

Frequently Asked Questions

San Mateo Complete Streets Plan

What is a complete street?

Complete Streets are streets designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe use and support mobility for everyone. This includes people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, drivers, or any other means. The concept of Complete Streets encompasses many approaches to planning, designing, and operating roadways and street space with all users in mind to make the transportation network safer and more efficient. Complete Street policies are set at the state, regional, and local levels and are frequently supported by roadway design guidelines.



What is the San Mateo Complete Streets Plan? What will it accomplish?

The San Mateo Complete Streets Plan (CSP) will serve as comprehensive playbook to help the city implement complete streets and to help achieve the Strive San Mateo General Plan update goals. The Complete Streets Plan will focus on pedestrian, auto, transit, biking, walking, goods movement, and landscaping improvements, most of which are already defined in the City's many adopted plans. Consistent with the Strive General Plan goals, the Complete Streets Plan focuses on developing a safe, reliable, accessible, and equitable transportation system. This Plan will make sure those improvements in the City's adopted plans talk to each other and are packaged for coordinated implementation. We expect that difficult decisions will need to be made around community and citywide priorities.

A collaborative process will be used to develop the CSP. This will include building capacity with local communities, technical stakeholders, and elected officials and equipping people with the vocabulary needed to participate in the plan process. Engagement activities for the CSP include stakeholder interviews, public workshops, community walk/bike tours, pop-up events, and interactive online engagement.

The CSP will include:

- Goals and policies for the planning, engineering, operations, and maintenance of complete streets in San Mateo
- Clear multimodal networks maps with information about citywide priorities
- Street design guidance to detail San Mateo's preferred complete streets design methods
- Citywide, multimodal prioritization of projects
- Robust engagement process with a summary report of community feedback
- Development of 10 priority projects to advance for funding
- Next steps for implementation, funding, and project advancement

The CSP is intended to be adopted City Council and will serve as an ongoing resource for the City and community moving forward.

How does it relate to other city plans? Is this the same as the General Plan?

While San Mateo has many planning documents that establish policy (e.g., the General Plan) or priorities specific to a travel mode (e.g., the Pedestrian Master Plan), San Mateo does not yet have a comprehensive, consolidated citywide transportation plan. As a result, many of the individual plans overlap and don't yet coordinate and talk to each other.

The Complete Streets Plan aims to resolve that issue to create a coordinated and consolidated set of policies, projects, design guidelines, and programs for San Mateo informed by the many plans and studies completed to date. Because the City's General Plan is currently being updated, there will be close coordination with the Community Development Department to ensure consistency and efficiency. The creation of a citywide Complete Streets Plan is a key in the Strive 2040 General Plan to add clarity and detail on how the City will approach complete streets.

The plans consolidated in the CSP include the following:

- Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan (2005)
- Truck Study Route (2008)
- North Central Community Based Transportation Plan (2011)
- San Mateo Pedestrian Master Plan (2012)
- San Mateo Sustainable Streets Plan (2015)
- Caltrans District 4 Bicycle Plan (2017)
- Green Infrastructure Plan (2019)
- C/CAG Countywide Bike/Pedestrian Plan (2021)
- C/CAG of San Mateo County Youth-Based High Injury Network (HIN) Report (2022)
- Reimagine SamTrans (2022)
- San Mateo Bicycle Master Plan (2022)
- TOD Pedestrian Access Plan (2022)
- Strive 2040 General Plan (2023)
- Priority Development Area (PDA) and Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Strategies

Who is working on this plan?

The City of San Mateo Public Works Department is leading this plan in close coordination with the Community Development Department. Other city departments also involved in the CSP's development include the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department, San Mateo Police Department, and the City

Manager's Office. Along with city departments, many local community groups, community members, and elected officials will be involved through engagement efforts during the CSP's development.

What is the project timeline?

The Plan process kicked off in Fall 2023 and will continue through July 2024. After that, the City will seek funding to implement the high priority projects coming out of the plan.

Why is a multimodal plan important?

The City has worked with community members and elected officials to adopt numerous plans and policies to guide future changes in the city. Some of this includes growth and some of this includes improvements to existing infrastructure. The City's past planning documents have laid out San Mateo residents, businesses, and visitors' needs for mobility and access. Stakeholders needs range from getting to zero fatal and severe injury traffic collisions, providing viable transportation alternatives for cars, reducing barriers to access and mobility particularly for lower-income communities of color, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions including vehicle miles travel to support climate related goals. Additional actions are required to address these community transportation needs and advance them toward implementation.

How can the community get involved?

The planning process strives to collect meaningful input from San Mateo community members to incorporate into the San Mateo Complete Streets Plan. Through the plan process, a variety of community members and stakeholders citywide will be engaged through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, bike/walk/transit tours and pop-ups, public workshops, and an interactive online website. On the [project webpage](#), check out the Upcoming Meeting and Events section to see upcoming and past engagement activities, events, and public meetings.

Throughout the engagement process engagement will be done in Spanish as well as English. People who live, work, and play in San Mateo will have a chance to provide feedback on three different phases of the CSP: existing conditions and needs assessment process, transportation network and recommendations, and project prioritization and concept plans. In addition, updates on the CSP will be presented to the City Council and Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission, which are meetings open to the public.

How will equity be integrated into this planning process and outcomes?

Equity is integrated into the planning process and outcomes by focusing on including community input from a diversity of voices, lifting up and engaging with underrepresented and marginalized communities, and creating accessible and inclusive spaces for the diverse participants. A key piece of the process is the community engagement, the goals of which include:

- Educating and updating the community on the benefits and challenges associated with the Complete Streets Plan
- Engaging traditionally underrepresented and marginalized communities in the process, including equity priority and low-income communities
- Building rapport and alignment among the community and City agencies to create equitable transportation solutions, particularly for lower-income people of color in San Mateo.

What is the process for deciding what modes are prioritized or how a street will be redesigned?

The City will make decisions about how streets are redesigned through a prioritization process. The process is based on a review of existing city plans and transportation modes; review of the goals, performance measures, and priorities from the existing conditions inventory; design standards and best practices; and plan alternatives to assess all projects. The City will share results with the Commission, City Council, Internal Working Group, External Working Group, and the public for additional input. Using the feedback from all stakeholders and community members, the City will then make hard decisions on the preferred street design choice.

With this Plan and, really, any transportation improvement comes project opportunities and challenges, specifically how to prioritize limited street space. While every city and community grapples with this issue, this is particularly difficult in San Mateo where street space is often very narrow. This means that providing a high-quality improvement for one mode of travel may come with a bigger compromise for another travel mode. The Plan will incorporate multimodal transportation safety improvements and landscaping elements while also considering how to utilize limited street space. San Mateo will need to prioritize how roadway space is used and carefully consider the pros and cons of how best to use available street space to meet the City's policy goals and community values.

Will this project support safety?

Yes, this Plan's draft goals consolidate goals from the Strive 2040 General Plan (2023) which focus on:

- Transportation options
- Safe, comfortable, and efficient travel
- Equitable mobility and access
- Inclusive engagement

Specifically, the City has committed to achieving "Vision Zero" as part of the Strive 2040 General Plan, which means that the City has a goal of getting to zero fatal or severe injury traffic collisions. Safety is a critical part of this plan and will be a critical part of the decision making and prioritization process.

Is there funding for this project?

This Complete Streets Plan development process is funded through a Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant. The City of San Mateo will then secure additional funding for implementation of projects recommended in the Plan.