



Proposal for a Transformative Biking and Rolling Plan

Created as part of the SF CYCLES campaign:
Connecting Your City with Livability, Equity, and Safety

VISION

With a once-in-a-generation opportunity to pass a bold, transformative update to San Francisco's bike plan — now called the [Biking and Rolling Plan](#) — the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition calls on all city leaders to support, and the Board of Directors of the SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to pass, a plan that creates a visionary, comprehensive, equitable system to support biking and rolling in San Francisco, centered on a citywide, interconnected network of car-free and people-prioritized corridors and incorporating policies and programs that increase access and reduce barriers. This system, when complemented by world-class transit, will make sustainable transportation preferable to and more convenient than driving a car.

BACKGROUND

After over two years of planning and public engagement, the SFMTA is preparing its first comprehensive update of the City's bike plan since 2009, in the form of the Biking & Rolling Plan. It is currently slated to go before the SFMTA Board of Directors for approval in February 2025.

The SF Bicycle Coalition has long believed that citywide interconnectivity for bicycles is key for mass adoption of active, sustainable modes. In the early 2010s, we launched the Connecting the City campaign to achieve connectivity. Since then, we've learned a lot: a network that asks vulnerable road users to "share the road" with cars is neither safe nor inclusive. As we stare down a climate emergency, we also face an epidemic of distraction and traffic violence on our

streets. A trickle of investment hasn't improved the situation. People who choose more sustainable (and vulnerable) modes must have dedicated space.

At the same time, communities that have historically had the least input into decisions that impact their neighborhoods — especially low-income and Black and brown communities — should have their needs and desires accounted for. We must equitably balance the urgency of achieving our goal with trust-building and inviting contributions from people in those communities who need better, safer streets.

Taking bold action to achieve our vision for the Biking and Rolling Plan aligns with many of the city's stated goals and policies:

- [The Transit First policy](#), which states, “Bicycling shall be promoted by encouraging safe streets for riding, convenient access to transit, bicycle lanes, and secure bicycle parking.”
- [The Climate Action Plan](#), which aims to reach net-zero green-house gas emissions by 2040 and shift 80% of trips to low-carbon modes¹.
- [The Vision Zero policy](#), which aims to reduce traffic-related deaths in the city to zero — which can only be achieved by significantly improving safety for people walking, biking, and rolling and, crucially, reducing the city's dependence on private vehicles.

The SFMTA's stated north star goal for the plan — “A safe, connected network within a ¼ mile of everyone, built in five years” — likewise aligns with our vision.

Data and polling in San Francisco supports the fact that the people of San Francisco want these transformative improvements. An SFMTA survey finds that 29% of residents, over 225,000 people, bike or roll at least once per week. 80% of San Franciscans want to use a bike regularly, but a fraction of those feel safe enough to do so. These results are supported by another recent [poll from GrowSF](#), which finds that 27% of respondents bike 2-3 times per week and that 45% consider it extremely or very important to develop more protected bike infrastructure.

There are several obstacles to the passage and execution of a visionary plan: the agency's projected financial shortfalls, political obstructionism, persistent concerns about loss of parking from merchants and homeowners, and more. Nonetheless, the only way to confront these obstacles is to plan for what the city actually needs and then address obstacles as they arise. Preemptively diminishing the Plan's ambition because of anticipated obstacles does not lessen the obstacles – it only limits what can be achieved.

¹ While the Climate Action Plan does not specify what proportions of this 80% should be made by transit, by human-scaled mobility such as walking and biking, or by private electric vehicles, the SFMTA should collaborate with SF Environment to establish more specific targets for the Plan's 2025 update, relying predominantly on transit and human-scaled mobility. While EVs produce less carbon emissions, they should not be considered a truly sustainable transportation mode, as we shall discuss later in this proposal.

PRINCIPLES OF AN AMBITIOUS BIKING & ROLLING PLAN

To achieve the vision of a citywide, interconnected network that truly keeps safe and prioritizes people who bike and roll, the Biking and Rolling Plan must embody certain principles that can guide planning into the coming decades:

- **Equity and access** — Barriers to access experienced by SF residents will be accounted for in the plan. Needs and desires of communities who have been historically disenfranchised will be considered and addressed.
- **Connectivity and convenience** — Anyone in the city can leave their house and be on the network on their bike or scooter within 5 minutes and use the network to reach any other neighborhood, without gaps or interruptions. The plan creates a network and policies that make biking and rolling easier to use than driving.
- **Safety and belonging** — Contact and conflict with motor vehicles is limited and, wherever possible, eliminated. The different threats to safety experienced by different people will be accounted for — safety from traffic violence, safety from interpersonal violence, safety from biased policing.
- **Vitality and joy** — The plan supports a vital San Francisco, with healthy local businesses, thriving cultural expression, and opportunities for civic and social interaction. The plan and network fosters the appreciation of San Francisco's inherent beauty and offers everyone in the city delight and joy.
- **Urgency and accountability** — The plan will have an ambitious timeline and scope, suited to the necessary transformation the city requires to achieve climate and safety goals. Clear mechanisms will exist to ensure action, provide transparent data, and keep decisionmakers answerable to the plan.

A Biking and Rolling Plan that fails to embody these principles is unacceptable, because it will not serve the true needs of the city and the hundreds of thousands of residents who currently bike and roll, or who want to.

OUTCOMES THAT REFLECT THESE PRINCIPLES

While the principles provide high-level guidance, these must be translated into real-world outcomes that demonstrate the City's commitment to achieving a world-class biking and rolling system. Such a system comprises both a safe network and programs and policies to support that network and the people who use it.

For the five guiding principles that an ambitious plan requires, we propose these outcomes:

Equity and access

1. A network that is perceived as safe by people ages 8 to 80
 - a. Prioritizing safe bike and roll connections to schools (including SF State and CCSF), especially between schools and BART and other transit.
 - b. Widening arterial bikeways for greater comfort for people riding at various speeds and to accommodate assistive mobility devices for people with disabilities.
 - c. Fully separating people biking from motor vehicles on routes to schools and parks.
 - d. Prioritizing high-quality bike infrastructure along corridors with high incidence of people riding bikes and scooters on sidewalks, to encourage riding in bike and roll lanes and thereby increasing safety and comfort for people walking or using assistive mobility devices.
2. Accelerated implementation of bike parking across the city
 - a. Installing safe options for long-term bike parking, such as bike hangars and bike cages, in City-owned parking garages or streetside, prioritized for those who live in dense housing and are unable to store their bikes inside buildings.
 - b. Consistently meeting or exceeding the current SFMTA goal of 500-1,000 bike racks installed annually for the first 5 years of the plan.
3. Expanded access to biking and rolling devices
 - a. Increasing investment in bike- and scooter-related programming in Equity Priority Communities.
 - b. Implementing incentive programs, such as rebates or subsidies, for people living on a limited income who transition to Class 1 or 2 e-bikes or scooters with a max speed of 20 mph.
 - c. Incentivizing the establishment of small bike- and scooter-related businesses (especially bike shops) in neighborhoods currently underserved by them, such as D10.
 - d. Working with BayWheels to improve affordability and expand location access. Working with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and regional agencies towards a more sustainable bikeshare system after the current contract expires in 2027, further integrating bikeshare into transit options.

4. Prioritization of collaborating with trusted organizations rooted in Equity Priority Communities, leading to improved infrastructure investments in those neighborhoods
 - a. Maintaining consistent local relationships to better understand local social structures, power distribution, and interpersonal dynamics.
 - b. Repairing trust in communities that have been harmed by City planning processes through transparency, responsiveness, and consistency.

Connectivity and convenience

1. A base grid of fully protected or separated bike and roll routes for both north-south and east-west connections across city
 - a. Within the first five-year phase, building major N-S and E-W connections that are fully separated from vehicle traffic (Ex: Embarcadero to Ocean Beach, Fort Mason to Daly City).
 - b. Establishing car-free school streets and car-free or people-prioritized routes and zones around all schools, enabling at least 80% of elementary-aged families to ride to school.
 - c. Establishing car-free or people-prioritized routes to all major parks in the City.
 - d. Implementing “green wave” signal timing based on bike speeds on major bike-and-roll arterials.
 - e. Improving wayfinding with clear human-level signs and markings on the street.
2. Robust bike and roll network maintenance plan, including frequent sweeping and clearing of debris, as well as regular audits of pavement quality
 - a. Developing a first-in-the-nation Pavement Condition Index for bike and roll facilities.
 - b. Regular repainting of street paint and replacement of destroyed soft-hit and K71 dividers, where used.
3. Improved legibility and usability of street designs by streamlining types and standards and aligning them with global best-practices
 - a. Standard designs should include: Slow Streets; protected cycle paths (which include physical barriers and buffers); car-free streets and cycle ways.
 - b. Standard designs should NOT include: Sharrows; new Class 2 painted bike lanes, except in cases where no curbside parking exists and average street speed is 20 mph or less.
4. Funding built into all projects along commercial corridors for grants to small businesses to become bike-friendly (bike corrals, e-bike battery charging stations, etc.)
5. Proactive collaboration with map apps (Google Maps, Apple Maps, etc.) to update bike-and-roll routes as soon as they come online

Safety and belonging

1. Significantly improved bike and roll infrastructure and traffic calming
 - a. Transitioning away from Class 2 (painted) bike lanes on streets with average speeds over 20 mph, or running alongside parked cars.
 - b. Establishing a standard toolkit for traffic calming and diverting, including speed bumps/tables, road narrowing, chicanes, diverters with bike/roll modal filters.
 - c. Implementing daylighting at all intersections within 5 years, completing the high-injury network by end of 2025 and all school zones by end of 2026.
 - d. Lowering speed limits on all roads made eligible under AB 43 within 5 years, towards making 20 mph the dominant speed limit on neighborhood streets.
 - e. Implementing all currently-permitted speed safety cameras by end of 2025; work with state lawmakers to continue to expand pilot.
 - f. Implementing a no-turn-on-red policy across the city by the end of 2027.
 - g. Regularly including scooters along with bikes on signage and road markings, to increase awareness of scooters belonging in bike and roll lanes.
2. Increased traffic enforcement
 - a. Working with the SF Police Department to increase Focus on the Five stops, the top five moving violations that lead to serious injuries and traffic fatalities: speeding, running red lights, running stop signs, failing to yield to pedestrians and failing to yield while turning.
 - b. Working cross-agency and with emerging technology companies to increase opportunities to automate enforcement for dangerous behavior, such as illegal turns and encroachment in bike lanes.
 - c. Work with community based organizations in EPC's that feel over-policed to generate creative and culturally responsive solutions that lessen the reliance on SFPD to enforce traffic laws.
3. Public education campaigns, focusing on the following topics:
 - a. Changes to speed limits
 - b. No turn on red restrictions
 - c. Safe sharing of the road for all road users, including the [hierarchy of street safety](#)
4. Inclusion of placemaking projects in Equity Priority Communities to better integrate new bike and roll infrastructure into local cultural character, thereby demonstrating the intent to benefit existing communities and improving local acceptance in communities at risk of displacement
 - a. Prioritizing street murals, with grants for community-rooted artists, in EPCs.
 - b. Partnering with community based organizations for street activations such as play streets, street markets, and block parties in EPCs.
 - c. Supporting the organization of culturally-specific community and family rides in EPCs.

Vitality and joy

1. People-centered gathering spaces included in mobility corridor designs
 - a. Prioritizing daylighting and bulbout space for seating, planters, and other place-making installations.
 - b. Ensuring smooth, consistent collaboration between Shared Spaces program and Livable Streets.
 - c. Creating small grants or tax credits for local businesses that invest in physical adaptations that complement bike and roll infrastructure improvements, attracting business from riders.
2. Increased, consistent investment in open streets events, such as Sunday Streets, play streets, night markets, etc.
 - a. Activating events with programming, in collaboration with other departments, non-profits, and CBOs.
 - b. Offering free and staffed bicycle valet at open streets events.
3. Engagement with communities to create attractive streetscapes in their neighborhoods, increasing the universal community benefit and acceptance of new infrastructure
 - a. Working with the SFPUC's Green Infrastructure program to invest in green infrastructure, including planters with drought-resistant native plants.
 - b. Partnering with SFPUC, SFDPW, SF Rec and Parks Dept, nonprofits, and community gardens to maintain greenery in healthy condition.
 - c. Expanding street mural program; partner with SF Arts Commission on small local grants to support place-based art and place-making projects.
 - d. Incorporating creative, attractive bike parking solutions into plan, reflecting local community and culture.

Urgency and accountability

1. Ambitious yet realistic timelines for key benchmarks
 - a. Developing a base grid of cross-town, fully-protected routes within the first 5-year phase, at least 3 connecting east to west and 3 connecting north to south (see recommendations for a phased strategy below).
 - b. Filling in neighborhood-connecting infrastructure between base-grid routes by end of second 5-year phase.
 - c. Completing citywide daylighting and no-turn-on-red within 5 years, focusing first on high-injury intersections and school zones.
 - d. Aligning progress of the Biking and Rolling Plan with other citywide safety programs and ambitious Vision Zero timelines.
 - e. Setting the bar ambitiously for all goals to establish a baseline, while seizing opportunities to exceed the baseline when possible.
2. A "complete streets" strategy that leverages all street projects to spur implementation
 - a. Aligning implementation with planned repaving, to maximize impact and minimize neighborhood disruption.

- b. Coordinating with DPW and utilities to identify opportunities to implement improvements in coordination with dig projects.
3. Improved public understanding and readiness, by dedicating SFMTA communications staff and planning resources specifically to the Biking and Rolling Plan
 - a. Identifying in advance the key stakeholders for next project phases and beginning communications early.
 - b. Informing and collecting feedback from district supervisors and community leaders as early as possible, and recruiting them to help communicate with the local community.
 - c. Providing communications training to all project planners.
 - d. Communicating the general benefits of improvements to local neighborhoods, supported by data.
4. Commitment to transparency regarding progress
 - a. Creating an easy-to-read dashboard on the SFMTA website tracking progress on the plan, updated quarterly.
 - b. Installing additional bike counters to more accurately track usage and behavior patterns of people biking; including collected data in reporting.

STRATEGIC PLANNING THROUGH A PHASED APPROACH

Too many plans generated by city agencies languish on shelves, failing to become a reality. For a plan to gain momentum, it needs a strategic approach — and of course, effective strategy depends on one’s perspective. The SF Bicycle Coalition believes that the plan’s strategic approach needs to achieve multiple aims (in order of importance):

- It needs to prioritize actions that will have the most impact for the investment, in terms of improving the safety and experience of people biking and rolling
- It needs to generate enthusiasm and confidence in the constituency most likely to vocally support the plan and generate political will to see it through, namely people who bike and roll and those who advocate for them
- It needs to map out a clear pathway for arriving at its ambitious goals
- It needs to consider today’s political realities as well as tomorrow’s political possibilities
- It needs to offer tangible improvements for neighbors who might not bike or roll but will be impacted by changes (note: this aim should rise in priority in Equity Priority Communities and those at risk of displacement)

We have seen a draft network map from the SFMTA that articulates an overall eventual goal for an end-of-plan network, which in its ambition seems keyed to *today’s* political realities. However, it does not achieve some important strategic aims. It does not generate enthusiasm and confidence in those already biking and rolling, because it relies on Slow Streets-style calming and diversion that, in two years of a permanent Slow Streets program, the SFMTA has not demonstrated it can consistently deliver. It does not lay out a rollout plan that communicates how the city will arrive at the final network in a systematic way. And it does not provide a vision

beyond what seems possible today, ignoring the broader possibilities in a future political landscape.

All advocates, ourselves included, must recognize that SFMTA cannot, on its own, change political realities or shape political possibilities. That is not the role of a city agency. Its role is to offer the best transportation designs and policies to achieve the City's stated goals. In doing so, the agency offers a tool with which people who bike and roll and the advocates representing them can educate and persuade elected officials, their communities, and other constituents of the universal value of these improvements. In other words, the responsibility to achieve an ambitious plan does not reside solely with the SFMTA. If the plan fails to be implemented because of a lack of political will, despite the agency's best efforts, responsibility lies as much with the biking and rolling community for not generating that will.

To better achieve strategic aims, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition recommends a phased approach to the Biking and Rolling Plan:

Phase 1: Years 1-5 (2025-2029)

FOCUS: A base grid of bold, fully-protected cross-town corridors, at least three each in the north-south and east-west directions, as well as car-free school streets and rigorously calmed school zones around all SFUSD schools.

This first phase would harness the momentum of the plan's passage to take bold action to connect the city with cross-town routes fit for all ages and abilities, an overwhelming priority of the biking and rolling community². It also demonstrates to those who bike and roll that the plan inaugurates a new phase — it's not simply business as usual. In subsequent phases, the base grid could then be filled in with additional neighborhood connectivity.

Simultaneously implementing car-free school streets and calmed school zones would allow the SFMTA to demonstrate the effectiveness of its traffic calming toolkit to create safer shared streets, prioritizing human-scaled mobility such as biking, rolling, and walking. Implementation of these zones should be data-driven, as the Slow Streets program purports to be, while increasing the rigor with which toolkit strategies are deployed when streets are not meeting target metrics. Strategies must go beyond soft-hit posts and small signs to include speed humps, diversion of motor vehicle traffic, modal filters, lane narrowing and chicanes, and other physical installations.

By focusing first on the areas around schools, the SFMTA begins with a popular goal — protecting children and families — while creating “islands” of people-prioritized zones that serve as a proof of concept for the broad benefits safer and slower streets provide local communities.

² In our recent poll asking our members to prioritize the importance of various key outcomes, over 80% of respondents rated an 8-to-80 network and protected cross-town connectivity as “most important” priorities.

Phase 2: Years 6-10 (2030-2034)

FOCUS: Connect the established base grid to school zones, merchant corridors, parks, medical facilities, and other important destinations, using a mix of robust protection (on streets with higher speeds or volumes of motor vehicles) or people-prioritized calmed streets.

In this second phase, the agency should collaborate with other city departments to allay fears and concerns through programs that make apparent how neighborhoods and merchant corridors can benefit from changes that are carried out. For example, a small grants program that helps businesses be bike-and-roll ready (through better parking, charging stations, maintenance and pump stands, etc.) can help businesses transition alongside the streetscape. Collaborating with the SF Arts Commission to pay local artists in EPCs to integrate new culturally-relevant public art, or with the SFPUC's Green Infrastructure program to improve and maintain greenery on corridors, can provide additional benefits to neighborhoods that are just starting to develop a culture of biking and rolling.

At the same time, focusing on connections from the base grid to destinations that encourage people to bike and roll for everyday mobility strengthens the case that human-scaled mobility is the most convenient and enjoyable way for residents to get where they need to go. A one-size-fits-all approach won't work to achieve connectivity. SFMTA should continue to assess what types of infrastructure — within a limited palette — will work best for each corridor. Physical protection between cars and human-scaled mobility must be prioritized where vehicle traffic is higher than 25 mph or daily volumes typically exceed 1,500 vehicles. People-prioritized, calmed shared corridors are appropriate where speeds and volumes are lower. And finally, special consideration should be given to corridors with high incidence of people biking and rolling on sidewalks, providing them with a more appropriate and safe place to travel (and thereby increasing safety for people walking, seniors, and people with disabilities).

The variety of infrastructure should be constrained to a few standard designs, in order to improve legibility and predictability. Overly novel or varied designs have at times resulted in infrastructure that is difficult for people moving on dynamic streets to understand at a glance. Illegibility of street design reduces predictability, which negatively impacts its safety.

Phase 3: Years 11-15 (2035-2039)

FOCUS: Complete the plan by addressing gaps in connectivity, hardening successful quick-build designs, and amending infrastructure to improve outcomes.

The final network described at the end of phase 3 should represent a hopeful vision of a city that is designed to maximize use of transit and human-scaled mobility to get around.

If the first two phases are successful, the number of people biking and rolling should be far higher in 2035 than it was in 2025. This will likely require that certain corridors on the existing network be widened or otherwise amended to better serve more people. In addition,

infrastructure that was implemented using a quick-build toolkit will have proven to be effective, and the agency should harden that infrastructure and make it permanent.

We can anticipate that trends enabled by improved technology will continue, such as more and more people adopting electrified mobility devices. This trend will yield exciting results, ensuring that SF exceeds its goal of 80% of trips being made sustainably. It will likely require additional adjustments to public infrastructure as well. Theft will continue to be an issue, since electrified devices are more valuable than mechanical ones, and offering opportunities to charge those devices enhances their usability. SFMTA should look to combine parking and charging, through the installation of secure lockers and hangars that incorporate charging.

At this point, we must also state unequivocally that **electric cars must not be the primary way that SF achieves its sustainable transportation goals**. While EVs are certainly preferable for people who need to use a vehicle to get around (such as many seniors and people with disabilities), they are still incredibly resource-intensive, demand large amounts of energy to operate, and take up an unacceptable amount of space. We call on the SFMTA to work with SF Department of the Environment, as that agency drafts a 2025 update to the City's Climate Action Plan, to specify that transit and human-scaled mobility (walking, biking, rolling) should comprise the vast majority of the plan's target of 80% of trips made by low-carbon modes.

Revising the Plan Every Five Years

If we can be certain of one thing, it is that a plan that we create today will only be partially relevant five years from now. With the pace of technological, societal, and demographic changes, people's transportation needs for getting to work, appointments, and recreation will continue to evolve. The SFMTA should build into the plan a process for efficiently evaluating and amending the plan every five years, while remaining steadfast in achieving the ultimate goals of the plan — to ensure that transit, biking, and rolling are the most convenient and enjoyable modes of transportation one can use across the city.

CONCLUSION

The SFMTA has invested two years and as much as a million dollars into the process of creating a new Biking and Rolling Plan. The scale of investment must be met with a proportionately ambitious plan, or that investment will have been a waste. The plan must reflect San Francisco's values, which the principles we articulate in this proposal uphold. And the principles must be underpinned with demonstrable, concrete outcomes. Finally, the agency must articulate a strategic rollout of the plan, moving beyond the piecemeal approach that characterizes today's implementation.

This proposal offers a huge number of demands and outcomes, and the scope we propose may be beyond what today's and tomorrow's realities can manifest. Our goal is to challenge the SFMTA to embrace ambition, to embrace possibility, to embrace hope for the future. We know that getting to the joyful, sustainable future we all want to see demands we maintain a bold

outlook, even in the face of anticipated resistance and opposition. Proposing less than what we know is needed will not reduce that opposition; it will only guarantee that we in fact achieve less.

Instead, we must move boldly towards what tomorrow demands of us. We must set ourselves on a route towards a more sustainable transportation system, towards streets where people are confident in their safety, towards a more connected, civil, and joyful city. This is the challenge we present to the SFMTA. Meet that challenge, and we — those who bike and roll, those who want to, and the advocates who lift up their voices — will work tirelessly alongside you to make the Plan a reality.