

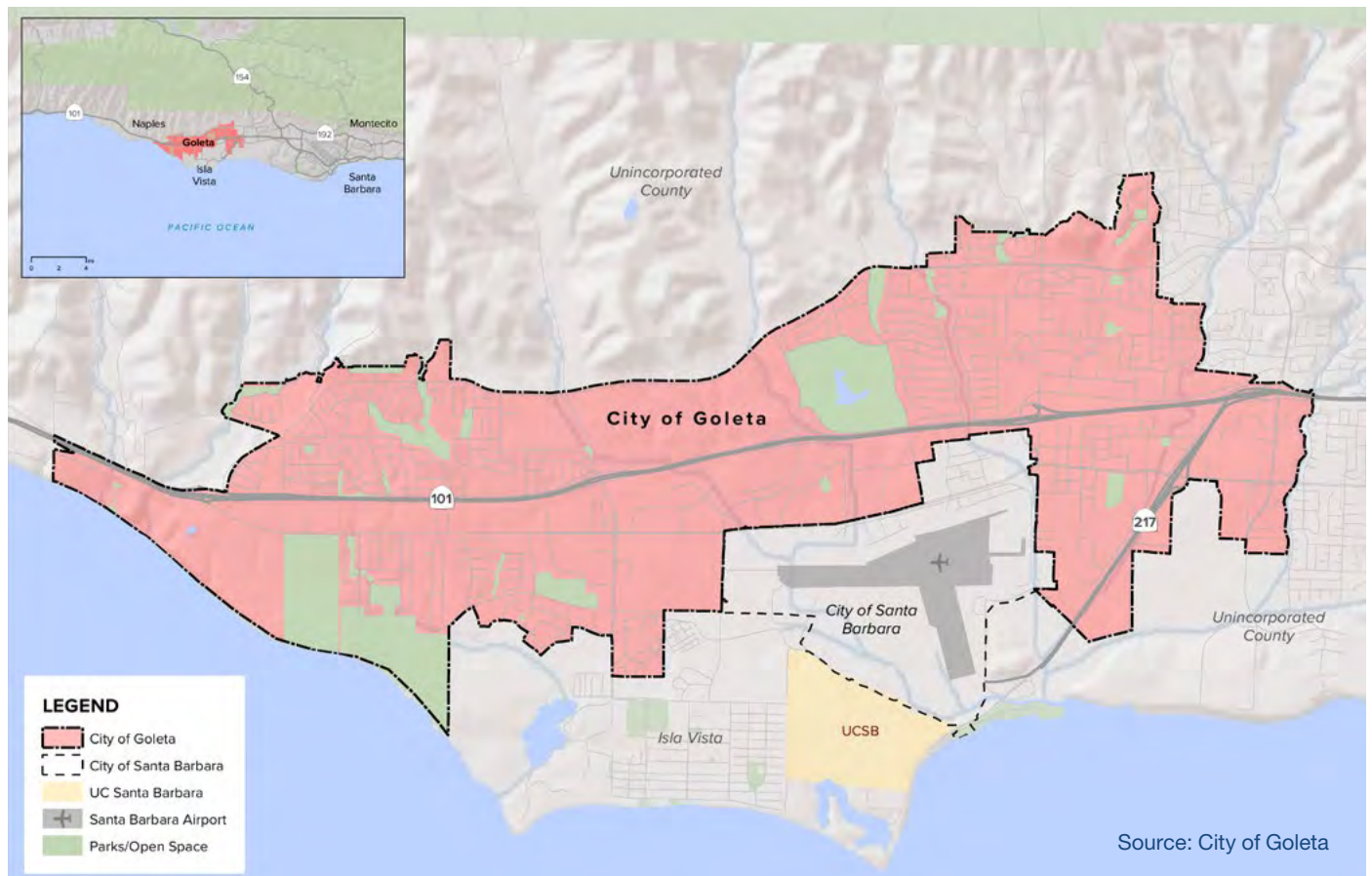
Project Highlight

Goleta Bicycle/ Pedestrian Master Plan



West of Santa Barbara, the City of Goleta stretches up the coast between the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Ynez Mountains. Though the City incorporated in 2002, sizeable areas to its east, west, and north remain unincorporated. Goleta surrounds the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) campus and the unincorporated area of Isla Vista—both of which can only be accessed via local city roads and bicycle/pedestrian paths or State Route 217. This unique geography, as well as the fact that many residents commute to jobs in Santa Barbara, makes the City’s transportation needs uniquely interconnected with those of its neighbors.

Goleta has seen a wide variety of land uses over the past century. Originally an agricultural area, it is now home to several business parks, shopping plazas, the Santa Barbara airport, and a handful of light industry. The city is bisected by the US 101 Freeway, which makes for relatively distinct communities above and below the highway. To the north, tract housing is intermingled with newer condominium developments and gated communities, as well as lower-density homes in the foothills. To the south is Old Town Goleta, a small commercial area and less



affluent residential district between State Route 217 and the airport. Further west beyond the airport, a large shopping mall of big box stores anchors a residential district of homes and high-density apartment blocks, many of which serve the UCSB community.

Despite the relative isolation of some neighborhoods and the frequent lack of bicycle or pedestrian facilities, both forms of transit remain prevalent. According to a survey conducted by the City, 50 percent of residents said they walk regularly to get around town, while 71 percent bike and 81 percent drive. The local Bike Coalition estimates seven to ten percent of residents commute daily by bicycle. A combination of factors, including sizeable populations of students and less affluent service workers, helps explain higher-than-average use of walking and biking.

The Project

Since incorporation, the City has utilized Santa Barbara County's *Bicycle Master Plan* to prioritize the creation of bike paths, parking racks, and other amenities. The *Goleta Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* kicked off in 2016 and is targeted for completion in Spring 2018. Unlike the County plan, the City's new plan will be based on the specific needs of Goleta residents, as identified during the outreach process, and crucially, will also include planning for pedestrian facilities.

The *Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* will establish infrastructure improvements needed to facilitate bike and pedestrian travel and provide criteria for prioritizing projects. The City aims to eliminate barriers to bike and pedestrian travel, to increase the miles of bike and pedestrian "path", and to improve public education around the benefits of these modes of alternative transport. The plan will include a list of potential projects that fulfill these goals, thereby reducing congestion, travel times, and total greenhouse gas emissions, while also promoting public health and equity. This vetting process for projects will also strengthen future grant applications to the State's Active Transportation Program, which the City will need to supplement limited local funding. Concurrently, the City is developing roadway design standards, which will set requirements for road design that include bicycle and pedestrian amenities.

In July 2014, the City adopted a *Climate Action Plan*, which set goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 11 percent below 2007 levels by 2020 and 26 percent below 2020 levels in 2030. One of the *Climate Action Plan*'s strategies is to create a comprehensive bicycle network that encourages bicycle commuting and reduces peak-hour car trips. The *Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* will implement that vision and allow the City to meet its emissions targets on time.



Source: City of Goleta

Locally-Driven Solutions

- Creating a community-based plan that prioritizes projects based on the constituent needs of a very ethnically and socioeconomically diverse community.
- Integrating Goleta's bicycle and pedestrian facilities with those of Santa Barbara and the surrounding unincorporated areas to create a functioning regional transit network.
- Making alternative transit safer and more broadly accessible, spurring fewer car trips and healthier residents.

The aforementioned alternative transportation survey was central to their planning effort, identifying existing transit and transportation patterns and preferences. It also investigated what prevents people from walking or biking more, as well as where they would like expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In order to allow people to give even more specific feedback about their own neighborhoods or commutes, the City provided an interactive online map in which users can tag locations and leave comments. To date, comments include requests for new bicycle infrastructure (e.g. “Can we have a separate bike lane here?”) and specific fixes (e.g. “The street lights here do not always register a cyclist crossing.”). Some commenters identify where the city has already provided safe, enjoyable biking (e.g. “Cathedral Oaks biking is awesome.”).

Local/Regional Connection

Goleta is closely interconnected with its neighbors—Santa Barbara proper, UCSB, Isla Vista, and the other surrounding unincorporated areas, and the efficacy of the *Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* depends heavily on the City’s ability to integrate its new bike and pedestrian system with the surrounding existing and planned systems. To create a shared space for

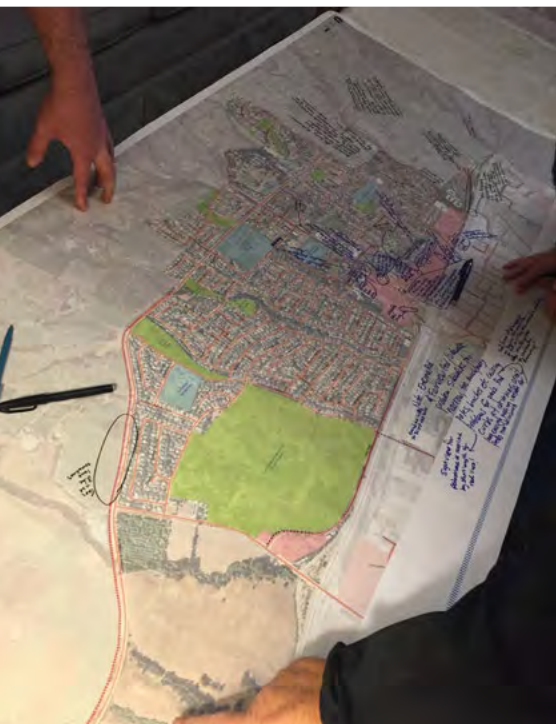
collaboration, the City has formed a Technical Advisory Group with representatives from the City of Santa Barbara, the County of Santa Barbara, UCSB, local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations, and community groups. The Advisory Group discussions will provide opportunities to integrate regional needs and City priorities.

The *Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* is intended to support the regional Santa Barbara County Association of Governments’ *Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) 2040*, which was passed in 2013. The SCS has performance measures related to environment, mobility and system reliability, equity, health and safety, and a prosperous economy. The projects that will be included in the *Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* will be evaluated on their ability to contribute to these metrics— and once implemented, they will help advance overall regional sustainability.

Agency Collaboration for Action

Representatives from many departments are contributing to both the community outreach effort and more technical aspects of the plan. For

example, the City Manager’s team spearheaded the community outreach plan and materials, while members from the Public Works, Planning and Environmental Review, and Neighborhood Services Departments helped produce Spanish versions of all the materials. Members of



Left to right: Participants at the community workshop held at the Encina Royal Senior Living Community leave specific comments about the pedestrian and bike facilities in their area.

Students use a dedicated pedestrian path to safely commute to and from school. Source: City of Goleta



Left to right: Dedicated bike lanes on streets like Santa Marguerita and Cathedral Oaks make biking safer and more enjoyable, according to community feedback. Source: Teresa Lopes, City of Goleta. Large and expanding UC Santa Barbara student housing complexes, where bike use is ubiquitous, sit just south of the Goleta city boundary. UCSB has extensive bike paths across its campus, and one of the City's goals will be to integrate these with their own into a network that serves commuting and recreational needs across the Goleta, Santa Barbara, and the surrounding unincorporated areas. Source: Peter Iannone.

Planning were instrumental in making the community workshops a success, and in partnership with Public Works, reviewed proposals and selected a consultant to produce the final plan. The team effort required to initiate the Plan and gather community feedback has fostered teamwork and comradery, strengthening cross-departmental relationships.

Effective Community Engagement

The Goleta City staff planned a multi-pronged outreach effort intended to reach across age groups and language barriers. They made their community survey available in English and Spanish, both online and in print. They distributed print surveys at the Goleta Library, Community Center, and City Hall. The survey was promoted via press release, the City's *Monarch Press* newsletter, and social media, and targeted e-mails about the survey were sent to individuals signed up for bicycle and pedestrian information through the City. To date, 1,050 responses have been collected, by far the most received for any City project. The effort has succeeded in engaging community interest: 32 percent of respondents voluntarily submitted their emails asking to be kept up-to-date on the Plan's progress.

In addition to surveys, the team hosted booths at the local Lemon Festival and the city farmers market during September, which together received 250 visitors. Since these are non-political events that attract wide

swaths of the community, the outreach team was able to interface with residents who might not have heard about the project through traditional communication channels. Community workshops in November and December at the Goleta Valley Community Center, UCSB, and a senior housing association meeting room attracted a diverse cross-section of ages and ethnicities and provided opportunities to comment in person. Each attracted 35 to 50 attendees.

Sustainable Benefits for California

Implementation of the *Goleta Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan* will help to advance many of California's sustainability objectives, particularly in the areas of:

- Equity
- Improved infrastructure systems
- Public health
- Reduced automobile usage and fuel consumption
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

For More Information

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