonly used bikeway design standards are contained in the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Chapter 1000 – Bikeway Planning and Design, dated February 1, 2001. The Caltrans standards are based largely on standards developed by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Federal Highway Administration, 1988, contains standards for bikeway signing.

Below are brief descriptions of the three most common bikeway facilities and their typical cross sections. More detailed explanations of bikeway design standards are provided in Chapter six of this document.

Class I Bikeway (Bike Path)

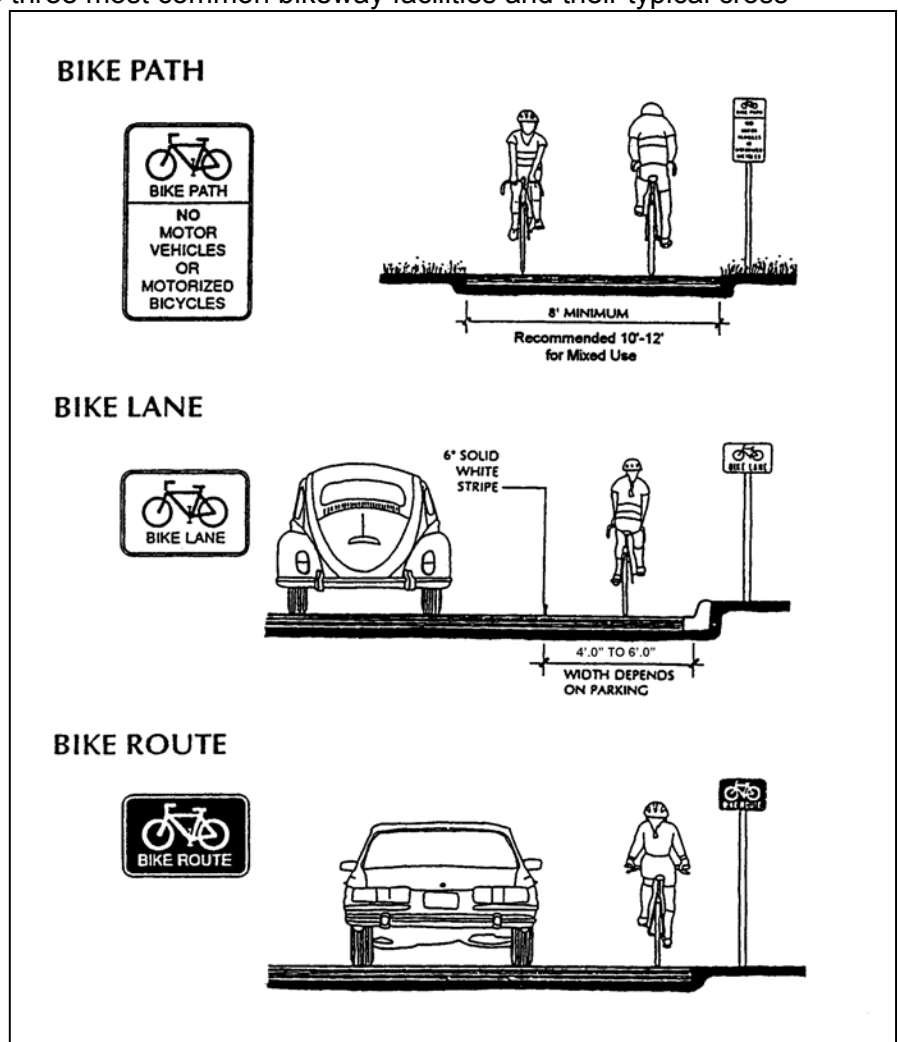
Provides a completely separated facility designed for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with minimal cross flows by motorists. Minimum paved width is eight feet for two-way travel and five feet for one-way travel. Bike Paths closer than 5 feet (1.5 meters) from the edge of the shoulder shall include a physical barrier to prevent bicyclists from encroaching onto the roadway.

Class II Bikeway (Bike Lane)

Provides a striped lane for one-way bicycle travel on a street or highway. The minimum width for a bike lane is four feet, but can be wider depending on adjacent parking, curb and gutter configurations.

Class III Bikeway (Bike Route)

Provides for shared use with pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic. Signs or permanent markings designate a bike route, and there is no minimum width since it is a shared use facility.



1.4 Relationship to Other Documents

A. Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor Master Plan

The Sacramento – Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC) Master Plan covers the Southern Pacific abandoned railroad corridor from the western El Dorado County line near Latrobe to the City at Ray Lawyer Drive. The preserved corridor is planned for use as an alternative transportation corridor with multiple uses including excursion trains, bicycle, pedestrian and equestrian trails, and utility easements.

The SPTC Master Plan is essentially the Plan for the “El Dorado Trail.” The SPTC plan covers 28 miles of the territory of the El Dorado Trail, and includes an environmental document. The NMTP is coordinated with the SPTC plan, providing linkages where possible as well as a continuous route through the City.

B. City of Placerville General Plan

The City’s General Plan is a legal document required by state law which serves as the community’s guide for development of its land. The General Plan is a comprehensive, long-term document that looks 10-20 years into the future. The City’s current General Plan was adopted in January 1990. The Circulation Element of the General Plan addresses transportation, and it is the goal of this NMTP to represent the non-motorized component of the circulation element for the next General Plan update.

The 1990 City of Placerville General Plan includes the following Goals and Policies related to non-motorized transportation:

Goal E: To provide a safe and secure bicycle route system.

Policies:

1. The City shall develop an inner-city bicycle route master plan.
2. Wherever possible, bicycle facilities should be separate from roadways and walkways.
3. The City shall limit on-street bicycle routes to those streets where available roadway width and traffic volumes permit safe coexistence of bicycle and motor vehicle traffic.
4. The City shall promote the development of bicycle routes that follow the contours of the land and are compatible with the terrain.
5. The City shall promote the development of bicycle routes in major development areas and along railroad rights-of-way.
6. The City shall promote development of bicycle routes and/or trails that connect parks and schools that link the Ray Lawyer Drive/Placerville Drive area with downtown, and that link the Apple Hill area with Placerville.
7. The City shall encourage the development of a bike trail through the City utilizing the Southern Pacific and Michigan/California Railroad rights-of-way. This trail could provide and opportunity to connect to other trail systems such as the American River Bikeway in Sacramento County.
8. Any future development adjacent to a bike trail shall be required to analyze impacts of the development on the bike trail and mitigate to the greatest extent possible identified impacts.

Goal F: To promote convenient and safe pedestrian circulation.

Policies:

1. Pedestrian Circulation needs and convenience in the downtown shall be given priority over the needs of through-traffic.
2. The City shall continue to enforce its program requiring adjoining property owners to repair and replace sidewalks in older neighborhoods to increase pedestrian safety and convenience.
3. In approving development projects, the City shall continue to require the construction of sidewalks connecting major pedestrian destinations, such as schools, hospitals, and government centers.
4. Where deemed necessary and appropriate, the City shall undertake construction of sidewalks connecting major pedestrian destinations, such as schools, hospitals, and government centers.
5. The City shall require all developments with a density of R1-20,000 [maximum density 2.18 dwelling units per acre] or greater to provide a sidewalk on at least one side of any street that is developed as part of the project or is used as a perimeter street by that project.
6. The City shall require all multi-family developments to provide sidewalks on both sides of any street that is developed as part of the project and on one side of any street that is used as a perimeter street by that project.
7. The City shall promote the construction of pedestrian overpasses along Highway 50 in conjunction with future highway construction.

In addition to the above goals, the City of Placerville General Plan includes an implementation program goal of preparing and adopting a Bicycle Route Master Plan and appropriate bicycle lane and street standards.

C. El Dorado County Bicycle Transportation Plan

The El Dorado County Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP) was developed concurrently with this NMTP in 2004. The County BTP was developed to fulfill the County's need to have an adopted bicycle plan in place. The overall goal of the BTP is to "Provide a safe, efficient and convenient network of bicycle facilities that establish alternative transportation as a viable option in El Dorado County and neighboring regions." The BTP lays out an ultimate bikeway system for El Dorado County, providing connectivity between the many communities and neighboring regions.

1.5 Community Involvement

The City of Placerville has a highly active pedestrian and bicycle community. The non-profit community based group “Trails Now” was established in 1990 with a mission of developing the abandoned Michigan – California Railroad right of way into a trail near Placerville. In 1991, an El Dorado County Joint Powers Authority purchased the Sacramento – Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC) and Trails Now expanded their mission to include the development of the SPTC Corridor into a trail. Today Trails Now is more than 100 members strong, and continues to have an active voice in any project in the Placerville area that relates to non-motorized transportation or recreation.

The active community involvement in non-motorized issues near the City provides a unique opportunity to include the public on a number of levels. The NMTP Advisory Committee involved various members of the public who commute by bicycle, a member of the Trails Now Board, a City of Placerville Planning Commissioner and staff from the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) and the City of Placerville. The EDCTC ratified the NMTP Advisory Committee in August of 2003. The NMTP Advisory Committee met regularly throughout the development of this plan and the project manager attended monthly Trails Now meetings to discuss the NMTP process and progress.

Public Meetings were held at the City of Placerville Planning Commission meeting on April 19, 2005 and at the Placerville City Council meeting on April 26, 2005. Public comments received from the community at the two meetings were considered in the adoption of this plan.

1.6 Compliance with Bicycle Transportation Account Guidelines

This NMTP complies with the Caltrans Streets and Highways Code, Section 891.2, items A-K (see appendix E) as described in the table on the following page:

TABLE 1	
Caltrans requirement	Section/Description..... Location
A. Estimated number of existing bicycle commuters in the plan area and the estimated increase in the number of bicycle commuters resulting from implementation of the plan	Bicycle Commuter Projections.....Chapter 2, pages 2 & 3
B. A map and description of existing and proposed land use and settlement patterns which shall include, but not be limited to, locations of residential neighborhoods, schools, shopping centers, public buildings, and major employment centers	Land Use Discussion Chapter 2, page 1 Map Set Chapter 5, maps 3 & 4, pages 9 & 10
C. A map and description of existing and proposed bikeways.	Map Set Chapter 5, maps 3 & 4 pages 9 & 10 Description (existing) Chapter 4, pages 5-8 Description (proposed) Chapter 5, pages 6-8
D. A map and description of existing and proposed end-of-trip bicycle parking facilities. These shall include, but not be limited to, parking at schools, shopping centers, public buildings, and major employment centers	Map Set Chapter 5, maps 3 & 4 pages 9 & 10 Description.....Chapter 4, pages 1 & 2
E. A map and description of existing and proposed bicycle transport and parking facilities for connections with and use of other transportation modes. These shall include, but not be limited to, parking facilities at transit stops, rail and transit terminals, ferry docks and landings, park and ride lots, and provisions for transporting bicyclists and bicycles on transit or rail vehicles or ferry vessels.	Multi-Modal Connections Chapter 5, page 2 Map Set Chapter 5, maps 3 & 4 pages 9 & 10
F. A map and description of existing and proposed facilities for changing and storing clothes and equipment. These shall include, but not be limited to, locker restroom, and shower facilities near bicycle parking facilities.	ExistingChapter 4, pages 1 & 2 Proposed Improvements..... Chapter 5, page 8 Map Set Chapter 5, maps 3 & 4 pages 9 & 10
G. A description of bicycle safety and education programs conducted in the area included within the plan, efforts by the law enforcement agency having primary traffic law enforcement responsibility in the area to enforce provisions of the Vehicle Code pertaining to bicycle operation, and the resulting effect on accidents involving bicycles.	Bicycle SafetyChapter 2, pages 4 & 5 Education..... Chapter 2, page 5
H. A description of the extent of citizen and community involvement in the development of the plan, including, but not limited to, letters of support.	Citizen/community involvement Chapter 1, page 5
I. A description of how the bicycle transportation plan has been coordinated and is consistent with other local or regional transportation, air quality, or energy conservation plans, including but not limited to, programs that provide incentives for bicycle commuting.	Description.....Chapter 1, page 3
J. A description of projects proposed in the plan and a listing of their priorities for implementation	Proposed Improvements..... Chapter 5, pages 6-8 Priority Projects..... Chapter 6 page 1-2
K. A description of past expenditures for bicycle facilities and future financial needs for projects that improve safety and convenience for bicycle commuters in the plan area.	Past Expenditures..... Chapter 4, page 2 Future Financial Needs..... Chapter 6, page 3