

# Memorandum

*Making Conservation  
a California Way of Life*

**To:** DISTRICT PLANNING DEPUTIES

**Date:** March 11, 2020

**From:** MARLON FLOURNOY, PMP  
Chief  
Division of Transportation Planning



**Subject:** CONTEXTUAL GUIDANCE FOR BIKE FACILITIES

Please see the attached Contextual Guidance for the Selection of Bicycle Facilities. This effort was a collaboration between Planning, Design, Traffic Operations and Sustainability, with help and input from the Districts.

This chart was developed from federal and State best practices and is intended for use during the pre-Project Initiation Document (PID) phase to identify the preferred facility-type in areas where bicycle facilities are desired. The chart is accompanied by a cover memo that provides the necessary background and details intended uses for the chart.

These products were developed over the course of many months through a multifunctional working group at Headquarters and refined through ongoing input from the Complete Streets Division Chief Steering Committee at each stage in its development. It was sent out for District input in October.

The Division of Design is developing further guidance on how to evaluate the feasibility of selecting a preferred bikeway type during and after the PID phase, as well as guidance on how to identify alternative facilities if the preferred facility is not feasible.

Thank you all for your help in finalizing this guidance. We will be posting it to the Division of Transportation Planning (DOTP) internet/intranet sites in the coming days. Please feel free to distribute to your staff as appropriate.

## Attachments

- 1) Cover memo for contextual guidance
- 2) Contextual Guidance Bikeway Facilities Planning

cc: Jeanie Ward-Waller, Deputy Director, Planning and Modal Programs  
Janice Benton, Chief, Division of Design  
Michael Keever, Chief Engineer and Deputy, Division of Design  
DOTP Assistant Division Chiefs and Office Chiefs



October 9, 2019

## Cover Memo for Contextual Guidance

### Background:

In support of Caltrans strategic goals to increase biking and walking, Sustainability, Design, Planning, and Traffic Operations have collaborated on a contextual guidance chart to aid Caltrans in the selection of bicycle facilities based on roadway characteristics such as place-type, speed and volume. The chart is for use during the pre-project initiation document (PID) phase. The recommendations are based on guidance published by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), AASHTO, and the California Highway Design Manual (HDM).

### Implementation:

The contextual guidance chart is intended to help identify the preferred bicycle facility for users of all ages and abilities based on project location and context. *It does not replace engineering judgement or design standards.* It should be used as a decision support tool for scoping active transportation facilities during the project planning phase and identifying corridor-level bicycle needs. Scoping facilities effectively at the planning phase will enable project managers and designers to make informed decisions and trade-offs during project development, especially in conditions with right-of-way, environmental or other constraints.

### Design User:

The design user for this chart is a user of all ages and abilities – from a confident cyclist<sup>1</sup>, to an “interested but concerned” traveler, who may consider biking for their daily needs if more comfortable facilities were available. Caltrans policy requires that “the Department provide for the needs of travelers of all ages and abilities” (DD-64-R2) in planning, design, operations and maintenance of the State highway system. Similarly, *Toward an Active CA*, the State Bike and Pedestrian Plan, suggests that facilities should be designed for users from the ages of 8 to 80 (p. 27).

Based on these policies, Caltrans should be designing bicycle and pedestrian facilities to serve users of all ages and abilities, therefore, this chart identifies the preferred facility to accommodate that user type. However, there may be times when a certain facility’s design user is not this type (i.e. high number of confident bicyclists, alternate routes are available, etc.). Additionally, there may be times in which the preferred “all ages and abilities” facility is not feasible. In these cases, this chart may not be applicable, but accommodations may still be made for those walking and biking. See [Facility Selection](#) for more information.

### Facility Selection:

This guidance is intended as a first step during the pre-PID phase in the selection of preferred bicycle facilities. The facility selection decision during PID development should be informed by additional information, such as public participation, data on potential usage (i.e. counts, origin & destination, etc.), and local input. Additionally, during the PID and PA&ED phase, facility selection will involve the consideration of real-world contexts such as land-use, right-of-way, roadway safety, operations, maintenance and environmental considerations. If the preferred facility is not feasible due to these contexts, there may still be opportunities to explore alternatives that include bicycle facilities. The Division of Design is developing further guidance on how to evaluate the feasibility of selecting a preferred bikeway type during and after the PID phase, as well as guidance on how to identify alternative facilities if the preferred facility is not feasible. Additionally, a summary of pedestrian features, context, and considerations will be included in the guidance. Finally, the [FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide](#) is a useful reference in making informed trade-off decisions related to bikeway selection types. The use of this and other publications and guides coupled with sound engineering judgment are to be exercised in collaboration with the guidance in the HDM.

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<sup>1</sup> A “confident cyclist” is defined as an advanced bicyclist that can operate under most traffic conditions

Caltrans Contextual Guidance for Preferred Bicycle Facilities\*\*

Place Type and Surrounding Land-Use <sup>1</sup>		Posted Speed			
		15-20	25-30	35-45	> 45
Urban Areas & Suburban Main Streets	<2,500	Standard Shoulder or Shared Lane	Standard Shoulder or Shared Lane	Class II or Class IV	Class IV
	2,500-5,000				
	5,000-10,000	Class II or Class IV	Class II or Class IV	Class IV	
	>10,000	Class IV	Class IV		
Rural Areas (Developing Corridors)		15-20	25-30	35-45	> 45
	<2,500	Standard Shoulder (may be designated as a Class III facility) <sup>2</sup>			
	2,500-5,000				
	5,000-10,000				
	>10,000				
	15-20	25-30	35-45	> 45	
Rural Main Streets	<2,500	Standard Shoulder or Shared Lane	Class II	Class II	Class I or IV
	2,500-5,000				
	5,000-10,000	Class II		Class I, II, or IV	
	>10,000	Class II			

<sup>1</sup> Highway Design Manual (HDM) Index 81.3

<sup>2</sup> HDM, Tables 302.1 and 307.2

\*\* Chart is not a replacement for engineering judgement. Intended for planning purposes, to identify minimum preferred bikeway facility under different place type, volume and speed conditions.