

# 6

## CIRCULATION

### BACKGROUND

#### Overview of Castro Valley Circulation System

The local transportation system in Castro Valley is limited to a few higher volume arterial roadways, such as Castro Valley Boulevard, East Castro Valley Boulevard, Grove Way, Redwood Road, and Lake Chabot Road. Much of the traffic in Castro Valley tends to funnel from the hillside via Lake Chabot Road, Redwood Road, Center Street, Cull Canyon Road, and Crow Canyon Road onto Castro Valley Boulevard, which also is used extensively by regional traffic when the I 580 corridor becomes congested. Through traffic from outside of Castro Valley uses Crow Canyon from San Ramon to avoid I 680 and I 580, while local streets, such as Grove Way and Center Street, are also used to avoid the I-580 westbound back-up at I 238.

Castro Valley Boulevard, East Castro Valley Boulevard and Grove Way (east of Redwood Road) are the only east-west arterials in Castro Valley. These are all concentrated along the I-580 corridor, leaving a severe lack of east-west arterials in the northern parts of Castro Valley. Local residents use the east-west collector roadways, such as Seven Hill Road, Heyer Avenue, and Somerset Avenue, to reach local destinations such as schools and to avoid the congestion on Castro

Valley Boulevard. This increased traffic on neighborhood streets has become a concern of residents, particularly since radar speed surveys found speeds on roadways, such as Somerset Avenue, Stanton Avenue, Miramar Avenue, Seven Hills Road, Heyer Avenue and Center Street, to be considerably higher than their posted speed limits.

The topography of the East Bay hills creates a circuitous street pattern in many of the residential neighborhoods as development has moved into the hillside and canyons, where use of alternative transportation modes is limited. Pedestrian access at bus stops is often problematic in the residential areas. Sidewalks are discontinuous and walkways for pedestrians are often impeded by parked cars. Despite numerous recreational opportunities and trails in close proximity, the topography and existing roadways with high vehicular traffic volumes and speeds are not conducive to bicycling and walking in Castro Valley.

With the Castro Valley BART station came the opportunity for higher density, transit-oriented development near the downtown. There is a need to improve the main pedestrian routes to the BART station from surrounding areas in central Castro Valley, so people living within a half mile radius can comfortably walk to the BART station. The Castro Valley Boulevard Redevelopment Strategic Plan provides a vision for a pedestrian-friendly downtown that balances the needs of all roadway users, including the bicyclists and pedestrians.

The transportation element covers vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation modes.

## Regional Context

Castro Valley is located at the mouth of a primary natural pass through the East Bay Hills that connects to the Tri-Valley area of the Alameda County and beyond. Interstate 580 is built in that natural pass, and traverses through Castro Valley. The Interstate 580 corridor provides the regional access from the Tri-Valley communities of Dublin, San Ramon, Danville, Pleasanton, and Livermore as well as the Central Valley to the east to the East Bay communities of Hayward, San Leandro, and Oakland. This corridor includes the BART train tracks located in the median of I 580 as well as a few parallel arterial roadways, such as Castro Valley Boulevard. As housing development has expanded exponentially along the 580 and 680 corridors of East Alameda County and on into the Central Valley, traffic levels and congestion on 580 have increased substantially.

Just west of Castro Valley, I 580 veers north toward Oakland, while Interstate 238 continues west toward Interstate 880, which runs north-south from San Jose to Oakland. The I 238 connection between I 580 and I 880 creates a bottleneck that results in congestion along I 580 through Castro Valley. Studies are underway of alternatives to the State Route 238 Bypass through the City of Hayward, which would provide connection from I 580 south to State Route 92.

Regional transportation improvements affecting traffic circulation in Castro Valley include the widening of I 238 and the I 580/Redwood Road interchange.

The transit services in Castro Valley are provided by BART and AC Transit. The Castro Valley BART station is located within the downtown area and provides service throughout the region. AC Transit provides buses to the Castro Valley BART station as well as medical uses and recreational uses in the vicinity.

Castro Valley is at a key location within the regional trail system, located at the juncture of Lake Chabot Regional Park, Cull Canyon Regional Park, and Don Castro Park. The Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan identifies key regional bikeway corridors in Castro Valley.

### Local Street Classifications and Levels of Service

The local roadways in Castro Valley are divided into three functional classifications:

- Arterial Roadways
- Collectors
- Residential Streets

These facilities are shown in Figure 6-1.

#### *Arterials*

Arterials are the primary roads providing access from the freeways. They provide connections from Castro Valley to the surrounding communities. The arterial roadways are limited to Castro Valley Boulevard, Lake Chabot Road, Redwood Road, Grove Way east of Redwood Road, Center Street south of Grove Way, and Crow Canyon Road.

#### *Collectors*

Collectors provide access within and between neighborhoods. Collectors carry the trips from the Local Streets to the Arterials. Collectors include Center Street, Norbridge Avenue, Stanton Avenue, and Somerset Avenue. Because these collector streets are also residential streets with homes fronting the roadway, travel speeds should be low.

#### *Residential Streets*

Residential Streets make up the remainder of the local roadways. They provide direct access to fronting residential properties. Travel speeds and traffic volumes should be low.

### *Level of Service*

The capacity of a roadway or intersection – the maximum number of vehicles that can be handled in a given time period – is affected by the facility’s characteristics, such as number of lanes, lane widths, grades, and operating conditions. The Level of Service (LOS) concept is generally used to measure the amount of traffic that a roadway or intersection can accommodate, based on maneuverability, driver dissatisfaction, and delay. The LOS ranges from LOS A, or free-flow conditions, to LOS F, or congested conditions, and varies according to the type of roadway. Levels of Service A through E represent an acceptable level of service that allow drivers to move and pass through intersections without significant delays. Level of Service F indicates a significant level of congestion and delay, and typically occurs just during peak commute hours.

## **6.1 OVERALL CIRCULATION SYSTEM**

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### **BACKGROUND**

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### **GOAL 6-1:**

Provide a multi-modal transportation system that includes a variety of facilities and routes to meet the diverse needs of Castro Valley residents, workers, businesses, and visitors.

### **POLICIES**

**Policy 6.1-1** ***Comprehensive Circulation System for Cars, Bikes, Pedestrians, and Transit.*** Promote a comprehensive system of transportation facilities, services and programs that includes transit facilities and services; streets and highways within the community and providing access to other urban areas; a system of pedestrian and bicycle pathways; and transportation management programs and measures to encourage the efficient use of these facilities and services.

**Policy 6.1-2** ***Measure performance for all Modes of Travel.*** Assess the performance of the community’s transportation system by measuring how well people and goods as well as vehicles move within and through the community.

**Policy 6.1-3** ***Reduce reliance on the Private Automobile.*** Make land use decisions that promote a multi-modal transportation system and reduce reliance on the private automobile. Allow higher density development near transit and mixed use. (See

Chapter 4 – Land Use and Community Development.)

Policy 6.1-4 **Balance the needs of all circulation modes.** Balance the needs of all four circulation modes – automobile, transit, bike and pedestrian when making decisions about transportation improvements and allocation of public right of way.

## ACTIONS

Action 6.1-1 **Consider Project Impacts on All Modes of Travel.** When reviewing development proposals, consider the needs of all travel modes: automobile, pedestrian, transit and bicyclists. In conditions of approval or environmental impact mitigations that are required, balance the needs of all the different modes. Consider impacts on levels of service for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit in addition to impacts on vehicular circulation.

Action 6.1-2 **Revise Traffic Analysis Methodology.** Revise the methodology Alameda County uses to evaluate transportation impacts on pedestrians, transit, cyclists and reduce the significance threshold for impacts to auto levels of service on streets where the County wants to prioritize pedestrians, transit, and bicycles. Provide that the level of service at intersections may be exceeded for new development within one-half mile of a BART station, or within the Downtown along Castro Valley Boulevard.

Action 6.1-3 **Infill Opportunity Zone around the BART Station.** Establish an infill opportunity zone including all areas within one-third of a mile of the Castro Valley BART station that the General Plan designates for mixed use development or development at a density of 24 or more units per acre as provided for in State law. Develop an alternative multimodal composite level of service standard or approved list of flexible level of service mitigation options that would apply within the infill opportunity zone.

Action 6.1-4 **Strategies to Reduce Peak Hour Auto Congestion.** Work with the Eden Medical Center and other major Castro Valley employers as well as small businesses to promote adoption of staggered working hours, compressed workweek, home-based telecommuting, car-pooling, use of transit, and bicycling to employment centers within Castro Valley to reduce traffic congestion especially during peak

hours.

## 6.2 REGIONAL ROADWAYS AND LOCAL STREETS

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### GOAL 6-2:

Reduce regional roadway congestion to reduce visual, noise, air quality, and traffic congestion impacts on Castro Valley.

### POLICIES

*Policy 6.2-1*     **Reduce Local Impacts of Regional Roadways.** Work with the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, the Alameda County Transportation Authority, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and surrounding jurisdictions to develop and implement regional solutions to local traffic problems created by growth outside of Castro Valley.

### ACTIONS

Action 6.2-1     **Norbridge/ Strobridge/ Castro Valley Blvd. Improvements.** Conduct a study of the two-way conversion of Norbridge at its western end and reconfiguration the intersections of Norbridge-Stanton and Strobridge at Castro Valley Boulevard to improve vehicular and bicycle access to the Castro Valley BART station as well as address the congestion at these intersections along Castro Valley Boulevard.

Action 6.2-2     **Redwood Road Interchange.** Implement the Redwood Road Interchange Project to install on-ramps and off-ramps to I-580 at Redwood Road. Complete the Redwood Road Interchange Project that constructs new on and off ramps onto I580 at Redwood Road and revises the onramps and off ramps along East Castro Valley Boulevard and Grove Way.

Action 6.2-3     **Minimize Construction Impacts of Freeway Interchanges.** Review the traffic control plan for the I-580/Redwood Road interchange project to maintain local access and minimize impacts on local circulation during the

construction period.

- Action 6.2-4 **Castro Valley/Foothill Intersection.** Provide dual left-turn lanes on Castro Valley Boulevard for traffic turning onto Foothill Boulevard.
- Action 6.2-5 **Consider design and impacts of Highway 238 Modifications.** Review design alternatives and address the potential impacts of the State Route 238 improvements through the City of Hayward on the local circulation in Castro Valley, particularly along Castro Valley Boulevard at Foothill Boulevard.
- Action 6.2-6 **Park and Ride Lot at Center Street.** Work with Caltrans and transit providers to identify measures to promote fuller utilization of the Park and Ride lot on Center Street. Work with Caltrans and AC Transit to relocate the Center Street park-and-ride lot once the I-580/Redwood Road interchange project is completed and the eastbound off-ramp is relocated from Center Street to Grove Way.

### 6.3 RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

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When Castro Valley Boulevard and I 580 becomes congested, motorists seek alternatives to the arterials and use collectors and residential streets to bypass congestion. The County has a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program that provides a process for identifying traffic calming measures to reduce and/or discourage through traffic on local and minor collector residential roadways. Traffic calming measures include:

- Speed Enforcement
- Neighborhood Speed Watch Program
- Bulb-outs
- Speed Humps
- Chicanes
- Roundabouts
- Diverters
- Full Roadway Closure

The implementation of these measures would address issues related to speeding and cut-through traffic.

In addition to the cut-through traffic, traffic congestion around local elementary and middle schools during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up affect local circulation. These conditions are a particularly concern on Heyer Avenue between Redwood Road and Cull Canyon Road due to Canyon Middle School and on Center Street between Castro Valley Boulevard and Heyer Avenue to the Creekside Middle School.

With the pattern of development, collector streets, such as Somerset and Heyer, have issues such as speeding, lack of pedestrian access, access from private roadways serving multiple residential units, and limited visibility from driveways due to on-street parking and encroachment in the street by trees and landscaping.

### GOAL 6-3:

Protect residential neighborhoods from through traffic, speeding, and non-residential parking.

### POLICIES

*Policy 6.3-1*      **Traffic Calming on Residential Streets.** Protect resident, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety by calming traffic, focusing on residential streets where traffic frequently exceeds the speed limit.

*Policy 6.3-2*      **Protect Neighborhoods from overflow parking from BART and businesses.** Prevent encroachment of non-residential parking in existing residential neighborhoods, particularly due to overflow parking for the Castro Valley BART station.

### ACTIONS

*Action 6.3-1*      **Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.** Continue to implement the County’s Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program to enhance safety and livability on residential streets. Identify and install the most effective and appropriate technique for each individual location.

*Action 6.3-2*      **Truck Traffic Prohibitions.** Consider adopting an ordinance that would prohibit trucks heavier than 3 tons from operating on designated residential streets, except for emergency, maintenance, and transit vehicles.

## 6.4 TRANSIT

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### GOAL 6-4:

Increase transit ridership and service to residences, employment, schools, and hospital.

### POLICIES

- Policy 6.4-1 **Promote Transit Use.** Promote transit use and reduce reliance on the private automobile in order to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and improve the quality of life in Castro Valley.
- Policy 6.4-2 **Improved Access to Transit for Special Needs Passengers.** Work with public transportation agencies to ensure that public transit facilities and services are be designed and operated to respond to special travel needs and problems of minorities, the elderly, young, handicapped and economically disadvantaged, and of other persons who do not have or are unable to use private automobiles.
- Policy 6.4-3 **Improve Access to Transit for Major Destinations.** Work with BART and AC Transit to promote the provision of safe, efficient, and convenient access to primary destinations of persons with special transportation needs, including major shopping areas, health care and social service centers, schools and colleges, and recreation areas and facilities.
- Policy 6.4-4 **Improve Transit Stops.** Improve transit stops and stations to create a more pleasant, comfortable, and safe waiting environment for transit users.

### ACTIONS

- Action 6.4-1 **Lobby for Increased Transit Funding.** Advocate and support regional, state, and national policies and programs that will encourage increased transit use by subsidizing transit fares, operations, and capital improvements and providing a more stable operating budget for transit agencies.
- Action 6.4-2 **Transit Pass Program for Employees.** Work with AC Transit, BART, the Castro Valley and Hayward School Districts, other major employers, colleges, and Alameda County cities to establish a transit pass program for

employees of major Alameda County businesses and students at Cal State East Bay, the Peralta Colleges and other large institutions.

- Action 6.4-3 **Improve Bus Service.** Review existing bus routes in Castro Valley for opportunities to improve service to higher density residential areas as well as employment centers.
- Action 6.4-4 **Access to Transit Stations and Bus Stops.** Coordinate with BART and AC Transit to facilitate safe, efficient, and convenient access to transit stations and bus stops.
- Action 6.4-5 **Funding for Transit Access Improvements.** Seek Safe Route to Transit and other funding to improve pedestrian access to bus stops along regional bus routes.
- Action 6.4-6 **Wayfinding Signage Program to BART.** Develop wayfinding signage program from Castro Valley Boulevard to the Castro Valley BART station for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Action 6.4-7 **Pedestrian Improvements on Wilbeam.** Improve sidewalks and add landscaping and lighting on Wilbeam Avenue to improve the comfort and safety of pedestrian access to the BART station.
- Action 6.4-8 **Commuter Check Program Participation.** Require participation in the existing Commuter Check program as a standard condition of approval for new large scale non-residential projects.
- Action 6.4-9 **Transportation Demand Management Programs.** Encourage establishment of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs at new or expanded large-scale employment sites and shopping centers, including provision of preferential carpool parking and car share programs, bicycle lockers, BART shuttles, and other transit connection services.
- Action 6.4-10 **Shuttle Services from Neighborhoods to BART.** Work with homeowners' associations and neighborhood groups in Palomares Hills, Five Canyons, and other large residential developments to establish shuttle services to BART and initiate other feasible measures to promote alternatives to driving alone such as car-pooling and shuttle services to major employment centers, commercial areas

and transit areas.

- Action 6.4-11 **Incentives for Carpools.** As part of development project review, encourage preferential parking measures for carpool and vanpool vehicles, guaranteed ride home services and other incentives to employees choosing transportation modes other than driving.
- Action 6.4-12 **Shuttle Service from Employers to BART.** Require major employers who propose new development or alterations that will substantially increase floor area to provide shuttle service for employees from worksite to services and transit stations and hubs to reduce the number of automobile trips.
- Action 6.4-13 **Shuttle Service from Hospital to BART.** Establish a shuttle service for employees and patients between Eden Medical Center and the Castro Valley BART station.
- Action 6.4-14 **Bus Shelters.** Identify locations for additional bus shelters, particularly at major stops and transfer points, and work with transit agencies or private businesses to have them installed.
- Action 6.4-15 **Financial Incentives for Transit Use.** Promote regional and local ridesharing organizations and advocate legislation to maintain and expand incentives for transit use such as tax deductions and tax credits.

## 6.5 BICYCLE CIRCULATION

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### GOAL 6-5:

Expand and improve local bikeway connections and provide a safe environment for bicycle travel throughout the community.

### POLICIES

- Policy 6.5-1 ***Comprehensive Bikeway System.*** Provide a system of bikeways in Castro Valley that is coordinated with existing and planned facilities in adjoining communities as well as other transportation routes and facilities serving the community.

- Policy 6.5-2 ***Bicycle Access to Major Destinations.*** Provide convenient and safe bicycle access to community and regional activity centers, employment, shopping, and recreation areas, and to public service centers and facilities.
- Policy 6.5-3 ***Regional Bicycle Corridors.*** Implement the regional bicycle corridors identified in the Alameda County Bicycle Master Plan for Unincorporated Areas and the Countywide Bicycle Plan.
- Policy 6.5-4 ***Bicycle Safety and On-Street Parking.*** Balance on-street parking needs with bicycle safety considerations.
- Policy 6.5-5 ***Bicycle Accommodations on Transit.*** Encourage transit operators to provide adequate bicycle accommodations.

## ACTIONS

- Action 6.5-1 **Revise County Road Standards for Bicycles.** Review and, as required, revise County road standards to accommodate bicycle routes consistent with this Plan and the Countywide Bicycle Plan.
- Action 6.5-2 **Bike Lanes on Castro Valley Boulevard.** Implement the bike lanes on Castro Valley Boulevard as part of the Redevelopment Strategic Plan.
- Action 6.5-3 **Bicycle Parking and Storage.** Amend the County Zoning Ordinance to include regulations regarding the provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities such as weather protected bicycle parking, direct and safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists to adjacent bicycle routes and transit stations, secure short-term parking for bicycles, and to the extent feasible encourage provision of showers and lockers for employees at worksites.
- Action 6.5-4 **Funding for Bicycle Plan Improvements.** Identify a funding source and schedule for implementing those high priority projects in the Countywide Bicycle Plan that would improve conditions for cyclists within the community including widening curb lanes and/or construct shoulders as necessary to provide bike lanes on Lake Chabot Road, Redwood Road, and Crow Canyon Road.

- Action 6.5-5 **Development Review Guidelines for Bicycle Access.** Establish guidelines to be used when reviewing development proposals to ensure that site plans and facilities are designed to encourage bicycle use and do not create unsafe conditions for bicyclists.
- Action 6.5-6 **Implement Countywide Bicycle Plan Design Standards.** Use the Alameda Countywide Bicycle Plan’s design guidelines and best practices or comparable criteria when designing the streetscape improvements.

## 6.6 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

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### GOAL 6-6:

Provide a safe and attractive walking environment accessible for all users, particularly disabled users, seniors, transit users, and children.

### POLICIES

- Policy 6.6-1 ***Implement the Alameda County Pedestrian Master Plan.*** Implement the Alameda County Pedestrian Master Plan for Unincorporated Areas policies and actions for enhanced pedestrian environments in Castro Valley. See Tables 6-1 and 6-2.
- Policy 6.6-2 ***Safe Routes to Schools.*** Develop Safe Routes to Schools programs to encourage walking and bicycling to schools as well as manage vehicular circulation to provide a safe environment for school children.
- Policy 6.6-3 ***Improve Pedestrian Facilities on Busy Streets.*** Provide safe and attractive pedestrian facilities along arterials and collectors particularly those that are part of the Pedestrian Activity Corridors, as identified in the Alameda County Pedestrian Master for Unincorporated Areas.
- Policy 6.6-4 ***Maintain Pedestrian Facilities.*** Pedestrian facilities and amenities shall be routinely maintained as funding and priorities allow. The highest priority shall be given to facilities that are used to provide access to transit, public facilities, senior facilities, and schools.

- Policy 6.6-5 **Increased Enforcement for Pedestrian Safety.** Improve street design and traffic enforcement to increase pedestrian safety.
- Policy 6.6-6 **New Development to Incorporate Pedestrian Facilities.** Design new development and redevelopment projects to facilitate pedestrian access and address any impacts to the pedestrian safety, access, and circulation.
- Policy 6.6-7 **Pedestrian Priority for Sidewalk Space.** When dealing with competing demands for sidewalk space, pedestrian needs shall have the highest priority.

## ACTIONS

- Action 6.6-1 **Pedestrian Improvement Projects and Priorities.** Install curbs, gutters, sidewalks, pedestrian crossing improvements and landscaping improvements along Somerset Avenue, Stanton Avenue, Miramar Avenue, Seven Hills Road, upper Lake Chabot Road, Heyer Avenue, and Center Street.
- Eliminate sidewalk gaps and improve sub-standard conditions in identified Pedestrian Activity Corridors within Castro Valley. Prepare and implement a capital improvement program over the next 20 years that eliminates all sidewalk gaps and substandard conditions identified in the Alameda County Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Action 6.6-2 **Streetscape Improvements and Priorities.** Provide streetscape improvements along Grove Way, Center Street, Castro Valley Boulevard west of Strobridge, and other gateways into Castro Valley to add pedestrian refuges in medians, bulb-outs, or other features that improve pedestrian comfort and safety.
- Action 6.6-3 **Pedestrian Crosswalk Lights at Dangerous Crossings.** Consider installing pedestrian crosswalk “runway” lights in the pavement at heavily-used and dangerous pedestrian crossings.
- Action 6.6-4 **Pedestrian Walkways Required in New Development.** Continue to require installation of

sidewalks and physically-demarcated walkways in new development.

Action 6.6-5 **Widen Dam Crossing.** Widen the dam crossing on Heyer Avenue west of Cull Canyon Road to add turning lanes and bike lanes in addition to pedestrian improvements.

Action 6.6-6 **Pedestrian and Bike Path Downtown.** Study the feasibility of developing a pedestrian and bicycle path linking the new Castro Valley Library to surrounding commercial and residential areas along Castro Valley Creek.

## 6.7 PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY DOWNTOWN

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### GOAL 6-7:

Promote a pedestrian-friendly downtown.

### POLICIES

Policy 6.7-1 ***Balance Needs of Different Modes.*** Balance the needs of automobiles with downtown pedestrian comfort and scale.

Policy 6.7-2 ***Add Pedestrian Amenities.*** Pedestrian amenities should be provided to create a more comfortable and pleasant walking environment in downtown.

### ACTIONS

Action 6.7-1 **Implement the Castro Valley Boulevard Streetscape Plan.** Implement the Castro Valley Boulevard Streetscape Plan to widen sidewalks, provide bike lanes, landscaping, and other improvements to upgrade the Boulevard's appearance and make it more attractive to pedestrians.

Action 6.7-2 **Adequate Time for Pedestrian Crossings.** Ensure that traffic signals are set to provide sufficient time for pedestrians and those with impaired mobility to safely cross the Boulevard.