



COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: May 28, 2024
CATEGORY: New Business
DEPT.: Public Works
TITLE: **Active Transportation Plan—Scoring Criteria**

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the scoring criteria for the Active Transportation Plan.

BACKGROUND

On [January 28, 2014](#), Council adopted the City’s most recent Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) and directed the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to review the PMP on an annual basis. The PMP outlined general policies, performance measures, and prioritization criteria related to pedestrian transportation. BPAC annual reviews of the PMP highlighted the need for future plan updates to include more specific elements, such as a sidewalk inventory, stronger policy language, a list of pedestrian-related projects, and reference to design guidelines.

On [November 17, 2015](#), Council adopted the Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP). This plan included bicycle connectivity gaps, policy and program recommendations, and a list of more than 180 projects to improve Mountain View’s bicycle-related network. Since 2015, City staff has used the 2015 BTP to identify and prioritize numerous bicycle-related capital projects and to impose bicycle-related improvements as a condition of approval for new developments in the City.

Since that time, as shown in Table 1, Council has taken additional actions to consolidate, further develop, and prioritize active transportation planning efforts.

Table 1: Project History

| Date | Action/Milestone |
|--|--|
| <u>November 10, 2020</u> | <p>In a Study Session for AccessMV: Comprehensive Modal Plan, Council directed staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine the PMP and BTP updates into a single-planning effort; • Have the combined plan define the modal priorities for the corridors beyond the General Plan Designations, based on right-of-way available and overall feasibility; • Bring back to Council the budget for the combined planning effort as part of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP); and • Consider as part of the planning desired features for healthy/green streets, such as tree canopy, seating, and other streetscape amenities. |
| <u>June 22, 2021</u> | <p>Council adopted the Five-Year CIP for Fiscal Years 2021-22 through 2025-26 and approved amending Pedestrian Master Plan Update, Project 21-36, to change the name to Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and to increase the budget from \$300,000 to \$500,000, to encompass both pedestrian and bicycle planning, consistent with the direction received as part of the AccessMV Study Session.</p> |
| <u>May 24, 2022</u> | <p>Council approved a professional services agreement with NN Engineering to develop the ATP in an amount of \$117,000.</p> |
| <u>June 13, 2023</u> | <p>Council approved the Fiscal Year 2023-25 Council Strategic Priorities and Work Plan, which identified development of a City Active Transportation Plan as part of Council’s Strategic Priority for “Mobility and Connectivity.”</p> |

In addition to providing direction on pedestrian- and bicycle-related policies, programs, and projects in the City, Council adoption of an ATP is an eligibility requirement for the City to compete for, and receive, state and federal ATP and other grant funding. In this context, the City’s ATP (or pedestrian, bicycle, or Safe Routes to School Program plans) needs to be current and consistent with the California Transportation Commission’s latest ATP guidelines.

ANALYSIS

Advisory Committees and Community Input

A robust internal and external stakeholder process was developed and implemented to help develop and provide feedback to the ATP. Two advisory committees were assembled to review and provide recommendations to draft elements of the ATP:

- An interdepartmental Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of 13 staff members from the Public Works, Community Services, Fire, and Community Development Departments and City Manager’s Office. The TAC meets at each stage of the project to review draft deliverables and ensure the ATP is consistent with other ongoing initiatives, such as the Biodiversity Strategy.
- An Active Transportation Plan Advisory Committee (ATPAC) to review draft deliverables and to provide a perspective from key stakeholders. The ATPAC is comprised of representatives from the following 12 member organizations or bodies:
 - Mountain View Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC);
 - Mountain View Youth Advisory Committee (YAC);
 - Santa Clara County Public Health Department;
 - Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA);
 - The Day Worker Center of Mountain View;
 - Green Streets for Sustainable Communities;
 - Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition;
 - Mountain View Streets for All;
 - Mountain View Mobile Home Alliance;
 - Mountain View Community Services Agency;
 - Mountain View Chamber of Commerce; and
 - Canopy.

In addition to these two committees, staff also involved, presented to, and obtained input on the ATP elements to date from the BPAC. The elements include the vision statement, community survey, draft existing conditions analysis, and scoring criteria.

Vision Statement

On [February 22, 2023](#), the ATPAC and BPAC received updates on the ATP process and provided input on the following draft vision statement:

“The City of Mountain View will lead regionally by creating an active transportation system that strengthens the community’s access to housing, employment, schools, and other destinations.

The Active Transportation Plan will enable the City to intentionally plan with policies that support walkable and bikeable places; programs that create a culture of walking and biking; and projects that produce a connected, low-stress, and inviting active transportation network that doubles as corridors of shade, habitat, and/or public open space. This network of streets and trails will encourage biking and walking, enhance biodiversity, and reduce climate-change impacts.”

The ATPAC and BPAC generally supported the concepts in the vision statement. ATPAC emphasized the importance of prioritizing schools, safety, regional connectivity, accessibility, and community engagement. The BPAC additionally emphasized a focus on safety, mode shift, and accessibility, supported by data and metrics.

Community Survey

During spring and summer 2023, a Citywide community survey was released to obtain input from the community about the strengths and weaknesses of the City’s active transportation network. Outreach in relation to the survey was conducted via email blasts, social media posts, lawn signs, posters in laundromats, and in-person outreach at community events for typically underrepresented communities as well as two bike tours and three walking tours. The City received 655 public responses with feedback that generally promoted active transportation and included comments about challenging locations and opportunities for improvement in relation to walking and biking.

Draft Existing Conditions Analysis

On October 24, 2023 and [October 25, 2023](#), ATPAC and BPAC, respectively, received an update on the ATP process, draft of existing conditions analysis, and feedback from the Citywide community survey. ATPAC’s feedback included: provide more emphasis on schools, identify delivery drivers parking in the bike lanes that are a problem, and improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, like those within mobile home parks and condominium complexes. They also expressed support for the review of City policies and standards from the perspective of creating a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly City and more tree plantings.

BPAC recommended reviewing practices in other cities where walking and biking are part of the culture. Additionally, BPAC emphasized the importance of:

- Ongoing bicycle and pedestrian count data collection;
- Navigating the City with a wheelchair, including neighborhoods with narrow sidewalks, and sidewalks with poles and obstructions;
- Effects of signal operations on people walking, specifically, including no right turn on red provisions, pedestrian-recall phasing, and signal phasing at freeway on-/off-ramps; and
- Issues associated with new technologies, such as personal delivery devices, or emerging trends, such as the blocking of bike lanes by delivery drivers.

Scoring Criteria Input

On April 17, 2024 and [April 24, 2024](#), ATPAC and BPAC, respectively, reviewed the scoring criteria. Both ATPAC and BPAC were supportive of the overarching criteria and weights as well as the point breakdowns for each of the criteria with some recommended changes further described below.

Recommended Scoring Criteria

Selection of project-scoring criteria is a critical next step in developing the ATP. The scoring criteria establish parameters and weights to objectively evaluate and prioritize active transportation projects identified through the ATP process. **This will allow projects to be prioritized for future funding recommendations and staff resources.** The project team developed the recommended scoring criteria and weights based on General Plan policies, Council Strategic Priorities, ATP Guiding Principles, ATP community survey responses, and input from the TAC, ATPAC, and BPAC.

Scoring criteria for the ATP cover four guiding principles of Access and Equity, Mobility and Connectivity, Safety and Comfort, and Sustainability and Biodiversity. The recommended weights across these four guiding principles are outlined in Table 2 below. The weighting highlights the primary importance of safety, while balancing other guiding principles for the plan.

Table 2: Criteria and Weighting

| Guiding Principle | Recommended Weight |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Safety and Comfort | 35% |
| Access and Equity | 30% |
| Mobility and Connectivity | 25% |
| Sustainability and Biodiversity | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

Recommended scoring rubrics for each metric are outlined below and reflect industry standards. For each of the four guiding principles, scoring rubrics include: (1) criteria; (2) metrics to assess these criteria; (3) scores to allocate to metrics; and (4) data sources for evaluating the metric.

Safety and Comfort (35%)

The scoring criteria for Safety and Comfort (see Table 3) incorporate community concerns related to active transportation, data on historic crash patterns, pedestrian network density, and pedestrian-crossing distance. Data on community concerns reflects data from the community survey on challenging places, challenging routes, potential places for improvement, and potential routes for improvement in relation to active transportation. Historic crash data reflects locations of crashes that resulted in fatalities or severe injury (KSIs). In reflection of the primacy of safety concerns, crash history has the highest weight of all items in the rubric. Finally, block length and pedestrian-crossing distance are included as these items are associated with exposure to traffic. As shown in Attachment 1, the metric reflects a composite map of community input, which omits facilities outside of City control, such as freeways and private roads.

Table 3: Safety and Comfort Scoring

| Criteria | Scoring Metric | Score | Source |
|------------------------------|---|-------|------------------|
| Addresses community concerns | Project area has low density of composite comments (bottom third). | 0 | Community Survey |
| | Project area has medium density of composite comments (middle third). | 5 | |
| | Project area has high density of composite comments (top third). | 10 | |

| Criteria | Scoring Metric | Score | Source |
|--|---|-----------|----------------------|
| Addresses existing (historic) crash patterns | Project area has no or low density of fatal or severe injury crashes (bottom third). | 0 | Crash history |
| | Project area has medium density of fatal or severe injury crashes (middle third). | 7.5 | |
| | Project area has a relatively high density of fatal or severe injury crashes (top third). | 15 | |
| Improves pedestrian network density | Project does not reduce pedestrian block length at all. | 0 | Project data and GIS |
| | Project reduces pedestrian block length but not to less than 500’. | 2.5 | |
| | Project reduces pedestrian block length to less than 500’. | 5 | |
| Reduces pedestrian-crossing distance | Project does not decrease width of pedestrian-crossing distance. | 0 | Project data and GIS |
| | Project does decrease width of pedestrian-crossing distance. | 5 | |
| Maximum score | | 35 | |

Access and Equity (30%)

The scoring rubric for Access and Equity (see Table 4) allocates scores based on whether the project is in an area with a high proportion of low-income households and fills gaps in the sidewalk network and “All Ages and Abilities” (AAA) bicycle network. AAA bicycle facilities are more comfortable for all types of riders. Filling gaps in both the pedestrian and bicycle networks improves access for all members of the community, including vulnerable users. ATPAC recommended that scoring metrics for filling sidewalk and AAA bicycle-network gaps provide partial points for partially filling a network gap. BPAC supported these changes at their April 24, 2024 meeting, and this is included in the recommended criteria.

Table 4: Access and Equity Scoring

| Criteria | Scoring Metric | Score | Data Source |
|---------------------------------|--|-------|--------------------------------|
| Supports lower income residents | Project is not within a low- or low- to mid-income census tract. | 0 | MTC EPC (ACS 5-year estimates) |
| | Project is within a low- to mid-income census tract defined as having more than 14% of the population below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). | 7.5 | |
| | Project is within a low-income census tract defined as having more than 28% of the population below 200% of FPL. | 15 | |

| Criteria | Scoring Metric | Score | Data Source |
|---|---|-----------|-------------|
| Fills a gap in existing sidewalk network | Project does not close a sidewalk gap. | 0 | GIS |
| | Project partially closes a sidewalk gap. | 3.5 | |
| | Project does close a sidewalk gap | 7.5 | |
| Fills a gap in All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network | Project does not close a gap in the AAA bicycle network. | 0 | GIS |
| | Project partially close a gap in the AAA bicycle network. | 3.5 | |
| | Project does close a gap in the AAA bicycle network. | 7.5 | |
| Maximum score | | 30 | |

Mobility and Connectivity (25%)

As shown in Table 5, the scoring rubric for Mobility and Connectivity includes criteria focused on walking distance from key destinations as outlined in the General Plan, with an emphasis on supporting school children. While research indicates that people are willing to walk further in environments with more walkable, urban design, a standard distance that people are willing to walk to destinations in the U.S. is one-quarter to one-half mile, equivalent to a roughly five- to 10-minute walk. Therefore, the scoring rubric evaluates a project’s walking distance from schools, key destinations, and transit stops relative to these distances.

ATPAC suggested increasing the distances around schools and other key destinations from a five-minute (one-quarter mile) walk to a 10-minute (one-half mile) walk. The rationale for this suggestion was that people comfortably walk or bike from locations further than one-quarter mile.

Following the ATPAC meeting, staff evaluated this suggestion and found that expansion of the walking radius from one-quarter to one-half mile for other key destinations would result in nearly all of the City receiving points for this criterion, which effectively negates the scoring rubric’s ability to differentiate between projects. For this reason, staff did not recommend this, and BPAC agreed with staff’s recommendation, noting that while school trips often originate beyond the one-quarter mile radius, they converge near schools; and, therefore, the improvements in the immediate area would have the greatest positive impact. As an alternative, BPAC recommended the City’s suggested routes to school be added to the rubric for partial points, and this has been added to the recommended scoring in Table 5.

Table 5: Mobility and Connectivity Scoring

| Criteria | Scoring Metric | Score | Source |
|---|--|-----------|--------|
| Supports school children | Project is more than a 5-minute walk (0.25 mile) from a school (public or private). | 0 | GIS |
| | Project is less than a 5-minute walk (0.25 mile) from a school and on a suggested route to school (public or private). | 5 | |
| | Project fronts a school (public or private). | 10 | |
| Supports other key destinations (commercial center, park, trail, Senior Center, or senior living community) | Project is more than a 5-minute walk from a key destination. | 0 | GIS |
| | Project is less than a 5-minute walk from a key destination. | 5 | |
| | Project fronts a key destination. | 10 | |
| Improves first-/last-mile connection to transit | Project is not within a 5-minute walk of any transit stop. | 0 | GIS |
| | Project is within a 5-minute walk of any transit stop. | 2.5 | |
| | Project is within a 10-minute walk (0.5 mile) of a major transit stop or high-quality transit corridor. | 5 | |
| Maximum score | | 25 | |

Sustainability and Biodiversity (10%)

Creating space for green street improvements in public rights-of-way supports active transportation by reducing heat impacts and improving pedestrian and bicyclist comfort. As a result, the Sustainability and Biodiversity scoring criteria recognize reductions in impervious surface area to treat runoff and increase plantings consistent with the City’s Biodiversity Strategy. ATPAC recommended having metrics award points to projects that create space for plantings, particularly shade trees. They also emphasized the importance of addressing climate change, slowing motor vehicles, and increasing comfort for pedestrians. BPAC supported these changes at their April 24, 2024 meeting. Table 6 incorporates these recommendations.

Table 6: Sustainability and Biodiversity Scoring

| Criteria | Scoring Metric | Score | Source |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------|------------|
| Reduces impervious surface area | Project does not reduce impervious surface area. | 0 | Calculated |
| | Project reduces impervious surface area by less than 4%. | 2.5 | |
| | Project reduces impervious surface area by 4% or more. | 5 | |
| Provide plantable space | Project does not increase open space for plantings (based on typical cross-section). | 0 | |
| | Project provides enough space for ground-cover plantings (plantable spaces less than 5’ wide). | 2.5 | |
| | Project provides enough space for ground-cover plantings and shade trees (plantable spaces 5’ or wider). | 5 | |
| Maximum score | | 10 | |

Plant selection and biodiversity recommendations will be identified by the Biodiversity Strategy currently under development and other plans such as Precise Plans.

Alternative Weight Distributions

Through the review of the TAC, ATPAC, and BPAC, the recommended weights of the criteria provide an appropriate balance between key goals, higher-value criteria, and community feedback. While staff and the committees have reviewed and recommend the weights applied, Council may consider redistributing weights between guiding principles, such as moving some weight from Sustainability and Biodiversity and allocating more to Safety and Comfort. Additionally, weights can be expanded or reduced for one or more guiding principles and/or criteria. After analysis, staff recommends the weight distributions as outlined for consistency with the input received and recommendations from the various committees.

NEXT STEPS

Should Council approve the recommended scoring criteria, staff will develop a list of projects based on prior plans, existing conditions analysis, community input, and staff evaluation. These projects will then be prioritized using the scoring criteria to create a project priorities list. This project list, along with policy recommendations, will be the focus of the next round of community engagement scheduled for fall 2024. Following community engagement, staff will return to BPAC and Council in Q4 2024 to review the list of project priorities and policy recommendations.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with approval of the scoring criteria.

CONCLUSION

Council has identified Strategic Priorities for Fiscal Years 2023-25 that include developing an Active Transportation Plan (ATP), which updates the Pedestrian Master Plan and Bicycle Transportation Plan and incorporates green streets and biodiversity elements. Staff, with input from the TAC, ATPAC, and BPAC, has developed a vision statement and guiding principles, conducted an existing conditions analysis, engaged the community, and developed scoring criteria by which to evaluate projects. The scoring criteria reflect input from the community and the committees and also balances four guiding principles with respective weights as follows:

- Safety and Comfort (35%);
- Access and Equity (30%);
- Mobility and Connectivity (25%); and
- Sustainability and Biodiversity (10%).

Key metrics assessed under these criteria measure the extent to which projects close network gaps, support trips by low-income residents, address high-crash locations, address community concerns, help students get to schools, reduce pedestrian block lengths and crossing distances, create space for plantings, and reduce impervious surfaces. The recommended scoring criteria is supported by BPAC and will be used to evaluate and prioritize projects for inclusion in the ATP.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not approve the staff-recommended scoring criteria and direct staff to redistribute and/or add/reduce weights to the scoring criteria.
2. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the standard agenda posting, staff sent notices to the project’s subscribers list available at mountainviewatp.com.

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Attachment: 1. Map of Community Concerns Related to Active Transportation

cc: PWD(A), TM, TP—Whyte