



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEDALING OF NEW BIKEWAY MASTER PLAN TO GET UNDERWAY; WORKING GROUP TO PROVIDE MTA WITH VALUABLE INPUT

A comprehensive new blueprint that will help the MTA determine which proposed bikeway projects should be given the highest priority in the next 25 years will begin next summer.

The "L.A. County Bikeway Master Plan" will take 18 months to complete and will be developed by the MTA with input from a working group made up of representatives from the city and county of Los Angeles, Council of Governments (COGs), the LA County Bicycle Coalition, LA City Bicycle Advisory Committee, Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) and other interested cities.

"The master plan will establish policies and priorities for the bikeway program," says MTA Planner Lynne Goldsmith. "It will identify existing bike facilities, propose new facilities, evaluate past funded projects, help MTA determine which projects should receive funding next, reevaluate program priorities and to evaluate need. We will also develop a website map showing where bike paths and bike lanes are located."

The last master plan was released in 1995 and listed 194 bike paths and 270 miles of bike lanes. The number of bike paths, usually built near flood control channels, riverbanks, rail rights-of-way and other utilities, and bike lanes, double-striped lanes found on streets, has increased since then.

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The new updated plan also will consolidate the six previous area bicycle plans into one plan for Los Angeles County.

"MTA needs to be planning for the mobility of our residents by offering alternatives to the automobile and even the bus," says Goldsmith. "Our population is expected to grow by more than 25% over the next 20 years. We need to be offering choices to people in getting to work or going to the store instead of driving their car. Our goal is to make cycling a viable alternative that is safe and easy."

Since 1992, MTA has provided \$82 million in funding through the Call for Projects program for 108 bikeway projects totaling 200 miles of bike paths and bike lanes.

The Call for Projects, held every two years, is a process overseen by MTA in which 88 cities in Los Angeles County, Los Angeles County, Caltrans and MTA itself apply for funding for transportation improvement projects that are of regional significance.

Another \$10 million in Call for Projects funding has been provided for bike lockers and racks at Metro Rail stations, the bike station in Long Beach, bicycle education programs, bike racks and bicycle maps.

In this year's Call for Projects, MTA allocated \$32 million in funding through the year 2007 for new bikeways and bridge widening. MTA contributes 80% of the total projects' cost while individual cities kick in 20%.

"Other goals in the bikeway program are to finance bike projects that add more miles of bike facilities and have links to public transit connections, and provide facilities people feel are safe and reliable and get people to where they want to go," added Goldsmith.

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Some of the major bike paths to be completed or built in the future are alongside major transit corridors including the San Fernando Valley East-West busway; Exposition Boulevard light rail project, San Fernando Road Metrolink right-of-way, as well as the Los Angeles River.

Since 1993, MTA has allocated an average of \$6.5 million each year toward bikeway projects, however the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) calls for increasing that amount to at least \$10 million annually.

Bicyclists account for 2.4% of 720,000 daily transportation trips made in Los Angeles County. The goal of the LRTP is to increase the total number of bicycle trips in the year 2025 to 2 million, or 5% of total trips.

Public meetings on the bikeway master plan will be held in LA County beginning next June or July. To be placed on the bikeway master plan mailing list, call the MTA's bike hotline at (213) 922-2660. As public meetings are scheduled, they will be listed on the hotline and on the MTA's website at www.mta.net.

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