4. OUR ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY

Our goal is to provide residents with more transportation choices by strengthening and balancing bicycle, pedestrian and transit opportunities in the City and surrounding region.

An Integrated Mobility System

Central to the well-being of Ventura’s citizens and visitors is *mobility*, the ability to get from one place to another. Mobility depends on the range, efficiency, and connectivity of the various components that comprise the transportation network – sidewalks, bicycle routes, and thoroughfares, as well as transit services – and that enable people to access the things they need, from the most basic to the extraordinary (See Figures 4-1 Bicycle Facilities, 4-2 Bus and Rail Routes, and 4-3 Roadway Classification Plan). Ventura is a community that recognizes that thoroughfares serve a variety of functions and are not simply conduits for automobile traffic.

Balancing automobile use with other means of travel is essential to maintaining social and physical health. Safe and enjoyable routes for pedestrians and bicyclists should connect every part of the city, and neighborhoods need to be linked by ample and convenient transit service along corridors. Ventura also must be connected to the larger region by a variety of transportation modes.

Thoroughfares have a tremendous effect on neighborhood character and therefore quality of life for both residents and visitors.

Thoroughfares are essentially the stage of public life where a diversity of citizens interact. They can create places of remembrance, chance encounters, and discovery. Ensuring that Ventura thoroughfares are *great places* requires improving design and quality as well as connectivity. In some cases, city thoroughfares are over-engineered to accommodate the worst-case scenario.

Slowing down automobiles, especially in residential neighborhoods, is a desire shared by many residents. Vehicle travel should be directed toward routes that minimize congestion, avoid conflicts with walkers and bicyclists, and keep residential neighborhoods free of excessive cut-through traffic. Additionally, in some areas of the city, suburban patterns have resulted in less connectivity than is desired by the community. Transportation modes and land uses in the city need to be distributed so that residents have close and easy access to meet their basic needs and travel destinations.

Traffic congestion is a major concern among Ventura residents. Although traffic on local roads is generally free-flowing, a few key intersections and road segments experience congestion during peak traffic hours. Simply widening roads to add lanes will not solve traffic congestion. Instead, the system needs integrated solutions that improve mobility for all
means of travel. While walking, biking, and transit use are already popular, these alternative modes need to be enhanced and better linked. For example, bus and rail systems serve Ventura, but not thoroughly enough to provide a reasonable alternative to auto use for most travelers. And while pedestrian access exists in most areas of Ventura, the network lacks continuous routes in some key locations.

As expressed in the Ventura Vision, a top community priority is to minimize automobile use through a fully integrated multi-modal transportation system. The policies and actions in this chapter aim to achieve this objective.
Walking

Sidewalks are arguably the most important component of the city's mobility system. As with circulation in general, the utility of pedestrian systems is inextricably linked to land use patterns. Combined with urban design elements, land use patterns influence how much walking can safely and effectively occur in the community. Circulation systems that are designed with pedestrians in mind tend to increase outdoor activity and community interaction, while those oriented toward motor vehicles tend to create disincentives to walking.

Ventura's pedestrian system consists of sidewalks, access ramps, crosswalks, linear park paths, and overpasses and tunnels. Special corridors such as the Beachfront Promenade, California Plaza, and Figueroa Plaza have been designated especially for pedestrians. The pedestrian system also includes neighborhood and park path systems, and dedicated trail facilities that are shared with bicyclists and other users.

Pedestrian paths need to be interesting, enjoyable, and lead to a destination, from the most simple – such as a pocket park – to more grand points of arrival, such as major civic spaces. Creating a network of paths that connect key features such as parks, schools, civic facilities, shops, and services is vital to the success of reducing dependence on the automobile. Those most in need of pedestrian access include children, teenagers, and the elderly, as well as those who cannot afford a car or choose not to drive.

The main deficiency of Ventura’s pedestrian system is its discontinuity. Some sections of thoroughfares lack sidewalks, and pedestrian connections between some key use areas are in need of repair. Crosswalks are prohibited along some corridors, and pedestrian signal phases are not always long enough for all walkers. Traffic-calming measures also are needed to improve walkability in many neighborhoods. Citizens have placed a high emphasis on improving the pedestrian network, recommending specific improvements such as:

- narrowing selected thoroughfare segments,
- improving sidewalks and road crossings,
- lengthening pedestrian signal phases,
- adding marked crossings at key intersections,
- developing safe and attractive walkways from Downtown and Midtown to the beach,
- ensuring that new development provides ample pedestrian access,
- creating trails along watercourses and through the hillsides, and
- improving pedestrian facilities near schools.

Policies and actions in this chapter intend to improve pedestrian access through this range of methods.
Biking

Because bicycles are an integral component of the city’s mobility system, they are allowed on all city thoroughfares. The City has adopted a General Bikeway Plan intended to create a safe, accessible, and interconnected network of bike paths, lanes, and routes that will ensure Ventura becomes and remains a truly bicycle-friendly community. The General Bikeway Plan is a flexible, comprehensive, and long-range guide for bicycle transportation and recreation planning, design, and budget decision-making. Accordingly, it is designed to:

- refine and implement City bicycle-related policies,
- establish bikeway design standards,
- enhance bicycle safety and education programs,
- set priorities and phasing for improvements and amenities depicted on the Select System of Bikeways map, and
- identify funding means and opportunities for interagency cooperation.

The City places high emphasis on improving the local bicycle network by following the recommendations of the General Bikeway Plan, which include:

- constructing additional Class I or Class II bikeways in a number of locations, including along the Santa Clara River and the coast to connect to the Ventura River Trail,
- installing bicycle racks,
- updating bicycle facility standards to ensure proper design and maintenance,
- constructing improvements to resolve bicycle/automobile conflicts,
- establishing a highly visible route identification and signage program that fits the character of the community, and
- mitigating impacts on bicyclists from new development and during and following construction of roadway projects.

Policies and actions in this chapter seek to improve bicycle access and safety by carrying out these recommendations.

Public Transit – Bus & Rail

Transit service in Ventura includes bus and rail operations (see Figure 4-2). South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) provides local bus service,
Ventura Intercity Transit Authority (VISTA) runs regional routes, and Greyhound offers statewide and national connections. Metrolink provides rail service to and from Los Angeles – although on a very limited schedule, while Amtrak trains that stop in Ventura run between San Luis Obispo and San Diego.

Although local bus routes connect most activity centers, the East End is not well served, and more frequent service is needed to key destinations such as the beach and downtown. Metrolink and Amtrak need to be linked to each other and accessed by local bus routes. An agreement between the City and the Ventura County Transportation Commission calls for identifying a permanent Metrolink site, and the best way to integrate all of these services is with a major multi-modal transit center that also accommodates potential additional future alternative transportation modes.

SCAT buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts and adjustable steps to ensure access for all riders. SCAT also offers discounted fares for seniors and disabled riders, as well as dial-a-ride service. However, seniors and mobility-impaired persons also desire frequent fixed-route service in smaller vehicles, and all riders need upgraded amenities at a number of stops. Bus routes also need increased frequency and stops to make transit a viable alternative to driving.

Other transit system needs include:

- reduced-emission vehicles,
- continued use of schedule synchronization to accommodate route transfers, and
- service to regional destinations such as California State University Channel Islands and airports.

Policies and actions in this Chapter aim to improve transit efficiency, encourage ridesharing, and preserve long-term transit options.

The Automobile and Types of Roadways

The most basic component of the mobility system is the thoroughfare, used not only by
people who drive, but also by people who ride the bus, bike and walk. Thoroughfares encompass sidewalks, bicycle lanes, travel lanes, and are the most utilized means of travel in Ventura. This system is organized into the following classifications: local thoroughfares, collectors, and arterials (see Figure 4-3, Roadway Classification Plan – also known as “Circulation Plan”).

Local Thoroughfares
Local thoroughfares provide mobility within neighborhoods and are generally not shown on the Roadway Classification Plan. Local thoroughfares include alleys, lanes, and “yield” streets.

Collectors
Collectors serve as links between local thoroughfares. Collectors may front residential and neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Collectors can be configured as boulevards, avenues, streets, and main streets.

Arterials
Arterials are the primary mechanism for cross-town travel and serve the major centers of activity. These roads typically carry a high proportion of the total urban area travel. Arterials can be configured as boulevards, avenues, and streets.
Collector and arterial thoroughfare segments in the City are characterized in two ways that describe their physical features: design classification and functional classification. Design Classification defines the number of travel lanes using the following categories: Primary Arterial (6 lanes or more), Secondary Arterial (4 lanes), and Collector (2 lanes), as shown on the Roadway Classification Plan, Figure 4-3. Functional Classification describes how a thoroughfare is used: essentially as a boulevard, avenue, street, or main street.

Functional Classification also identifies whether roadways have medians, parking, bike lanes, and other streetscape attributes needed to achieve objectives other than just moving traffic, such as accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, and adjoining land uses and public spaces. Table 4-1 shows the design and functional classifications for thoroughfares in the City.

Ventura is mainly connected by 2-lane and 4-lane thoroughfares. The classification for each type of road segment represents a balance between vehicle capacity, pedestrian and bicycle access, parking requirements, streetscape character, and right-of-way limitations.

**Boulevard**
A multi-lane and generally urban corridor with a central, planted median.

**Avenue**
Avenues are typically multi-lane, short distance connectors, with a painted median, used in both residential and commercial areas, and often terminate at prominent buildings or plazas.

**Street**
Street typically allows two way travel and may be multi-lane and does not have a central median and generally provides access to predominantly residential areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Sizes (Engineering Design Classification)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Arterial (6 or more lane roadway)</td>
<td>Secondary Arterial (4 lane roadway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing</td>
<td>Existing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future Widening</td>
<td>Future Widening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future Extension</td>
<td>Future Extension</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thoroughfare Types (Functional Classification)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boulevard</td>
<td>Boulevard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avenue</td>
<td>Avenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Definitions for Design Classifications are the City’s modifications to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards. Definitions for Functional Classifications are the City’s modifications to the Traditional Neighborhood Development Street Design Guidelines.
Main Street
Main streets have 2 vehicle lanes. Their main purpose is to provide low-speed access to commercial, mixed-uses, and higher density neighborhoods.

Consistency between the design and functional classifications is determined based on the number of through lanes. Temporary improvements, such as restriping to change the number of lanes are allowed, however a permanent improvement that moves the curbs and changes the number of lanes would require an amendment to this plan.

The Ventura Vision offers several key recommendations to improve the city thoroughfare system:

- add or enhance north-south arterials;
- consider an additional Santa Clara River bridge, Portola Avenue overcrossing of U.S. 101, and Johnson Drive overcrossing of Route 126; and
- soften the barrier impact of U.S. 101 by working with Caltrans to improve signage, aesthetics, undercrossings, and overcrossings.

Policies, actions, and the Roadway Classification Plan work together to address these recommendations. To improve the safety and functioning of the thoroughfare network and to maintain its compatibility with the character of the community, the policies and actions in this chapter also call for upgrading problem thoroughfares and intersections, improving and constructing freeway ramps, and connecting unfinished roadways. Additional actions intend to protect views from scenic routes, including State-designated scenic highways.
Policy 4A: Ensure that the transportation system is safe and easily accessible to all travelers.

Action 4.1: Direct city transportation investment to efforts that improve user safety and keep the circulation system structurally sound and adequately maintained. First priority for capital funding will go to our pavement management program to return Ventura streets to excellent condition.

Action 4.2: Develop a prioritized list of projects needed to improve safety for all travel modes and provide needed connections and multiple route options.

Action 4.3: Provide transportation services that meet the special mobility needs of the community including youth, elderly, and disabled persons.

Action 4.4: Combine education with enforcement to instill safe and courteous use of the shared public roadway.

Action 4.5: Utilize existing roadways to meet mobility needs, and only consider additional travel lanes when other alternatives are not feasible.

Action 4.6: Require new development to be designed with interconnected transportation modes and routes to complete a grid network.

Action 4.7: Update the traffic mitigation fee program to fund necessary citywide circulation system and mobility improvements needed in conjunction with new development.

Action 4.8: Implement the City’s Neighborhood Traffic Management Program and update as necessary to improve livability in residential areas.

Action 4.9: Identify, designate, and enforce truck routes to minimize the impact of truck traffic on residential neighborhoods.

Action 4.10: Modify traffic signal timing to ensure safety and minimize delay for all users.

Action 4.11: Refine level of service standards to encourage use of alternative modes of transportation while meeting state and regional mandates.

Action 4.12: Design roadway improvements and facility modifications to minimize the potential for conflict between pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles.

Action 4.13: Require project proponents to analyze traffic impacts and provide adequate mitigation in the form of needed improvements, in-lieu fee, or a combination thereof.

Policy 4B: Help reduce dependence on the automobile.
CHAPTER 4

Action 4.14: Provide development incentives to encourage projects that reduce automobile trips.

Action 4.15: Encourage the placement of facilities that house or serve elderly, disabled, or socioeconomically disadvantaged persons in areas with existing public transportation services and pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Action 4.16: Install roadway, transit, and alternative transportation improvements along existing or planned multi-modal corridors, including primary bike and transit routes, and at land use intensity nodes.

Action 4.17: Prepare and periodically update a Mobility Plan that integrates a variety of travel alternatives to minimize reliance on any single mode.

Action 4.18: Promote the development and use of recreational trails as transportation routes to connect housing with services, entertainment, and employment.

Action 4.19: Adopt new development code provisions that establish vehicle trip reduction requirements for all development.

Action 4.20: Develop a transportation demand management program to shift travel behavior toward alternative modes and services.

Action 4.21: Require new development to provide pedestrian and bicycle access and facilities as appropriate, including connected paths along the shoreline and watercourses.

Action 4.22: Update the General Bikeway Plan as needed to encourage bicycle use as a viable transportation alternative to the automobile and include the bikeway plan as part of a new Mobility Plan.

Action 4.23: Upgrade and add bicycle lanes when conducting roadway maintenance as feasible.

Action 4.24: Require sidewalks wide enough to encourage walking that include ramps and other features needed to ensure access for mobility-impaired persons.

Action 4.25: Adopt new development code provisions that require the construction of sidewalks in all future projects.

Action 4.26: Establish a parking management program to protect the livability of residential neighborhoods, as needed.

Action 4.27: Extend stubbed-end streets through future developments, where appropriate, to provide necessary circulation within a developing area and for adequate internal circulation within and between neighborhoods. Require new developments in the North Avenue area, where applicable, to extend Norway Drive and Floral Drive to connect to Canada Larga Road; and connect the existing segments of Floral Drive. Designate
the extension of Cedar Street between Warner Street and south of Franklin Lane and the linking of the Cameron Street segments in the Westside community as high priority projects.

**Policy 4C: Increase transit efficiency and options.**

Action 4.28: Require all new development to provide for citywide improvements to transit stops that have sufficient quality and amenities, including shelters and benches, to encourage ridership.

Action 4.29: Develop incentives to encourage City employees and local employers to use transit, rideshare, walk, or bike.

Action 4.30: Work with public transit agencies to provide information to riders at transit stops, libraries, lodging, and event facilities.

Action 4.31: Work with public and private transit providers to enhance public transit service.

Action 4.32: Coordinate with public transit systems for the provision of additional routes as demand and funding allow.

Action 4.33: Work with Amtrak, Metrolink, and Union Pacific to maximize efficiency of passenger and freight rail service to the City and to integrate and coordinate passenger rail service with other transportation modes.

Action 4.34: Lobby for additional transportation funding and changes to Federal, State, and regional transportation policy that support local decision-making.

**Policy 4D: Protect views along scenic routes.**

Action 4.35: Require development along the following roadways – including noise mitigation, landscaping, and advertising – to respect and preserve views of the community and its natural context.

- State Route 33
- U.S. HWY 101
- Anchors Way
- Brakey Road
- Fairgrounds Loop
- Ferro Drive
- Figueroa Street
- Harbor Boulevard
- Main Street
- Navigator Drive
- North Bank Drive
- Poli Street/Foothill Road
- Olivas Park Drive
- Schooner Drive
- Spinnaker Drive
- Summit Drive
- Telegraph Road – east of Victoria Avenue
- Victoria Avenue – south of U.S. 101
- Wells Road
Action 4.36: Request that State Route 126 and 33, and U.S. HWY 101 be designated as State Scenic Highways.

Action 4.37: Continue to work with Caltrans to soften the barrier impact of U.S. HWY 101 by improving signage, aesthetics and undercrossings and overcrossings.

Action 4.38: Maintain street trees along scenic thoroughfares, and replace unhealthy or missing trees along arterials and collectors throughout the City.