

3. TRANSIT AND BRIDGE ACCESS

TRANSIT AND BRIDGE ACCESS GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal:

Expand Bicycle Access to Transit and Bridges

Objectives:

- Provide bicycle access to transit vehicles whenever feasible
- Provide convenient bicycle access and bicycle parking at transit stations
- Provide bicycle access to all local bridges wherever feasible

INTRODUCTION

The integration of bicycle and transit use on a local and regional basis enhances the role of each mode in providing convenient transportation. This integration is essential in maximizing the utility of bicycle transportation for medium and long-range trips, whether for commute, recreational or utilitarian purposes. Bicycle access should be provided to all transit modes, including bus, streetcar, rail and ferry. Bicycle access also should be provided on San Francisco's bridges whenever feasible to ensure maximum connectivity.

Bicycle access to transit vehicles, like bicycle parking at transit stations, provides an intermodal link that improves the efficiency and range of both transit and bicycling. Bicycle access to transit vehicles themselves provides maximum mobility at both ends of a transit trip. Transit vehicles, however, are often too crowded to accommodate many bicycles. The actions in this Plan are intended to maximize the opportunity for transit users to bring bicycles on board transit vehicles while recognizing that secure bicycle parking at transit stations will facilitate many bicycle and transit intermodal trips. This Plan's recommendations for the San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) may be



Photo credit: Valley Transportation Authority

Bicycle commuter enters a VTA LRV during commute hour.

enacted by the SFMTA. San Francisco does not have jurisdiction over the other transit agencies listed, but this Plan’s recommendations constitute an official request to those agencies to consider improving the utility of their transit systems for bicyclists.

Good bicycle access to transit includes two major components:

- 1) Bicycle parking at transit stops that is well promoted, including:
 - Secure facilities
 - Adequate capacity to meet demand
 - Available at an affordable cost
- 2) Bicycle transport on transit vehicles, including:
 - Bicycle access at all reasonable hours
 - Adequate capacity to meet the demand
 - No additional charge beyond the standard passenger fare

BICYCLE ACCESS TO TRANSIT

It is important to provide bicyclists with easy and efficient access to all of the major public transit modes serving San Francisco including heavy rail, light rail, bus and ferry systems. This access must be provided to both the transit vehicles themselves and at transit stops and stations.

MUNI ACCESS

Muni is the seventh-largest public transit system in the United States, providing local transit service by bus, light rail (“Metro”), historic streetcars and cable cars. Although bicycle racks are provided on all Muni buses, currently none of Muni’s rail vehicles permit bicycles on board and bicycle racks are not yet feasible due to engineering and safety constraints. Muni’s light rail vehicles (LRVs) could provide an important service for bicyclists by permitting bicycles on board. Almost every light rail system in North America allows bicycles on board (including the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, Sacramento Regional Transit District and the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission).



Front-mounted bicycle rack on the 38 Geary.

Action 3.1

Create an SFMTA policy that explicitly permits folded bicycles on all SFMTA transit vehicles.

Action 3.2

Develop a pilot program to provide bicycle access on SFMTA light rail vehicles for a trial period that would be monitored for potential future implementation.

A Muni pilot program to permit bicycles on LRVs would provide a test of the safety and operational impacts of allowing bicycles on board. As part of the pilot program, specific design measures should be developed to ensure that bicycle access does not interfere with other passengers' convenience or safety, particularly for the elderly, disabled and small children. Muni should implement such a pilot program, beginning on the Third Street light rail line, as proposed as a mitigation measure in the 1998 Third Street Light Rail Project Environmental Impact Report¹. The SFMTA should determine LRV program regulations and the following should be considered:

- Bicycles (except folding bikes) should not be allowed on crowded LRVs
- Off-peak commute hours should first be explored in a trial allowing bicycles on LRVs, with possible exceptions for allowing bicycles on LRVs at all times between the Castro Street and West Portal Stations
- Bicyclists with proof of payment should board at one of the back doors and remain near that back door while on board

The SFMTA should develop criteria to evaluate the success of this pilot program. This pilot program should conclude with recommendations for continuation or modification to the service and accompanying regulations.

Action 3.3

Update the SFMTA's bicycle accessibility guidelines and widely distribute and publicize these guidelines.

SFMTA bicycle accessibility guidelines should be updated to allow folding bicycles within all Muni vehicles. These guidelines also should provide clear guidance to transit operators and bicyclists regarding the use of existing front-mounted bicycle racks on buses. Promotional materials, including directions on how to use the front-mounted bicycle racks, should be developed as part of these guidelines and be widely distributed.

Action 3.4

Create an SFMTA policy that allows bicyclists with disabled bicycles to bring them aboard SFMTA transit vehicles, interior space permitting and at the vehicle

¹ The DEIS/DEIR finds on page 5-2 that the project "precludes the future development of a formalized (striped) bike lane" and recommends on page 3-68 "that Muni establish a policy providing for the accommodation of bicycles on the Third Street light rail vehicles."

operator's discretion, when the SFMTA transit vehicle either does not have bicycle racks or when the racks are full.

Action 3.5

Install bicycle racks on all SFMTA-operated buses and work with other transit operators with buses operating in San Francisco to install bicycle racks on their bus fleets.

All of Muni's bus fleet (about 900 buses) carries up to two bicycles on a front-mounted bicycle rack. No operational difficulties associated with this rack type have been identified and Muni should continue to provide bicycle racks on all of its buses and ensure existing racks are maintained.

MUNI BICYCLE STATION ACCESS AND PARKING

Several Muni Metro Stations are shared with Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) (see Table 3-1 below). These shared stations are within BART's jurisdiction. The City should assist BART in their efforts to improve bicycle access at shared stations. The SFMTA also should adopt designs similar to those being employed in BART stations to improve bicycle access and bicycle parking at Muni Metro Stations. Issues of pedestrian clearance and rider safety should be addressed. As bicycle access to Muni LRVs is instituted, signage, stair channels² and adequate bicycle parking should be installed at the Castro Street, Church Street, Forest Hill, Van Ness Avenue and West Portal Stations.

The SFMTA should pursue right of way (ROW) bicycle rack installation at non-underground Muni Metro Stations. The SFMTA's Bicycle Program has installed bicycle racks near Muni Metro and BART Stations, but has not installed racks within the stations.

BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT ACCESS

BART provides heavy rail service for San Francisco and the Bay Area, including eight stations within San Francisco. East Bay counties are connected to San Francisco via BART's Transbay Tube and service south of the City extends to the San Francisco International Airport, with a new Caltrain transfer station in Millbrae. Because bicycles are not permitted on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, BART provides a critical link between San Francisco and the East Bay.

Action 3.6

Work with BART to analyze existing bicycle policies, identify expanded bicycle access times and create a trial program for non-folding bicycle access in both directions on Transbay peak period trains.

² Stair channels allow bicyclists to transport their bicycles up and down stairways without having to lift the bicycle by providing a smooth surface that bicycle wheels can roll along.

Bicycle access has improved from no access when BART first opened, to the current access rules created through BART's Bicycle Accessibility Task Force (BBATF)ⁱ. Bicyclists can now board most trains and are allowed in all train cars except the first. Although BART allows bicycles during off-peak hours, it prohibits bicycle access on peak-hour trains in the "commute direction." This prohibition is a strong disincentive for Transbay bicycle commuters, and limits BART as a commute option for many bicyclists, thereby impeding the advantages of intermodal bicycle commuting.

BART BICYCLE STATION ACCESS AND PARKING

Bicycle access to underground BART stations is restricted to stairs and elevators that were not originally designed to accommodate bicyclists. Access fare gates also are designed for pedestrians only, requiring that bicyclists use the emergency/wheelchair gate for their bicycles and then return to the pedestrian entrance. This station infrastructure should be improved through future station renovations. Recently constructed BART stations and renovated stations provide a wide fare gate that can accommodate wheelchairs and bicycles.

Table 3-1 below shows BART's recommendations for improving bicycle access and bicycle parking in its San Francisco stationsⁱⁱ. The SFMTA should support and assist BART in its plan to improve station access for bicycles, specifically including the installation of bicycle parking improvements and bicycle stair channels.

Table 3-1
BART's Recommended Bicycle Access and Parking Improvements

Station Location	Recommended Bicycle Facility Improvement	Status
16 th Street	Parking Improvement	Completed - 77 bicycle parking spaces
16 th Street	Stair Channel Installation	Completed
24 th Street	Parking Improvement	Completed - 70 bicycle parking spaces
24 th Street	Stair Channel Installation	Under evaluation
Balboa Park*	Parking Improvement	Completed - 107 bicycle parking spaces
Balboa Park*	Stair Channel Installation	Under evaluation
Civic Center*	Parking Improvement	Completed - 63 bicycle parking spaces
Civic Center*	Smart-card bicycle cage	Seeking funding – 200 bicycle parking spaces
Civic Center*	Stair Channel Installation	Under evaluation
Embarcadero*	Bike station	Completed- 130 bicycle parking spaces

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Embarcadero*	Stair Channel Installation	Under evaluation
Glen Park	Parking Improvement	Completed - 61 bicycle parking spaces
Glen Park	Stair Channel Installation	Under evaluation
Montgomery*	Parking Improvement	Under evaluation
Montgomery*	Stair Channel Installation	Under evaluation
Powell*	Parking Improvement	Completed - 7 bicycle parking spaces
Powell*	Stair Channel Installation	Under evaluation

* Denotes a Shared Muni and BART station

CALTRAIN ACCESS

Action 3.7

Work with Caltrain to expand bicycle access on its trains and to its San Francisco stations by promoting bicycling to stations and by providing secure bicycle parking at station areas.

Caltrain provides commuter rail service to downtown San Francisco's Fourth and Townsend Streets Station from 32 stations to the south, including Millbrae, Hillsdale, Palo Alto, San Jose and Gilroy. Caltrain operates two distinct types of rolling stock which are not interchangeable: Gallery and Bombardier. Each train set comprises cars of one type or the other. The Gallery bicycle car can accommodate up to 32 bikes, while the Bombardier bicycle car can hold up to a maximum of 16 bikes. Each bicycle car in a train set is indicated by a decal on the side of the train. Some train sets will contain two bicycle cars, such that if there are two Gallery bicycle cars, a train set will hold up to a maximum of 64 bikes, while two Bombardier bicycle cars on a train set can hold up to 32 bikes per train set. Current protocol is that bicyclists board and exit trains after other passengers. Detachable or collapsible trailers or large, bulky attachments that expand bicycle width, such as saddlebags, backpacks or briefcases, are not permitted. Bicyclists must be at least 12 years old. Bicycle capacity should be increased along this regional rail line.



Photo credit: BikeMap.com
Commuter bicycles on the Caltrain Cab Car.

Caltrain's onboard bicycle program is very popular and well utilized. It maintains the highest carrying capacity of bicycles of any commuter rail service in the nation. Even with relatively high capacity, a number of peak period passengers with bikes are unable to board due to capacity constraints. This is commonly referred to as "bumping." Passengers with bumped bicycles can still board the train, but must leave their bike at the station. Bumping happens in peak periods; at stations with very high bicycle traffic volumes and at the preceding stations of a peak direction run (because some passengers with bikes will have alighted by the time the train reaches later stations).

Caltrain is currently working to identify potential operational solutions to reduce occurrences of bumping, such as providing timely bicycle capacity information as well as boarding and alighting protocols for bicycles, conducting feasibility studies for additional wayside options such as bike sharing programs and continuing to pursue long-term investments, such as the Caltrain 2015 program. The Caltrain 2015 program serves to increase capacity for all riders by providing more frequent service in the peak hours. Caltrain is also working on a system-

wide access policy to both address the needs of all Caltrain riders and guide future investment decisions.

CALTRAIN BICYCLE STATION ACCESS AND PARKING

Fourth and Townsend Streets Station

See the discussion below under the Bike Stations heading.

Twenty-Second Street Station

Bicycle access and parking improvements are strongly recommended at this station. The current stair access to the train platforms is inadequate to encourage more bicyclists to use this station and secure bicycle parking is limited. Previously, bicycle lockers existed at Muni's Woods Maintenance Yard adjacent to the station. These lockers served bicycle commuters accessing Caltrain's 22nd Street Station, but were removed due to security concerns after September 11, 2001. Muni and Caltrain should work together to resolve security issues and reinstall bicycle lockers.

REGIONAL BUS TRANSIT ACCESS

Buses provide a critical trip link for many bicyclists traveling longer commute distances, shopping where larger purchases limit safety or ability to complete a round trip solely by bicycle or when weather conditions limit the desirability and comfort of a bicycle trip.

Unless noted otherwise, all bus transit providers serving San Francisco:

- Do not charge an additional fare for bicycles
- Use front-mounted bicycle racks that hold two bicycles
- Allow only single-rider, two-wheel bicycles
- Require bicyclists to be able to load and unload their bicycles without help from the bus operator

The San Francisco Bay Area is served by many transit operators. AC Transit, Amtrak, GGT, and SamTrans each accommodate bicycles on their buses, as described below. Since multimodal bicycle commuters and recreational riders depend on one or more of these transit operators, City staff should work with the MTC and regional transit operators to improve the capacity and convenience of intermodal bicycle access to San Francisco.

AC TRANSIT BUS ACCESS

AC Transit, operated by the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, serves 13 cities and adjacent unincorporated areas in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. AC Transit operates local East Bay bus service and 26 commuter bus routes

from the East Bay to the Transbay Terminal in downtown San Francisco. All AC Transit buses are equipped with front-mounted bicycle racks that hold two bicycles. Two additional bicycles can be stored on commuter coaches in the cargo bays (one per bay) when the front-mounted rack is full. On selected commuter coaches crossing the San Mateo and Dumbarton bridges, custom-made undercarriage racks allow four additional bicycles to be stored.

AMTRAK CAPITOL CORRIDOR BUS ACCESS

The Capitol Corridor links Amtrak intercity train service with feeder bus service throughout Northern California. All trains on the Capitol Corridor allow bicycles onboard. Service to and from downtown San Francisco is provided by buses that connect to the Emeryville train station. Each bus can accommodate bicycles within luggage storage bins.

GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT BUS ACCESS

GGT provides regional bus service in San Francisco, Marin and Sonoma Counties, as well as limited local service within Marin and Sonoma Counties. GGT buses up to 40 feet long have front-mounted bicycle racks and space for two additional bicycles in their luggage bays. GGT should outfit their 45-foot vehicles with front-mounted bicycle racks as now permitted by state law and already implemented by AC Transit (see above). GGT tries to schedule its buses without bicycle racks solely along routes with frequent service to ensure bicyclists' potential waiting time for a bus with a rack is minimized.

SAMTRANS BUS ACCESS

SamTrans, operated by the San Mateo County Transit District, provides bus service throughout San Mateo County and into parts of San Francisco and Palo Alto. The entire SamTrans fleet of buses is equipped with front-mounted bicycle racks. Two additional bicycles are allowed inside buses, depending on passenger loads.

FERRY BICYCLE ACCESS

Two ferry operators provide service to San Francisco: Golden Gate Ferries and Blue & Gold Ferries. Both services allow bicycles on board free of charge. Golden Gate Ferries operate from San Francisco to Larkspur and Sausalito and provide 25 bicycle spaces per boat (15 on catamarans) on a first-come, first-serve basis. Blue & Gold Ferries operate from San Francisco to Sausalito, Tiburon, Vallejo, Alameda/Oakland and Angel Island and allow up to 20 bicycles per boat at the discretion of the captain. No policy changes are recommended at this time.



Bicyclist accessing the Blue & Gold Ferry.

TRANSIT STATION ACCESS

Action 3.8

Ensure that all San Francisco transit stations, including the new Transbay Terminal, provide barrier-free bicycle access and state-of-the-art bicycle parking facilities and work with the California High-Speed Rail Authority to ensure bicycles are accommodated on its long-distance trains.

The planned new Transbay Terminal will serve as the City's major transit hub, linking bus and light rail lines, as well as Caltrain commuter rail service and potentially high-speed intercity rail service. The new multimodal station, which will be built on and around the current location, has received environmental clearance and is estimated to be complete by 2019. Additionally, the surrounding redevelopment plan calls for thousands of new housing units, offices and retail space. Large numbers of automobiles move through the streets surrounding this employment center and major public transportation hub every day. In such a compact downtown neighborhood, bicycle facilities can help relieve congestion.

In all new and existing transit facilities, the City should be involved in the planning and design processes to ensure that convenient bicycle access by way of elevators, ramps or escalators is provided to all building levels, particularly those with train platforms.

Action 3.9

Work with San Francisco Bay Area transit operators and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to develop, implement, maintain, expand and enforce improved intermodal bicycle access.

The existing Transbay Terminal serves approximately 20,000 bus passengers per day and the newly renovated Caltrain 4th & King Streets Station serves approximately 12,200 rail passengers daily. The planned extension of Caltrain to the new Transbay Terminal will likely bring an increase in the demand for bicycle facilities in and around the station, such as access to all platforms, secure bicycle parking and convenient bicycle routes to and from the station.

The existing Transbay Terminal will be replaced by an intermodal facility serving AC Transit, Amtrak bus service, BART (via an underground tunnel), Caltrain, Golden Gate Transit (GGT), Greyhound, Muni and SamTrans. The new Transbay Terminal will connect all of these transit systems to downtown San Francisco and address the Bay Area's most pressing need for greater interconnectivity of transit service. By the year 2020 the Transbay Terminal will potentially serve 10,000 bus passengers and 12,000 train passengers during peak hours, with capacity for considerably more. A total of 50 bus bays will meet the 2020 growth forecast for all transit operators currently using the Transbay Terminal and it will have sufficient latent capacity to meet further transit service expansion. It is critical that the overall design for this new facility address bicycle access, circulation and secure storage in order to promote multimodal commute trips.

For projects in San Francisco under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) and joint powers agencies such as the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (Transbay Terminal), these agencies should consult with the SFMTA to ensure adequate bicycle facilities and bicycle access are provided on all street and building designs.

BIKE STATIONS

Action 3.10

Promote bicycle parking stations at major transit hubs that provide secure, monitored bicycle parking, bicycle commuter information and bicycle maintenance services.

Bike stations promote intermodal transportation. Bike stations allow commuters, shoppers and tourists to bicycle to a transit hub, switch to the transit system and also receive affordable, secure bicycle parking or repair services. San Francisco currently has two bike stations: at the Embarcadero BART Station and the Caltrain Fourth and Townsend Streets Station. Caltrain secured three-year grant funding and opened a bike station at the Fourth and Townsend Streets Station in early 2008. This facility is within Caltrain's jurisdiction and is funded and supported by several agencies and organizations including the San Francisco Department of the Environment (SF Environment), the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC), and the SFMTA Bicycle Program.

BICYCLE ACCESS TO BRIDGES

Action 3.11

Work with Caltrans and the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD) to provide improved bicycle access to and upon all San Francisco bridges wherever feasible and appropriate.

San Francisco is served by two major regional bridges: the Golden Gate Bridge to the north and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge to the east. Several local bridges within San Francisco also exist. Whenever new local bridges are constructed, bicycle travel should be accommodated.

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

The Golden Gate Bridge is operated by the GGBHTD. Cycling distance across the bridge is 1.7 miles including the bridge approaches. Bicyclists approach the bridge from San Francisco through the Presidio by way of Lincoln Boulevard, and from Marin County by way of Alexander Avenue from downtown Sausalito or from the Marin Headlands or Fort Baker. Raised sidewalks provide direct two-way bicycle access on both sides of the bridge, although bicyclists may only use one side of the bridge at a given time per the schedule presented below in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2
Bicycle Access on the Golden Gate Bridge

Day	November-March Standard Time	to	March –November Daylight Saving Time	Weekdays	Weekends/ Holidays
Morning	5:00am	to	5:00am to 3:30pm	East Sidewalk	West Sidewalk
Evening	3:30pm	to	3:30pm to 9:00pm	West Sidewalk	West Sidewalk
Night	6:00pm	to	9:00pm to 5:00am	East Sidewalk	East Sidewalk

Since 1992, bicyclists have been allowed nighttime access to the Golden Gate Bridge via a monitored security gate. The security gate access program was financed through San Francisco's Transportation Development Act Article 3 funds, and was a cooperative venture involving the GGBHTD, the San Francisco Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), the SFBC and the SFMTA Bicycle Program.

With significant input from the SFMTA Bicycle Program and the SFBC, the GGBHTD added safety railings between the bicycle and pedestrian paths and

the roadway on the Golden Gate Bridge to improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety in 2003.

Bicycle access improvements should be made to the southern approach to the west sidewalk of the Golden Gate Bridge. The existing path approach includes sharp turns and a narrow transition to and from the bridge sidewalk, which are difficult for bicyclists to navigate. Alternative designs and routes should be analyzed in an engineering feasibility study to determine if bicycle safety and convenience approaching the bridge can be improved. Direct, straight-line access to the west sidewalk should be considered.



Image credit: NewBayBridge.com, 2004

Photo rendering of the proposed Bay Bridge bicycle and pedestrian pathway (view heading toward Oakland).

SAN FRANCISCO-OAKLAND BAY BRIDGE

Once completed, the new east span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge will accommodate bicyclists from Oakland to Yerba Buena Island, but no bicycle or pedestrian path is currently planned for the west span (connecting Yerba Buena Island to San Francisco) of the bridge. Bicycles are accommodated in this corridor at various times on AC Transit, BART and via the Caltrans Bicycle Commuter Shuttle. The shuttle service consists of a 12-passenger van that tows a specially built trailer with 12 bicycle racks. It operates nonstop between the Transbay Terminal in San Francisco and the MacArthur BART Station in Oakland only during peak commute periods on a 45-minute headway. The fare is \$1.00 each way. This shuttle service is funded as part of the Bay Bridge operational budget. The new Transbay Terminal must provide a conveniently located shuttle stop (both convenient to bicyclists and to bridge access).

Once the new east span of the Bay Bridge is complete, bicyclists will be able to travel between Oakland and Yerba Buena and Treasure Islands, and will be able to connect to downtown San Francisco via Muni bus service. Additionally, draft plans for future development on Treasure Island include the addition of ferry service between Treasure Island and downtown San Francisco, which could provide bicyclists with another option for traveling between the East Bay and San Francisco.

BICYCLE PATH ON THE BAY BRIDGE

The main span of the new east span of the Bay Bridge will be a single-tower self-anchored suspension design. In 1998, MTC (acting as the Bay Area Toll Authority, or BATA) approved \$50 million to incorporate a bicycle/pedestrian path on the new bridge. The 15.5-foot-wide two-way path will run along the southern

edge of the eastbound deck, from Yerba Buena Island to Oakland and will be positioned one foot above the motor vehicle deck to shield users from traffic noise and exhaust.

In 2000, Caltrans launched a \$3 million study (funded by MTC/BATA) to look at the technical feasibility and cost of extending the path to the west span of the Bay Bridge (connecting Yerba Buena Island to San Francisco). Completed in 2001, the study found that a west span path could technically be constructed; however, it would cost at least \$160 millionⁱⁱⁱ.

i A full description of the BART Bicycle Rules can be viewed online at <http://www.bart.gov/guide/bikes/index.aspx>.

ii BART Bicycle Access and Parking Plan; Volume 1.

iii http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/bay_bridge/bbbike.htm