# 4.9 Transportation and Circulation

This section analyzes the potential effects of the Housing Plan on the transportation system. Information on the transportation system has been compiled from both local and regional sources, including the City's General Plan Circulation Element, and information from other local agencies such as the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG). The analysis of potential transportation impacts is based in part on the CEQA Transportation Impact Analysis prepared by Iteris (August 2024) included in Appendix F.

## 4.9.1 Environmental Setting

### a. Transportation Overview

The city is roughly bisected by U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101), which serves as the primary link for vehicular travel between Santa Barbara and other South Coast destinations such as the cities of Goleta and Carpinteria, as well as more distant destinations such as Ventura or northern Santa Barbara County. As of March 2025, the city's roadway network includes:

- 254 miles of roadway that includes a mix of arterial, collector, and local roads as defined by Caltrans Functional Roadway Classification, shown in Figure 4.9-1.
- 300 miles of sidewalks
- 1,200 crosswalks
- 123 signalized intersections
- 98.5 miles of bicycle facilities ranging from Class I, II, III and IV bicycle facilities

As part of the 2011 General Plan Update, the City adopted a Growth Management Program which aims to efficiently use existing transportation capacity and reserve constrained transportation capacity for high priority development (i.e. housing). It does so by dividing the City into six Development Areas, as shown in Figure 4.9-2, and incentivizing development in specific areas. All Development Areas take primary access from U.S. 101 with secondary access from the City's roadway network. The 2011 General Plan Update emphasized higher-density housing and mixed-use development within the Downtown Development Area. In addition to the existing concentration of businesses, amenities, and services, the Downtown Development Area is suitable for higher-density development because the street network is laid out on a grid system with blocks approximately 500 feet long, making it attractive for walking, biking, and transit. In conjunction with City's established active transportation and transit network in the Downtown Development Area, this results in much lower vehicle trip generation for housing and nonresidential development, which enables higher densities with less impact on transportation capacity.

Surrounding Growth Management Development Areas of Upper State, Riviera, Coast Village and the Mesa have discontinuous roadway patterns more common with suburban sprawl, with limited walking, biking and transit infrastructure. Because active transportation and transit infrastructure are not as strong, residents in these areas are more likely to use a vehicle as their primary mode of transportation. As properties develop or re-develop, they must be brought into conformance with City street and sidewalk standards.

**Figure 4.9-1 Caltrans Functional Roadway Classification Map**

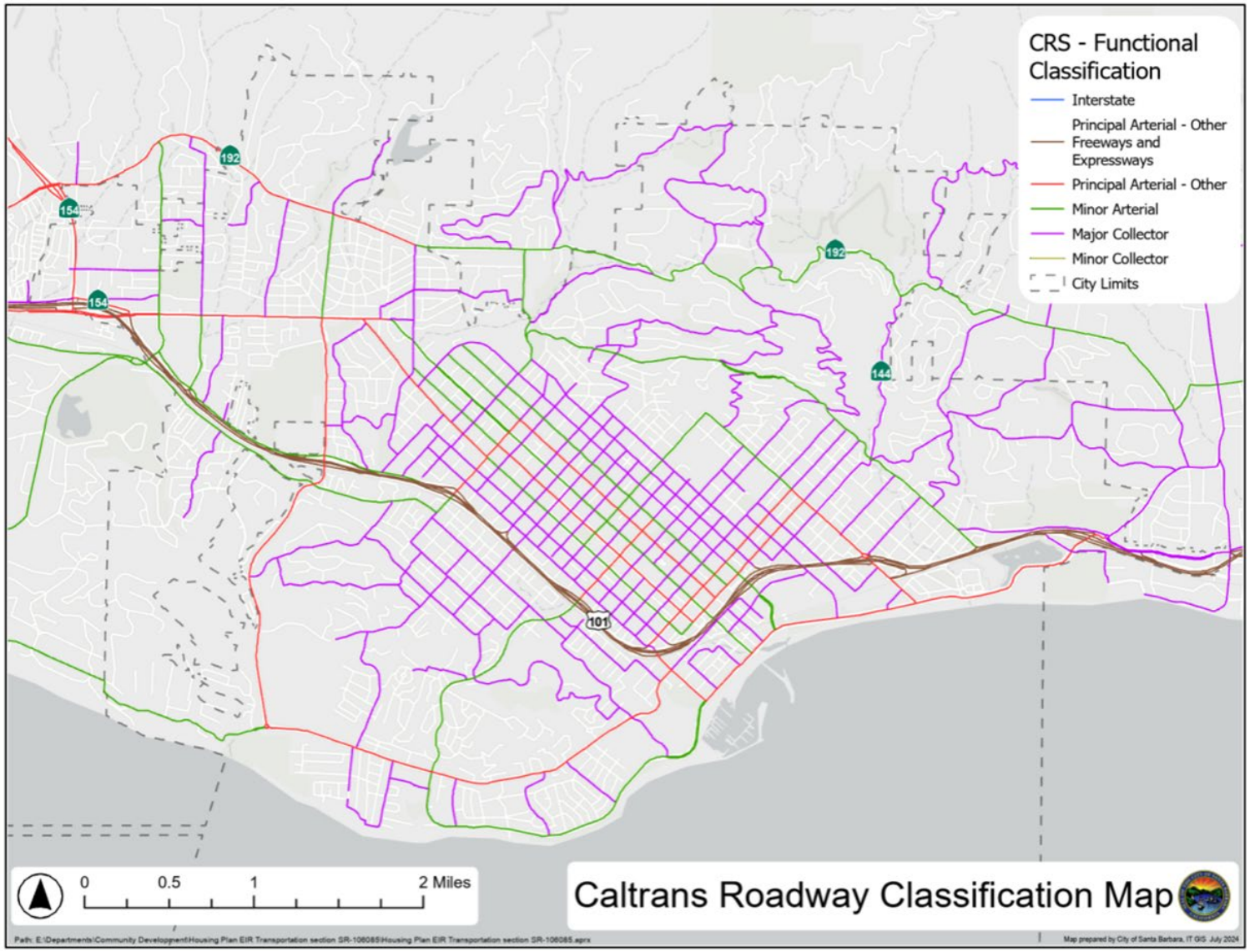
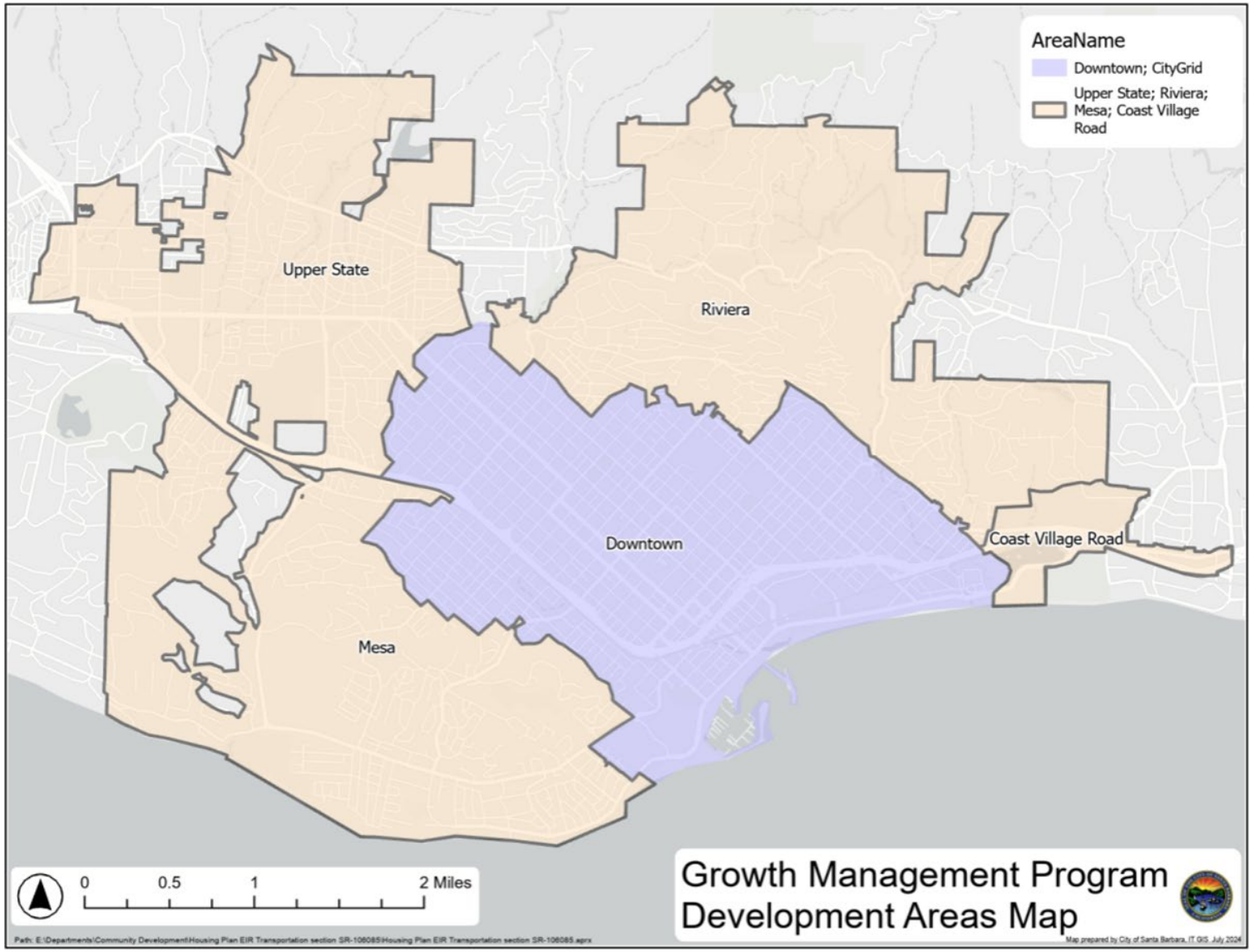


**Figure 4.9-2 Growth Management Program Development Areas**



## b. Active Transportation

### Walking

There is currently 300 miles of sidewalk in the City. The Downtown Development Area has a high-quality pedestrian environment with sidewalks on both sides of most roadways (Figure 4.9-2). The Mesa, Upper State, and Coast Village Development Areas have sporadic sidewalks, and the Riveria Development Area has little to no sidewalks due to topographical constraints. Figure 4.9-3 shows the City's Sidewalk Inventory Map, with the blue and green colors representing sidewalk and red representing missing sidewalk. The City's Pedestrian Master Plan (2006) prioritizes sidewalk based on demand- and need-based factors, including proximity to schools, parks, public activity areas; land use and population density; commute modes; safety; sidewalk gap closure; and public input. Currently, the City is only able to fund the repair of existing sidewalks. New sidewalks must either receive grant funding or be constructed as part of public improvements associated with private development. Most of the capital projects identified in the Pedestrian Master Plan have either been completed or have received grant funding, with construction anticipated over the next several years. The Pedestrian Master Plan and Chapter 22.44 of the Municipal Code include development guidelines of sidewalk width required that is based on width of right of way.

### Bicycling

Santa Barbara's comprehensive bicycle network connects nearly every part of the City via approximately 98.5 miles of bicycle facilities (Figure 4.9-4). State Street is identified as the spine of the City's bicycle network in the Bicycle Master Plan connecting east-west facilities with supporting facilities on the parallel streets, enabling cross-town travel. The City's off-street multiuse paths include the four-mile Beachway that goes along the entire Waterfront and the 2.6 mile Las Positas/Modoc Path that connects the Hidden Valley, Westside, Bel Air, Campanil and Mesa neighborhoods and is also part of the region's COAST route that connects to UCSB/Goleta and Ventura.

Most of the capital projects identified in the 2016 Bicycle Master Plan have been completed or have received funding, with construction anticipated over the next several years. Given the 8,000 new residential units anticipated by the City's Housing Element Update, it is expected that there will be a continued demand for bicycle infrastructure for all ages and abilities.

**Figure 4.9-3 City of Santa Barbara 2020 Sidewalk Inventory**

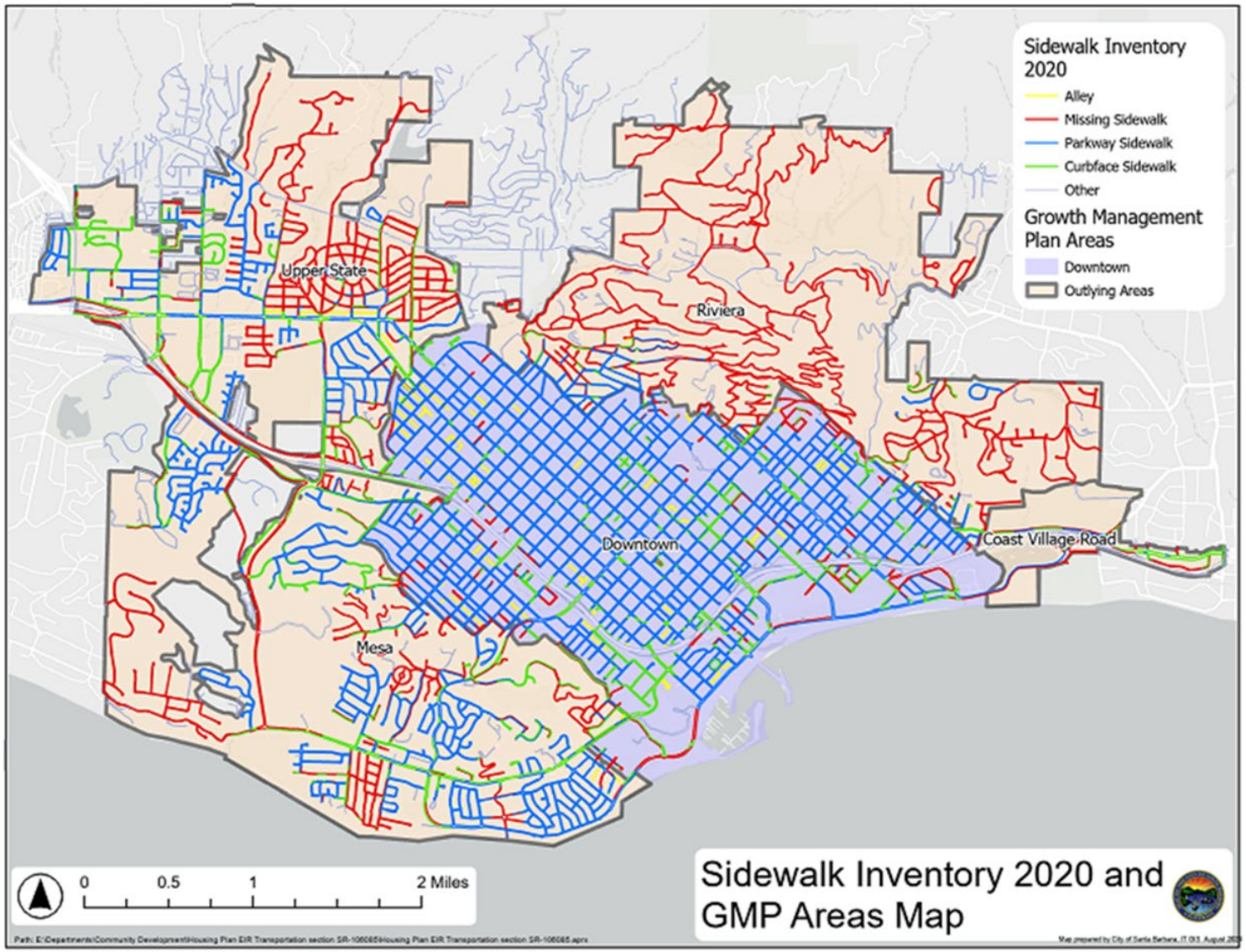
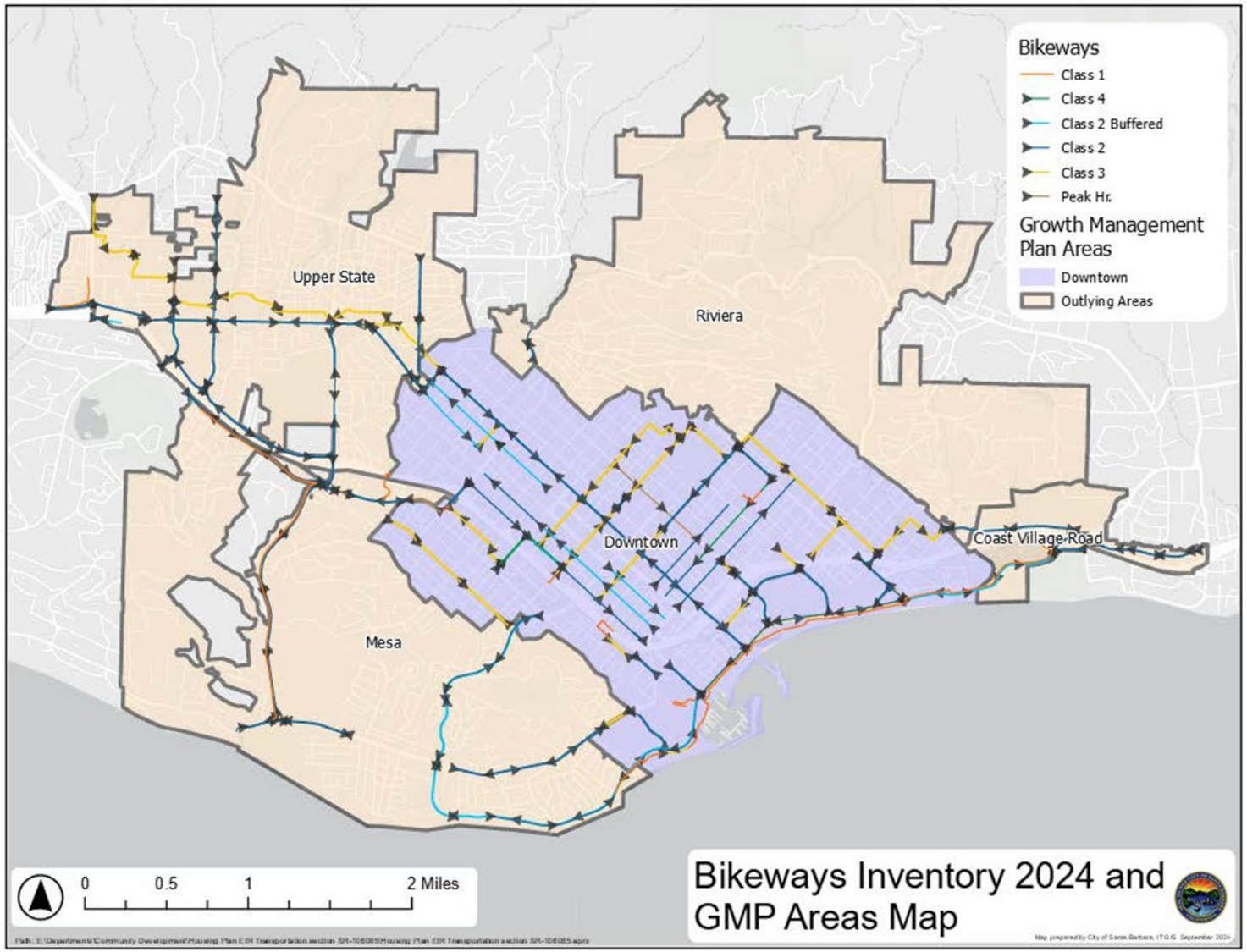


**Figure 4.9-4 Bicycle Facilities Map (2024)**



## c. Public Transit

Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transportation District (MTD) provides fixed route bus service in southern Santa Barbara County, including the City of Santa Barbara and the adjacent communities of Goleta, Carpinteria, Isla Vista, Montecito, and Summerland. MTD's Transit Center is located Downtown at the intersection of Chapala and Carrillo Streets providing local and regional connections (MTD 2020).

Regional transit service is provided by Coastal Express (Ventura) and Clean Air Express (Santa Maria/Buellton). The Clean Air Express operates commuter bus service from Santa Maria to Goleta and Santa Barbara and from Lompoc to Goleta and Santa Barbara. The Coastal Express operates between Ventura and the South Coast, including timed transfers at the Santa Barbara Transit Center to the MTD route 24X serving UCSB (express bus).

Amtrak serves Santa Barbara with passenger rail service along the Pacific Surfliner route which travels north-south between San Diego and San Luis Obispo. Amtrak provides trains daily in each direction along with connecting bus services. The Amtrak station is located at the intersection of State Street and Yanonali Street at the City's Depot Lot (Public parking lot, Amtrak Station and Greyhound Station).

## d. Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) involves programs that encourage more people to either:

- Shift more of their vehicle trips to times of day that have less congestion (or avoid the auto trip altogether through strategies such as telecommuting).
- Shift more of their individual vehicle travel to modes that create less congestion (carpool, transit, bicycle, or walking).

The City of Santa Barbara, the County of Santa Barbara, and SBCAG all have active TDM programs, as do other public agencies and private companies. Private businesses and government agencies often employ a mix of these types of benefits to help reduce traffic congestion. Projects reviewed through land development process that need discretionary approvals by Planning Commission and/or City Council often include TDM related components.

## e. Transportation Funding and Upcoming Projects

Transportation improvements within the city of Santa Barbara are generally overseen by the City, with Caltrans having responsibility for improvements associated with U.S. 101 and the State Highway system (e.g., State Route [SR] 192, SR 154, and freeway on and off ramps to U.S. 101 and State Routes). Transit improvements are generally under the authority of the managing transit agency (e.g., MTD). The typical funding sources for transportation-related infrastructure are listed below.

### Utility Users Tax

Utility Users Tax (UUT) is a general tax levied on the use of residential and commercial utility services, including water, refuse, electric, telecommunication, video, and natural gas. The City's UTT rate is 6 percent. City Council policy has established the use of half of UUT monies to Streets capital and maintenance.

## Measure A

Measure A is the 0.5 cent sales tax approved by Santa Barbara County voters in November 2008. The City uses funds generated by Measure A for a variety of transportation projects including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, support for local transit, local road improvements, and local street and sidewalk infill and maintenance programs. Measure A funds are used exclusively on transportation projects and programs (including staffing for roadway maintenance) specifically authorized in the voter approved Measure A Investment Plan. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) oversees the distribution of Measure A funds and is responsible for completing regional transportation projects. SBCAG allocates Measure A funds to the City's Streets Capital Program for local transportation projects within the City.

## Measure C

Measure C is a one cent general purpose local sales transaction and use tax approved by Santa Barbara voters in November 2017. The new sales tax, which became effective on April 1, 2018, generates an estimated $22 million annually and provides much-needed funding to address deferred maintenance of City infrastructure, and to replace the City's outdated and unsafe police station. Measure C is a general-purpose sales tax revenue allocated by City Council. In February 2018, City Council established the following priorities for Measure C funds for the first five fiscal years: planning, permitting, and bonding for a new police station facility; repairing local streets throughout the City, including related street infrastructure; replacing Fire Station No. 7; community projects to support the City's parks and library; business district infrastructure projects; and maintenance of City buildings.

Measure C provides for the renewal of Public Right of Way assets, including street pavement, sidewalks, curb ramps, curbs and gutters, traffic signals, bridges, and storm drain systems. This funding is helping the City to achieve the goal of improving streets so that they can be maintained through regular preventive maintenance and avoid costly rehabilitation and reconstruction. Measure C also provides for better public safety through improved traffic control systems, better designs for vehicle and pedestrian infrastructure, pedestrian crossings, and street lighting; and provides for the renewal of old storm drain systems throughout the City.

## Grants

Streets and Active Transportation Capital projects are eligible for several federal, state, and local grants. Many grants require a "match" that is a proportional amount of funding that must be provided by the City to qualify for the grant. Some grants contribute a portion of project funding with additional City funds needed to fully fund a project. The most common grant sources funding the Fiscal Years 2024-2028 Streets-Transportation grant program include the Active Transportation Program (State), Highway Bridge Program (federal) and Highway Safety Improvement Program (federal).

As of May 2025, the following current projects are either in construction, coming soon to construction, or recently completed:

- De La Vina Street Safe Crosswalks and Buffered Bike Lanes Project (recently completed)
- Eastside and Westside Community Paseos Projects (recently completed)
- Modoc Multiuse Path Extension Project (recently completed)
- Streets Maintenance Pavement Projects (ongoing)

- Vision Zero State Street Undercrossing Project (recently completed)
- Cabrillo Boulevard and Los Patos Way Roundabout (Phase One of the East Cabrillo Boulevard Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements, Roadway Roundabout, and Replacement of Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Bridge Project) (recently completed)
- Lower Milpas Street Operational Improvements (construction anticipated in 2025)
- Vision Zero Priority Corridor Projects (San Andres Street, Cliff Drive, and Las Positas Road) (under construction)
- Upper De La Vina Active Transportation Improvements (under constructed)
- Upper De La Vina Street/Mission Creek Bridge Replacement (under construction)
- Carpinteria Street/Sycamore Creek Bridge Replacement (construction anticipated in 2025)

As of July 2024, the following major active transportation safety projects are in design:

- Cliff Drive: Urban Highway to Complete Streets (construction in 2027)
- Milpas Street Crosswalk Safety and Sidewalk Widening Project (construction in 2027)
- Westside and Lower West Active Transportation Plan Implementation (construction in 2027)

Caltrans' largest planned roadway improvement is the South Coast U.S. 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Project, which would add a new HOV lane in each direction of U.S. 101 between Bailard Avenue in the City of Carpinteria and the Sycamore Creek Bridge in the City of Santa Barbara. The City's project jurisdiction extends from Sycamore Creek to Olive Mill Road. Portions of the project have been completed, under construction or in final design and headed to construction. Caltrans/SBCAG are actively seeking funding to fund the final freeway segment that is between Sycamore Creek and Cabrillo Interchange. If funding is received construction completion is anticipated in 2028. The HOV Project includes several parallel or mitigation projects that fall within the City limits that will help relieve traffic congestion at critical intersections and provide important active transportation connections.

## 4.9.2 Regulatory Setting

Transportation issues are addressed in adopted City, County, State, and federal plans, policies and regulations. Within the City, primary responsibility for these issues is addressed in the City's General Plan and Municipal Code as administered by the City's Public Works and Community Development Departments. In 2011, the City Council adopted Plan Santa Barbara, which included a readoption of the 1997 Circulation Element and new 2011 Circulation Element policies. The comprehensive goal and vision of the 2011 Circulation Element is: "While sustaining or increasing economic vitality and quality of life, Santa Barbara should be a city in which alternative forms of transportation and mobility are so available and attractive that use of an automobile is a choice, not a necessity." Supporting transportation planning documents include the Pedestrian Master Plan (2006), Bicycle Master Plan (2016) and Vision Zero Strategy (2018), which aims to eliminate all severe injuries and fatalities on the City's road network. There are also neighborhood specific transportation management plans (NTMP) focusing on neighborhood livability by improving the active transportation network. Examples of neighborhood plans include: Eastside NTMP (2013), Westside and Lower West NTMP (2020), Cliff Drive Vision Zero Planning Effort (2022) and Milpas Street Corridor (2020/2022). Applicable regulations regarding emergency response and emergency evacuation plans are described in Section 4.6, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*.

## a. Federal Regulations

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) provides a number of grant programs, primarily for the construction and upgrading of major highways and transit facilities. Many of these grants are administered by the state and regional governments. Use of federal grant funding also invokes the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).

## b. State Regulations

### Caltrans Authority over the State Highway System

Caltrans is responsible for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of all interstate freeways and state routes. It builds, maintains, and operates the State Highway System in California with a goal to facilitate the safe and efficient use of the state transportation system for all users. Caltrans sets standards in its 2020 Transportation Impact Study Guide that focuses on the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metric. The document is intended to be a reference and informational document that aligns with the standards and thresholds established in the State's Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA. This document is available to be used by local governments to uniformly review transportation analysis and assess the operational standards of Caltrans-maintained facilities. The 2020 Transportation Impact Study Guide acts as a replacement for the 2002 Guide for the Preparation of Traffic Impact Studies but is only intended to be used with local land use projects and plans, not to be used for transportation projects on the State Highway System.

### Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) is a capital improvement program that plans transportation projects related to State facilities in California for the next five years. The program is updated every two years with new construction projects as more funding is provided. The California Transportation Commission approves the fund estimate and then Caltrans and regional planning agencies submit plans for transportation improvement projects. If the projects are programmed in the STIP, then relevant agencies can begin the implementation process.

### Complete Streets Act

The Complete Streets Act was signed into law as Assembly Bill (AB) 1358 in 2008. It requires that cities and other public agencies incorporate "complete street" policies and principles into their General Plans and Updates within the Circulation Elements, so that the plan addresses the needs of all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians. Caltrans Deputy Directive 64 (DD-64-R1 October 2008) embraces the Complete Streets Act and its incorporation into all phases of state highway projects, from planning to construction to maintenance and repair.

### Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375)

With the passage of AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the State of California committed itself to reducing statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is coordinating the response to comply with AB 32.

On December 11, 2008, CARB adopted its Scoping Plan for AB 32, which was subsequently updated in 2013, 2017, and 2022. This scoping plan included the approval of SB 375 as the means for achieving regional transportation related GHG targets. SB 375 provides guidance on how curbing emissions from cars and light trucks can help the state comply with AB 32.

There are five major components to SB 375. First, regional GHG emissions targets: CARB's Regional Targets Advisory Committee guides the adoption of targets to be met by 2020 and 2035 for each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the State. These targets, which MPOs may propose themselves, are updated every eight years in conjunction with the revision schedule of Housing and Transportation Elements.

Second, MPOs are required to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that provides a plan for meeting regional targets. The SCS and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) must be consistent with each other, including action items and financing decisions. If the SCS does not meet the regional target, the MPO must produce an Alternative Planning Strategy that details an alternative plan to meet the target. The RTP and SCS are further described below.

Third, SB 375 requires that regional housing elements and transportation plans be synchronized on eight-year schedules. In addition, Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocation numbers must conform to the SCS. If local jurisdictions are required to rezone land as a result of changes in the housing element, rezoning must take place within three years.

Fourth, SB 375 provides CEQA streamlining incentives for preferred development types. Certain residential or mixed-use projects qualify if they conform to the SCS. Transit-oriented developments (TODs) also qualify if they (1) are at least 50 percent residential, (2) meet density requirements, and (3) are within 0.5 mile of a transit stop. The degree of CEQA streamlining is based on the degree of compliance with these development preferences.

Finally, MPOs must use transportation and air emissions modeling techniques consistent with guidelines prepared by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). Regional transportation planning agencies, cities, and counties are encouraged, but not required, to use travel demand models consistent with the CTC guidelines.

## Senate Bill 743 (SB 743)

SB 743, which was signed into law in 2013, directed OPR to develop revisions to the CEQA Guidelines by July 1, 2014, to establish new criteria for determining the significance of transportation impacts and define alternative metrics instead of traffic level of service (LOS). SB 743 requires the new criteria to "promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multimodal transportation networks, and a diversity of land uses." It also states that alternative measures of transportation impacts may include "vehicle miles traveled, vehicle miles traveled per capita, automobile trip generation rates, or automobile trips generated." SB 743 changes the way that public agencies evaluate the transportation impacts of projects under CEQA by recognizing that roadway congestion, while an inconvenience to drivers, is not itself an environmental impact (see Pub. Resource Code, § 21099, subd. [b][2]).

## CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3

In 2018, changes to CEQA included the adoption of Section 15064.3, Determining the Significance of Transportation Impacts. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 establishes VMT as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. Generally, land use projects within 0.5 mile of either an existing

major transit stop[1] or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor[2] should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact. Projects that decrease vehicle miles traveled in the project area compared to existing conditions should be presumed to have a less than significant transportation impact. A lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate VMT, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household or in any other measure. A lead agency may also use models to estimate VMT and may revise those estimates to reflect professional judgment supported by substantial evidence.

On June 23, 2020, City Council amended the City's Traffic Management Strategy to remove the outdated California Environmental Quality Act references and retained traffic congestion as a land use policy. In December 2023 the City adopted new Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis, which include guidelines for VMT analysis as well as thresholds of significance for individual projects as well as land use plans.

### Assembly Bill 2097 (AB 2097)

AB 2097, effective on January 1, 2023, no longer requires residential and non-residential parking (excluding hotels and event centers) within a half mile of qualifying public transit facilities (per Section 21155 of the Public Resources Code).

There are two qualifying public transit facilities under AB 2097:

- Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) Transit Center (Transit Center), located downtown, on Chapala Street between Figueroa and Carrillo Streets; and
- Amtrak Station, which is located at the intersection of State Street and Yanonali Street at the City's Depot Lot (Public parking lot, Amtrak Station and Greyhound Station).

New ground-up development or change of use to existing buildings within the qualifying boundary do not have to provide parking (excluding hotels and event centers).

Over time, providing less parking in the AB 2097 qualifying areas will continue to decrease traffic congestion downtown, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building a healthier community. There are many policies in the City's General Plan and 2024 Climate Action Plan that relate to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## c. Local Regulations

### Santa Barbara County Association of Governments Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy

SBCAG is required by State and federal law to prepare, update, and adopt a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) every four years. The most recent update to the RTP was completed by SBCAG in 2021 (Connected 2050) and sets forth long-range transportation planning goal describing how the region will meet its transportation needs for the 30-year period from 2020 to 2050. Connected 2050 is currently being updated by SBCAG with the same 30-year period from 2020 to 2050. Connected 2050 provides a collective vision for the region's future that balances transportation and housing

[1] "Major transit stop" is defined in Public Resources Code Section 21064.3 as a site containing an existing rail transit station, a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods.
[2] "High-quality transit corridors" are defined in Public Resources Code Section 21155 as a corridor with fixed route bus service with service intervals no longer than 15 minutes during peak commute hours.

needs with social, economic, and environmental goals. Connected 2050 helps guide future planning efforts and policy decisions that affect transportation, including its relationship with housing and land use, with the goal to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions. Connected 2050 is based, in part, on SBCAG's Regional Growth Forecast which projects population and employment data to 2050. SBCAG designates RHNA allocations based on the Regional Growth Forecast.

Connected 2050 includes five goal areas – Environment, Mobility & System Reliability, Equity, Health & Safety, and Prosperous Economy – with respective policies to meet each goal areas, which are expected to result in significant benefits to the region, not only with respect to transportation and mobility, but also economic activity, safety, and social equity. Policies in Connected 2050 applicable to the Housing Plan address land use, circulation, alternative transportation, affordable housing, and safe roads and highways.

## General Plan Circulation Element

The Circulation Element is a required element of the City's General Plan. Government Code Section 65302(b) states that a circulation element shall consist of:

> …the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.

The comprehensive goal and vision of the Circulation Element is "While sustaining or increasing economic viability and quality of life, Santa Barbara should be a city in which alternative forms of transportation and mobility are so available and attractive that use of an automobile is a choice, not a necessity. To meet this challenge, the City is rethinking its transportation goals and land use policies, and focusing its resources on developing balanced mobility solutions." The City's Plan Santa Barbara 2011 documents the reevaluated transportation goals and land use policies and focused its resources on developing balanced mobility solutions. With the Plan Santa Barbara General Plan update adoption, additional goals, policies, and implementation actions were added, intended to further integrate circulation policies with the City's sustainable focus.

The Circulation Element addresses the requirements of state law, which are to evaluate the transportation needs of the community and to present a comprehensive plan to meet those needs. This includes compliance with the California Complete Streets Act of 2008, which requires cities and counties to include complete streets policies as part of their general plans so that roadways are designed to safely accommodate all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, children, older people, disabled people, as well as motorists. Adoption of the Circulation Element triggered implementation mechanisms designed to move the ideals identified in the Circulation Element to on-the-ground projects that would improve mobility via a variety of transportation options.

The City's Circulation Element conveys the City's objectives to address and reduce automobile congestion, manage access for all travel modes, and support the enhancement of a multi-modal transportation system. The following Circulation Element policies are especially applicable to the goals of the Housing Plan:

- **Policy C1. Transportation Infrastructure Enhancement and Preservation.** Assess the current and potential demand for alternative transportation and where warranted increase the availability and attractiveness of alternative transportation by improving related infrastructure and facilities without reducing vehicle access.

- **Policy C2. Regional Transportation and Commuter Transit.** Coordinate regionally with agencies and the private sector to establish viable rail, bus and carpooling options for commuters, and create an energy efficient regional transportation network.
- **Policy C6. Circulation Improvements.** Where existing or anticipated congestion occurs, improve traffic flow in conjunction with providing improved access for pedestrians, bicycles and public and private transit through measures that might include physical roadway improvements, TDM strategies and others.
- **Policy C8. Emergency Routes.** It shall be a high priority to keep all emergency evacuation, response and truck routes free of physical restrictions that may reduce evacuation/response times.

## Bicycle Master Plan

The City of Santa Barbara's Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) was updated in July of 2016 with mapping updates in March 2022 and October 2024. The BMP involved extensive gathering of community input and field research. The community-driven BMP outlines the goals, policies, and implementation strategies that will improve bicycle safety, convenience, facilities, and infrastructure in the City of Santa Barbara over the next fifteen to twenty years. The BMP will also enhance and preserve Santa Barbara's circulation system for all road users by increasing the number of trips taken by bicycle, thereby reducing future traffic congestion levels and parking demand. The majority of the capital projects from the City's 2016 Bicycle Master Plan have been largely completed or funded for construction that is anticipated over the next several years.

## Pedestrian Master Plan

The City of Santa Barbara's Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) was updated in April 2006 as directed through the adoption of the City's Circulation Element in 1997. The PMP is also to be consistent with *Plan Santa Barbara* and helps guide pedestrian policies found in the Circulation Element. The PMP seeks to extend Santa Barbara's distinction as one of the most pedestrian-friendly urban communities in the country, benefiting residents, business owners, shoppers, and visitors. Pedestrian infrastructure upgrades are proposed in various areas throughout Santa Barbara, especially around schools, libraries, community centers, and business districts. Improvements include intersection safety improvements, sidewalk completion, accessibility compliance, landscaping, and connectivity. In addition, the Safe Routes to School program and other innovative programs covered in the PMP seek to address the needs of people of all ages and abilities. The Pedestrian Master Plan also represents a blueprint for improving residents' quality of life by reducing traffic, noise, and energy consumption. The majority of capital projects from the City's 2006 Pedestrian Master Plan have been completed or funded for construction that is anticipated over the next several years.

## Vision Zero Strategy

City Council adopted the Vision Zero Strategy in 2018 to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. Vision Zero is based on an underlying ethical principle that it can never be acceptable that people are killed or seriously injured when moving on public roadways. As an ethics-based approach, Vision Zero functions to guide priorities and strategic use of limited city resources. It is a new lens through which public officials and professionals make decisions based, above all, on safety outcomes. Historically, road users have

held most of the responsibility for safety. Vision Zero changes this relationship by emphasizing that the responsibility is shared by roadway policy makers, designers, and enforcement, as well as road users. With this understanding in mind, Vision Zero is a fundamentally different way to approach traffic safety. The Council adopted strategy document includes a statement of core principles, adoption of a Safety-First mentality, and the identification of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to eliminating roadway deaths and serious injuries.

### Safe Streets for All Action Plan

In December 2023, the City of Santa Barbara (City) was awarded Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Planning Grant in the amount of $799,400 with a required twenty percent City match to prepare a SS4A Action Plan (Action Plan) from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The goal of the Action Plan is to prevent traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries within the City, while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all by strategically identifying infrastructure improvements that remove barriers to safe mobility.

The Action Plan builds upon the efforts of the Council-adopted Pedestrian (2006) and Bicycle (2016) Master Plans, and the Santa Barbara Vision Zero Strategy (Vision Zero) by identifying projects, best practices, and community needs to improve safety for all road users. Work on the Action Plan began in fall 2024 and is expected to conclude in 2026.

## 4.9.3 Impact Analysis

### a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds

The Housing Plan's potential impacts are evaluated using Appendix G of the 2024 *CEQA Guidelines*. Impacts would be significant if implementation of the Housing Plan would do any of the following:

1. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
2. Conflict or be inconsistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15064.3, subdivision (b), Criteria for Analyzing Transportation Impacts;
3. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); and/or
4. Result in inadequate emergency access.

In March 2024, the City adopted new Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis, which include guidelines for VMT analysis as well as thresholds of significance for land use plans, which are defined as General Plans, Specific Plans, and Master Plans. The Housing Plan implements the 6$^{th}$ Cycle Housing Element and is a land use plan for the purpose of this analysis. Land use plans include developments made up of larger geographies than a standalone land development project. Given the large geographies, the Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis recommend the following criteria be adopted for the evaluation of land use plans:

- A project's impact shall be considered less than significant if the Future Year With Project VMT/Service Population (or per Capita if residential-only) of the project area is below 15% below the Base Year (2020) SBCAG region average VMT/Service Pop (or per Capita).

## b. Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

| | |
|---|---|
| **Threshold 1:** | Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? |

**Impact TRA-1 THE HOUSING PLAN WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT, THE BICYCLE MASTER PLAN, THE PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN, SBCAG'S 2050 RPT-SCS, OR ANY OTHER APPLICABLE PROGRAM, PLAN, ORDINANCE, OR POLICY RELEVANT TO THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM. THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.**

The Housing Plan would result in the potential growth of up to 8,001 new residential units during the 6th Cycle Housing Element planning period, which would increase multimodal trips (vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit) onto the local and regional circulation network. A portion of new housing development is anticipated in the Upper State, Mesa, and Coast Village Road areas. New or enhanced active and transit-oriented infrastructure is anticipated as properties in those areas add new residential units. New residential development will also result in increased demand to enhance the existing sidewalk network by providing wider sidewalks and pedestrian amenities, as well as increased demand for bicycle infrastructure for all ages and abilities.

The Housing Plan would not prescribe any modifications to the City's roadway network or implement specific design features or specifications for new project-level development, roadways, or other transportation facilities.

The potential increase in multiple modes of travel associated with residential growth under the Housing Plan would be in conformance with the goals and policies contained in the following plans affecting the City's circulation network:

- 2011/1997 Circulation Elements
- 2016 Bicycle Master Plan
- 2006 Pedestrian Master Plan
- 2018 Vision Zero Strategy
- SBCAG Connected 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy

A brief discussion of the Housing Plan's consistency with the City's 2011/1997 Circulation Element, the 2016 Bicycle Master Plan, the 2006 Pedestrian Master Plan, and SBCAG's 2021 2050 RTP-SCS follows.

### 2011 Circulation Element

The evaluation of the proposed Housing Plan's consistency with the Circulation Element considers the amount of projected growth and the type and distribution of future growth. Existing Circulation Element programs and policies guide development and management of the transportation system. Circulation Element programs and policies encourage multi-modal transportation and related facilities, reduction of drive-alone trips, TDM programs, and enhanced land use tools and strategies supportive of multi-modal transportation including incentives for mixed-use development.

The forecasted development of up to 8,001 new residential units under the Housing Plan would be primarily infill, and residential mixed-use developments would be prioritized in closer proximity to existing active transportation and transit infrastructure. A majority of the forecasted development falls within the General Plan Downtown Growth Management Area, that facilitates lower vehicle

miles traveled. New non-discretionary development is required to be consistent with applicable General Plan goals and policies, including goals and policies related to transportation and circulation contained in the Circulation Element.

Transportation impacts associated with large discretionary residential and mixed-use projects, such as the La Cumbre Plaza Planning Area that falls within the Upper State Street Growth Management Area, where up to 2,000 residential units are anticipated, would be addressed as part of City-review of individual development proposals. It is anticipated that there would be circulation, safety enhancements and significant active infrastructure improvements needed in the Upper State Street Growth Management area. Therefore, the Housing Plan would not conflict with the programs and policies in the Circulation Element.

## 2016 Bicycle Master Plan, 2006 Pedestrian Master Plan and 2018 Vision Zero Strategy

Both the Bicycle Master Plan and the Pedestrian Master Plan are intended to amplify policies in the City's General Plan that identify bike and pedestrian network gaps and opportunities to enhance existing facilities and where new facilities are needed. The larger infrastructure projects identified in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans have largely been completed or are funded to be completed in the next few years. The 2018 Vision Zero Strategy also incorporated infrastructure actions which the City has begun obtaining grant funding for infrastructure projects increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. The City recently received additional grant funding for a Safe Streets for All Action Plan (SS4A Action Plan) that would identify remaining infrastructure needs for all road users. SS4A Action Plan Planning effort is a two-year effort, beginning in fall 2024.

With respect to the Housing Plan's forecasted residential development, new residential and mixed-use projects would be required to comply with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans and Vision Zero Strategy, and would need to incorporate right of way improvements proportional to their proposed development. Therefore, the Housing Plan would not result in a significant environmental impact due to conflicts with goals and policies of the Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan and Vision Zero Strategy.

## 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy SCS

The SBCAG 2050 RTP-SCS is a long-range land use and transportation plan for Santa Barbara County. The City's Housing Element is required to be updated every eight years for jurisdictions within an MPO on a 4-year RTP cycle, such as SBCAG.

### *Goals and Policies*

The Housing Plan includes programs that support planning future residential development around regional transportation goals established by the City and SBCAG to address the jobs/housing balance, improve residential access to transit opportunities, and mitigate adverse environmental impacts. Program HE-1 provides adaptive reuse opportunities consistent with the General Plan principle of encouraging the highest density housing within a quarter mile of frequent transit service and commercial services. Program HE-12 prioritizes the development of new deed-restricted affordable housing for extremely low-, very low-, low-, and moderate-income households in targeted areas of the City, particularly downtown and areas where transit is readily available.

The 6th Cycle Housing Element identifies housing opportunities near transit corridors, employment centers, and services throughout the City. As a result, implementation of the Housing Plan would encourage development on infill sites and redevelopment around the City already serviced by public transit. Program HE-7, Objective Design Standards, is proposed as a new section of the Municipal Code (Title 25) that would provide alternatives to conventional zoning regulations to accommodate infill development in existing neighborhoods, which would encourage development of housing on infill sites near transit and employment centers, consistent with regional transportation related goals.

### *Consistency with Regional Housing Needs Allocation*

The 2050 RTP-SCS was developed by SBCAG alongside the region's 6th Cycle of the RHNA process (refer to Section 3.2.2, *Regional Housing Needs Allocation and Buffer*). The RHNA process occurs every eight years and directly impacts every RTP-SCS, including SBCAG's 2050 RTP-SCS. Distribution of units by income level adjusts the proportion of low- and very low-income groups in each jurisdiction so that every jurisdiction is allocated its fair share of affordable housing.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy is required to be based on forecasted growth patterns and thereby creates an informal requirement of consistency between the allocation of housing units through the RHNA process and the allocation of population growth for the Sustainable Communities Strategy. This is codified as a statutory objective of the RHNA process and subject to review by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) through the 6th Cycle Housing Element process. As local agencies update housing elements to comply with the 6th RHNA cycle, the RHNA process will advance the SCS's growth patterns. Therefore, the Housing Plan's consistency with SBCAG's RHNA allocation plan, including the City's RHNA allocation for the 2023-2031 planning period of 8,001 units, is consistent with the development pattern of the 2050 RTP-SCS.

Potential discretionary developments that could conflict with City transportation plans would be required to be reviewed by City staff to ensure consistency with all applicable City transportation related plans and policies, including the Circulation Element and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans and Vision Zero Strategy. The Housing Plan would not conflict with any programs, plans, ordinances and policies addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, nor would it limit or preclude the City's ability to implement programs and policies to further transportation plans. The Housing Plan would advance the 2050 RTP-SCS growth patterns by demonstrating the City's ability to accommodate the RHNA allocation through the year 2031. As a result, the Housing Plan would result in a less than significant impact to programs, plans, ordinances, or policies addressing the circulation system.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

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| **Threshold 2:** | Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? |

### Impact TRA-2 FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FACILITATED BY THE HOUSING PLAN WOULD BE EXPECTED TO RESULT IN PROJECT VMT THAT IS LESS THAN 15 PERCENT BELOW THE EXISTING YEAR AVERAGE FOR THE SBCAG REGION. AS A RESULT, THE HOUSING PLAN WOULD NOT CONFLICT OR BE INCONSISTENT WITH CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15064.3, SUBDIVISION (B). THEREFORE, THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

In March 2024, the City adopted Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis by Resolution of the City Council, which include local guidelines and thresholds of significance to address potential transportation related VMT impacts of projects subject to CEQA. These guidelines implement SB 743 by promoting public health, infill development, multimodal transportation networks and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis require analysis of whether the associated project VMT will cause significant impact on the environment. The City adopted the State-recommended threshold of 15 percent below the VMT baseline (i.e., existing conditions).

Individual land use development projects that decrease average vehicle miles traveled per capita, per employee, or per service population in the project area compared to existing conditions are considered to have a less than significant impact. In accordance with the Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis, projects that would generate fewer than 250 average daily trips (ADT), projects within one-half mile of an existing major transit stop or one-quarter mile of an existing high-quality transit corridor, neighborhood serving retail less than 50,000 square feet, projects with 100 percent affordable housing units, accessory dwelling units, and projects that would produce fewer than 1,000 ADT in the Downtown/Upper State/Riviera Areas are presumed to cause a less than significant impact on the environment, unless substantial evidence is otherwise identified that indicates such projects would generate a potentially significant level of VMT. Most land use development projects that would be facilitated by the Housing Plan would align with these categories of development that are presumed to have a less than significant impact for VMT.

Individual land use development projects that would not be screened from VMT analysis based on these criteria would require a quantitative VMT analysis supported by the City's Travel-Demand Forecasting Model (SBTDFM). Projects that would produce VMT that exceed applicable thresholds would require a mitigation plan that implements VMT Reduction Strategies to reduce the project VMT to at least 15 percent below the baseline of existing development (average City VMT per resident for a residential project) to avoid a significant impact.

Appendix E of the Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis includes on-site and off-site VMT Reduction Strategies including the following that can be implemented by individual residential development projects (City of Santa Barbara 2024):

- Unbundle residential parking costs from property costs
- Implementing preferential rideshare parking
- Providing bicycle parking in multi-unit residential projects that exceeds Zoning Parking Requirements
- Integrating affordable and below-market-rate housing into non-residential development (mixed-use)
- Locating bike path/bike lane connections on project sites

- Expand Bikeway Network (On-Street)
- Implement Market Price Public Parking (On-Street)

The VMT Reduction Strategies in the Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis can reduce VMT by avoiding vehicle travel by site users through promotion of alternative modes, carpooling and avoided trips strategies to reduce travel to and from a project site. Implementation of one or more of these programs can result in the required 15 percent reduction in VMT per resident on average as necessary to reduce individual development project impacts to be less than significant. The maximum potential effectiveness of the identified VMT Reduction Strategies are quantified using industry standard methods as developed by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) in the *Handbook for Analyzing Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Assessing Climate Vulnerabilities, and Advancing Health and Equity* (August 2021) and *Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures* (August 2010).

Future residential development facilitated by the Housing Plan would be required to adhere to all State and local requirements for avoiding significant impacts related to VMT. Any VMT Reduction Strategies required for mitigation would be required to comply with the policies of the City's General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis to promote infill residential and mixed-use development; enhance residents' access to transit, pedestrian, and bike networks; and facilitate use of these systems to reduce trip lengths. As a result, the Housing Plan would be expected to be consistent with target VMT reductions of least 15 percent below the existing baseline VMT for the SBCAG region. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

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| **Threshold 3:** | Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible use (e.g., farm equipment)? |
| **Threshold 4:** | Would the project result in inadequate emergency access? |

### Impact TRA-3 THE HOUSING PLAN DOES NOT INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THAT COULD INCREASE HAZARDS DUE TO DESIGN FEATURES. THEREFORE, THE HOUSING PLAN WOULD NOT SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASE HAZARDS DUE TO A GEOMETRIC DESIGN FEATURE OR RESULT IN INADEQUATE EMERGENCY ACCESS, AND THIS IMPACT WOULD BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT.

The Housing Plan analyzes forecasted residential growth conditions during the 6th Cycle Housing Element planning period and sets goals and policies for the development and preservation of affordable housing and improvement of fair housing in the city. The Housing Plan does not grant entitlements for any specific project or future development and would not prescribe any modifications to the City's roadway network or implement specific design features or specifications for new project-level development, roadways, or other transportation facilities. The City maintains standards for public improvements and private facilities (e.g., internal circulation, ingress/egress) that guide the construction of transportation facilities to minimize design hazards for all users of the transportation system. As individual residential projects are proposed, applicants would be required to follow the appropriate City design guidelines in implementing roadway improvements that are necessary to alleviate transportation hazards. Depending on project scope and location, an

Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) may be required to confirm that a specific development project would not result in increased hazards due to a geometric design feature. Therefore, as a policy framework, the Housing Plan would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment).

The Housing Plan does not include elements that would impede emergency vehicle access. Depending on project scope and location, an Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) may be required to confirm that a specific development project would not result in inadequate emergency access. Construction activities facilitated by the Housing Plan could temporarily impair emergency access points used for emergency access vehicles. However, standard construction procedures from development of a construction management plan would address these conditions and would require provision of alternative emergency vehicle access points. Any construction on State highway systems would be required to create a temporary traffic control plan that adheres to the standards set forth in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Caltrans 2021). Future development forecasted under the Housing Plan that would involve work in the public right-of-way would be required to ensure appropriate traffic control, pursuant to the requirements of an encroachment permit, as set forth in Chapter 10.55 of the City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code (City of Santa Barbara 2021).

The new residential development forecasted by the Housing Plan is anticipated to consist of primarily multi-unit and mixed-use development, which could result in alterations to existing transportation infrastructure, including, but not limited to, sidewalks, driveways, streetlights and bike/transit facilities or amenities. Future residential development would be required to adhere to applicable City Fire Department design standards for emergency vehicle access. California Code of Regulations Title 19, Article 3, Section 3.05 requires access roads from every building to a public street to be all-weather hard-surfaced right-of-way not less than 20 feet in width.

While the majority of potential residential growth forecasted by the Housing Plan would consist of infill and residential mixed-use developments that would not be located in high fire-hazard areas, some new residential development, such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) may be located in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the northeast and northwest portions of the City and local designated High Fire Hazard Areas mainly in areas with land use designations of open space, hillside low density residential, and low density residential, as well as a small portion of land designated medium density residential. In high fire hazard areas, California Fire Code Appendix D, Sections D106 and D107 require the development of a minimum of two approved fire apparatus access roads for both multi-unit residential development and single-unit residential development. In addition, the City maintains their own requirements for emergency access.

In addition, future residential development would be reviewed by City staff to ensure consistency with all applicable City and State design standards, including standards for project access points, location, and design, sight lines, roadway modifications, provisions for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit transportation connections, and emergency access. Therefore, the Housing Plan would not result in increased hazards due to inadequate emergency access. As a result, these impacts would be less than significant.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

## 4.9.4 Cumulative Impacts

The general approach to cumulative impact analysis used in this Program EIR is discussed in Section 4, Environmental Impact Analysis. Cumulative projects also include planned and pending residential development projects that contribute to the City's RNHA.

Cumulative development in the City would include residential and commercial development which has the potential to contribute to an overall increase in citywide VMT and could result in growth and subsequent VMT increases exceeding forecasts projected by SBCAG's RTP-SCS. In addition, increased VMT could conflict with the transportation GHG-reduction goals of the City's Climate Action Plan. Therefore, cumulative development throughout the City has the potential to result in increased citywide VMT. As described in Impact TRA-2, future residential development facilitated by the Housing Plan would be required to adhere to all State and local requirements for avoiding significant impacts related to VMT. Any VMT Reduction Strategies required to reduce the potential impact of individual development project would be required to comply with the policies of the City's General Plan, Local Coastal Program, and Master Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Transportation Analysis. Project-level VMT Reduction Strategies include promoting infill residential and mixed-use development; enhancing residents' access to transit, pedestrian, and bike networks; and facilitating use of these systems to reduce trip lengths. These VMT reduction measures would reduce GHG emissions in accordance with the City's Climate Action Plan. The growth anticipated under the Housing Plan is consistent with the development pattern of the 2050 RTP-SCS; therefore, the Housing Plan would not contribute considerably to a VMT increase or conflict with the SBCAG 2050 RTP-SCS.

Some types of transportation impacts, such as potential hazards or emergency access issues, are related to site- and project-specific conditions. These issues require site specific analysis and would not be significantly affected by other development outside of the city. Compliance with applicable regulations and oversight, including City and Caltrans design guidelines, City of Santa Barbara Municipal Code requirements, and City and/or County Fire Department design standards for emergency vehicle access, as outlined in Impact TRA-3, would effectively reduce the potential for individual projects to create a transportation hazards or emergency access impact within the City as well as in Santa Barbara County. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to the transportation hazards and emergency access would be less than significant.