



# Canal Neighborhood Community-Based Transportation Plan



Prepared for  
Canal Transportation Plan  
Stakeholder Committee  
Transportation Authority of Marin  
City of San Rafael

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Copies of this report are available at [www.tam.ca.gov](http://www.tam.ca.gov) or call 415-499-6528.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) started the Community-Based Transportation Planning Program to identify barriers to mobility in Bay Area communities and work to overcome them. Using a grassroots approach, the Community-Based Transportation Plan (CBTP) effort has created a collaborative planning process for minority and low-income Bay Area communities that involves residents, community organizations, transit operators, city governments, county congestion management agencies and MTC.

This Plan documents the efforts and results of the community-based planning process for City of San Rafael's Canal Neighborhood. Background of the study is described in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 outlines the demographics and travel characteristics of the neighborhood. Transportation issues for the Canal Neighborhood as identified in previous studies and reports are summarized in Chapter 3. The techniques used to reach out to the community and the resulting list of transportation gaps are described in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, solutions to address the transportation gaps identified in the previous chapter are presented and prioritized. Finally, in Chapter 6, considerations for implementation and potential funding sources are discussed.

### Key Findings and Issues

- The Canal Neighborhood is physically isolated from other parts of San Rafael by the Canal waterway and the Highway 101/Interstate 580 freeways.
- There are limited shopping, education or health services available within the Canal Neighborhood; travel to other locations for these services is constrained by poor bicycle, pedestrian and, to some extent, motor vehicle connections.
- Canal residents make up 20 percent of San Rafael's population; they are predominately immigrants (70% Hispanic) and typically speak a language other than English at home.
- Compared with San Rafael and Marin County, Canal residents are younger, household and family sizes are larger and household incomes are smaller.
- Most housing in the Canal Neighborhood is renter-occupied and the population is more transient than in other parts of San Rafael and Marin County.
- Canal residents own fewer cars and ride transit more frequently than other residents of San Rafael and Marin County.
- Bus routes 35 and 36 which serve the Canal Neighborhood are the most heavily used routes in Marin County.
- In previous outreach efforts, the community said that better connections were needed to other parts of San Rafael, that the bus service should be improved, and that it should be safer to walk and ride a bike in the neighborhood. Francisco Blvd. East and Bellam Blvd. were of particular concern for bicycling and walking with high speed traffic, heavy traffic volumes and narrow travel lanes. Freeway on and off-ramps are an additional hazard when bicycling and walking on Bellam Blvd.
- Upcoming transportation improvements for the Canal Neighborhood include bus service improvements to be implemented in September 2006 and major streetscape improvements by the City of San Rafael on Medway Road between Francisco Blvd. East and Canal Street.

## Recommended Solutions

The following 13 transportation solutions are recommended for the Canal Neighborhood addressing the transportation gaps identified by the community. The improvements listed below were reviewed and prioritized based upon project support, effectiveness in mitigating transportation gaps, and potential for implementation. The projects are prioritized as follows:

### *High Priority Projects*

1. **Adjustments to Bus Transit Service** - Adjustments to transit service were implemented by MCTD in September 2006 including increased frequency and capacity of service, more direct service to Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Northern San Rafael and Mill Valley and more convenient service to Fairfax.
2. **Crosswalk and Lighting Improvements** - This solution would include the installation of crosswalks and enhanced lighting where needed.
3. **Canal Crossing** - A pedestrian/bicycle connection from the Canal Neighborhood to Downtown, San Rafael High School, Montecito Shopping Center and other locations north of the waterway would be provided. Initial studies would involve the evaluation of potential alternatives including various bridge designs, a tunnel, shuttle, or improvements to existing routes.
4. **Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Improvements** - Curb ramps, raised crosswalks and curb extensions will be constructed for access routes to Bahia Vista School in Fall 2006.
5. **Bus Shelters** - Additional bus shelters would be installed where feasible.
6. **Canal Neighborhood Safety and Streetscape Improvement Project** - This solution would involve the study of neighborhood traffic, circulation and safety hazards to identify and implement safety and streetscape improvements for bicycle and pedestrian travel within and to areas outside the neighborhood.

### *Medium Priority Projects*

7. **Highway Crossing** - The highway crossing would provide a separated pedestrian/bicycle crossing of Hwy 580/Hwy 101 between the neighborhood and Andersen Drive.
8. **'Street Smarts' Program** - This program utilizes public education to address the behaviors of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists with advertising and focused community outreach.
9. **Rides to School for Parents Program** - This solution recommends a pilot program to provide transportation for parents of San Pedro Elementary School students to attend school events, parent conferences and for family emergencies.
10. **Neighborhood Transportation Information Kiosk** - The kiosk would provide information on transportation options available to the neighborhood including transit services, paratransit, 511 rideshare, Commuter Checks, 'Trips for Kids' after school and earn-a-bike programs, school buses, etc. The kiosk would be placed in a location central to the community.
11. **Canalfront Paseo** - The Paseo would provide pedestrian/bicycle access on both sides of the Canal waterway. Together with the Canal Crossing, the Paseo would provide access to Downtown, Montecito Shopping Center and other locations to the north as well as fill a gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail between Pickleweed Park and Pt. San Pedro Road.

### *Low Priority Projects*

12. **Modified Transit Fare to Downtown** - This solution would provide a reduced transit fare for trips between the Canal Neighborhood and the San Rafael Transit Center. It would not affect the fare for trips requiring connection at the transit center.
13. **Car Share Program** - The car share program would provide subsidized hourly car rentals to the Canal Neighborhood for members who qualify for the program.