

BIKE SEBASTOPOL

October 16, 2024

To: City of Sebastopol, Planning Commission, City Council. SCTA + Fehr &Peers,

As a local citizen group advocating for safer cycling, Bike Sebastopol would like to share feedback on the DRAFT ATP for the updated ATP (Active Transportation Plan) that pertain to City of Sebastopol projects and those immediately intertwined with Sebastopol's border (technically in Unincorporated Sonoma County). Please contact us to discuss any questions. Thanks for your consideration.

Looking forward,

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Representing Bike Sebastopol on behalf of the Bikeable Community committee.

From a cyclist perspective, we reviewed the draft ATP to see what improvements can be made that will improve bike safety, encouraging more riders for routine transportation needs, increase bike culture, reduce transportation emissions, and are items that address missing gaps not identified in the previous ATP (called the Bike & Pedestrian Master Plan). In addition, we have been encouraging the city to be ambitious and vision several new Class 1 trails to connect neighborhoods and increase local ridership.

Our recommendations:

Review the Hwy 116 Greenlanes, (built in 2017)

(<https://bikesebastopol.weebly.com/green-lanes-hwy-116.html>) and funded by CalTrans. Refer to Caltrans Guide for Complete Streets <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/dib-94-010224-a11y.pdf> when reviewing and identify areas that could be improved. The current as-built situation does not fully comply with the Caltrans Complete Streets Guidelines. The Greenlanes were an improvement over the previous situation, but could be even better, safer, through remedying sections of the route, so that more riders feel comfortable and safer riding this route.

Top 5 achievable projects for next 2 years.

The DRAFT ATP has a long list of projects with no attempt to connect them together. It would be helpful to identify the top 5 'doable' projects that can be done in the next 2

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years along with a strategy for funding them. The Funding portion of the DRAFT ATP is very short, basically a list of funding sources. The ATP should provide recommendations for how Sebastopol can better position itself to secure funds for these projects and identify best options to pursue. It's important to note that while some funding sources require match funds, the SCTA has set aside funds for this specific purpose so that cities can pursue this type of funding without dipping into their own reserves. For example, currently SCTA has set allocated match funding for the Ragle/MillStation project for when funding is applied for again.

Providing some clarity on near term projects will give City Staff, community members, and Council Members a clearer idea of what are the next steps beyond completing this ATP. As-is, there is much left unknown, with no clear path forward.

For example, one project that should be on the 2 year list is adding Bike sensitive sensors to traffic lights currently controlled by Cal Trans. There are at least 4 intersections that would benefit from this upgrade, providing a vast improvement. This is one of the most common noted improvements gathered during community input.

Top 5 Ambitious Projects to pursue over the next 10 years.

Class 1 Trails – Most modern transportation planning documents (eg. CalTrans Complete Streets planning document) identify Class 1 as the preferred option when developing new cycle/pedestrian infrastructure. The Only 2 projects that meet this criteria (Appled Blossom & Gravenstein Trails) in the DRAFT ATP are listed in their own category of “aspiration projects”, not even included in the Project Table or given a Tier 1 2 or 3. This is disappointing. Bike Sebastopol and other groups have advocated for these trails for the past 8-10 years and have worked patiently to include them in the ATP so that they can take the next step toward being developed. They should be on the table of projects. They could also be in a section of TOP ‘Ambitious’ projects to pursue over the next 10 years, along with some suggestions for funding sources that could be pursued to move this forward. Another top Project would be the Ragle Rd – Mill Station Rd Project that has been partially designed and funding applied for in the past. This route will provide a significant improvement connecting the West County trail to Mill Station Rd to Ragle Park and beyond.

Bike Boulevards should be Tier 2 or 3.

Most of the city roads where Bike Boulevards have been proposed are pretty mellow already. It's unclear why these were proposed and what exactly it means? Maybe it's speed bumps, but maybe it's something else. Its unclear. No clear answer has been received throughout the ATP process. These are not Tier 1 priority.

Transitions Improvements – Higher priority and less expensive.

A higher priority is identifying intersections where improvements can be made for cyclists transitioning from one city street to another, where it is currently unsafe or other barriers to getting through in timely fashion. Or from city street to trail. Examples of this are: a. where the West county trail intersects with High School Rd. – make it more cycle friendly. b. adding bike sensitive traffic lights at the Morris/hwy12 intersection. Etc.

Other considerations...

1. The way the projects are presented and their rankings makes it hard to extract which projects are top priority within the next few years.
2. Project rankings: no rubric was provided and no data was provided in how these projects were ranked. In the spirit of transparency, the scoring rubric and scores for each project should be provided, perhaps as an appendix.
3. Funding – The CIP (Capital Improvements Plan & Developer Fees) was mentioned but no description of this was provided. Apparently the city has some funds and is going ahead developing several projects. It would be helpful to describe the CIP and how it works.
4. Section 5 Maps and project list are hard to read. It would be helpful if there were better maps (or more zoomed in maps) that showed the street names and a close up of proposed projects. As-is it requires one to look at a map elsewhere to figure out what the project is referring to.
5. We previously suggested grouping projects that are in one zoom. For example the Libby Park connector could be one map that combined Projects # 8,9,10.
6. There is **no mention of Climate Change** as motivation for the ATP. Page one of the document discusses various reasons, but there is no mention of reducing GHG as a motivator. According to the RCPA, transportation is the leading source of Greenhouse Gases in Sonoma County. Increased cycling & walking can reduce this. As a city that has passed a Climate Resolution, please add some appropriate language.
7. Page 1. *Lack of any prioritization by City Staff and Council 'due to budget constraints'*. This isn't quite true. The city is spending \$ on some ATP projects already via Capital Improvement Plan. For example, the Bodega Ave repavement project is referred to as a Bike Lane project. Also Project # 42 & 43 on Bodega Ave are being developed with CIP funds.
8. Page 8 Transit. Consider marking the routes in different colors so one can see which route goes where. There is also another route (#26) that goes to Rohnert Park and is highly used by students attending SSU, Credo HS, etc.
9. Figure 3 page. 9, The ORANGE colored roads are not on the LEGEND. What do these roads have in common?

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10. Allow sidewalk cycling in some instances. There are painted notes on many sidewalks indicating cycling on sidewalks is prohibited. Where it's not safe to ride in the road and there isn't another option, sidewalk cycling should be reviewed and allowed. Coupled with educational efforts for both cyclists and pedestrians.