



Table of Contents

<i>I. Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition’s Advocacy Work.....</i>	<i>1</i>
Mission.....	1
Vision.....	1
Overarching Goal.....	2
2025 Strategic Outcomes.....	2
Guiding Principles.....	2
SVBC’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Values.....	2
SVBC Policy Advisory Committee.....	2
How SVBC Determines Campaigns and Takes Positions.....	3
Why you are important.....	3
What is a member advocate/Biketivist?.....	3
<i>II. GUIDE TO CREATE YOUR OWN SVBC LOCAL TEAM.....</i>	<i>4</i>
Local Team Charter.....	4
SVBC Local Team Toolkit.....	4
Working with SVBC.....	9
<i>III. Resources.....</i>	<i>10</i>
Sample personal letter.....	10
Sample script for city council meeting.....	11

I. Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition’s Advocacy Work

See: <https://bikesiliconvalley.org/about/>
<https://bikesiliconvalley.org/betterbiking/>

Mission

Our purpose is to create a healthy community, environment, and economy through bicycling for people who live, work, or play in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

Vision

We envision a community that values, includes, and encourages bicycling for all purposes for all people.



Overarching Goal

Our central goal is to see that 10% of trips are taken by bike by 2025. Cities in our two counties currently range from under 1% to 9% trips by bike to work. For more information, check out the Silicon Valley Bike Vision¹, a collaboration between SVBC and Joint Venture Silicon Valley. This report documents the state of biking in Silicon Valley, including stats on how many people ride and the number of collisions by city, as well as gaps and key opportunities. It is a great place to start to get a snapshot of your local context.

2025 Strategic Outcomes

In support of our goal of 10% of trips by bike in 2025, we have identified a number of key outcomes we are working to achieve by 2025 as a result of our programs and initiatives:

1. All people feel safe on bikes in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.
2. Bicycling is accepted as a normal part of everyday life.
3. Bicycling is accessible, convenient, and fun.
4. Bicycling is integrated into youth education and the culture of future generations.
5. People utilize bicycling as a core component of a healthy and active lifestyle.
6. Local & regional governments and community leaders look to SVBC for trusted expertise.
7. Bicycling is recognized as a key indicator for quality of life, economic wellbeing, and talent retention for Silicon Valley.

Guiding Principles

At SVBC, we think how we accomplish our goals is extremely important, and we support our mission, vision, and outcomes with the following principles:

- Innovation
- Connection to the community
- Diversity and inclusion
- Professionalism
- Collaboration

SVBC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Values

Our mission and vision cannot be achieved without making our cultural humility and social justice central to our work.

<https://bikesiliconvalley.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

Equity

Access

Community Power

Sustainability

Empathy

SVBC Policy Advisory Committee

The Policy Advisory Committee² is comprised of Board members and SVBC members who represent SVBC Local Teams or other area BPACs. The group discusses local biking policy issues of interest to SVBC and advises the SVBC Board and staff on positions and policies.

¹ <https://bikesiliconvalley.org/betterbiking/silicon-valley-bike-vision-report/>

² <http://bikesiliconvalley.org/files/documents/svbc-policy-advisory-committee-charter.pdf>



How SVBC Determines Campaigns and Takes Positions

Based on the Board-established goal of 10% of trips taken by bike by 2025, SVBC has determined broad initiatives that govern our main campaigns and that we believe will lead to more people on bikes and a healthier and safer environment for bicyclists.

Initiatives

- ✓ Safe Streets for All/Vision Zero
- ✓ Low-stress bike networks (all ages and abilities, universally accessible)
- ✓ Bikes + Transit
- ✓ Planning for New Mobility
- ✓ Encourage Biking
- ✓ Green Transportation
- ✓ Livable Communities

For each initiative, we have policy recommendations and guidance. Stay tuned for our policy agenda/menu, coming soon.

When an agency, elected official, partner or member wants SVBC to take a position, they fill out a Position Recommendation Form³ that is reviewed by staff, the appropriate SVBC Local Team, and the SVBC Policy Advisory Committee or Board of Directors if necessary.

Why you are important

We can't do it alone. SVBC has limited staff members, representing over hundreds of members and 36 jurisdictions between two counties. We rely on our members for your local expertise, on-the-ground experiences, and real-life stories. We need you to show your local government officials that you care and that there are people who want safe and comfortable bicycle infrastructure and bicycle friendly policies.

What is a member advocate/Biketivist?

A member advocate is a current SVBC member that participates in our advocacy work. This person may take a lead role in specific campaigns and has a strong capacity for leadership and organizing others. Along with having a strong background and history of the issue, this person is positive and is respected by others who are engaged on the issue.

³ <http://bikesiliconvalley.org/files/uploads/SVBC Position Recommendation Form.docx>

II. GUIDE TO CREATE YOUR OWN SVBC LOCAL TEAM⁴

SVBC Local teams provide a forum and resources for a group of local activists who bike in a particular city or region and meet regularly to discuss relevant issues such as new bike infrastructure, events, social rides, and city policies and plans. SVBC Local Teams also funnel local information up to SVBC staff and help staff create educated positions with community support.

There is a need to spread these local-level groups to additional cities and areas. This section will cover the process and tips on starting a new SVBC Local Team and guidelines for complying with the established structure.

- *Level 1:* Group that is formed around a specific, time-bound project and disbanded upon completion.
- *Level 2:* Established SVBC Local team: Group continues once initial project is achieved to work towards broader SVBC goals.

Local Team Charter

Requirements of an SVBC Local Team:

1. SVBC staff person attends first meeting.
2. Minimum 6 meetings per year.
3. Set agenda for each meeting.
4. Take minutes and attendance, and then share with SVBC staff.
5. Fill out "Position Recommendation Form" for official SVBC letters, SVBC staff attendance at public meetings, or requesting official SVBC talking points.

Benefits to residents/SVBC Local Team:

1. Team is included on SVBC website and meetings are added to online, public calendar.
2. SVBC facilitates and moderates an email forum.
3. SVBC offers resources and expertise.
4. Advocacy trainings offered semiannually to develop and grow volunteers into leaders.
5. Community outreach: e-mail blasts, social media.
6. Organizing events: public presentations, activities.
7. Connecting with the local alliances and relationships SVBC has built.

SVBC Local Team Toolkit

Organizing your SVBC Local Team Checklist:

1. Reach out to SVBC
2. Get your team together
3. Understand the landscape
4. Develop a campaign goal
5. Engage the community
6. Request what you want and make it public
7. Moving your campaign forward
8. Meeting agendas and minutes
9. Engaging volunteers

⁴ Thank you to Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapters for their Grassroots Organizing Toolkit 2011, from which this section was adapted.

Step 1: Reach out to SVBC

First, make sure a SVBC Local Team in your desired location does not already exist. If one does not, contact advocacy@bikesiliconvalley.org to set up a meeting regarding your potential group and area. We will provide you with the steps necessary and speak to you about the desired outcomes.

Step 2: Get Your Team Together

The next step is to gather individuals in your community who are concerned about bicycling. Host a house party, online meeting, or informal potluck at a community center or schedule a meeting at a local restaurant or watering hole with the interested members. At your first meeting, come prepared with ideas for what the team can do to promote bicycling, and a few ways team members can participate. Additionally, encourage members on your current team to share their own ideas. You should be mindful of reaching out to a diverse group of people and make sure your meetings are inclusive. We want to engage people of all ages, abilities, genders, races, ethnicities, experiences, income levels, types of riders, etc.

Methods for recruiting team members

- Host an event (e.g. presentation, film screening)
- Ask SVBC staff to send an e-mail to members in the area
- Create a flier and post at community hotspots
- Reach out to other community-based groups
- Invite your friends and neighbors via word of mouth
- Host several open house events at different locations

Agenda for your first meeting may include:

- Introduce everyone in attendance
- Discuss SVBC history and/or current campaigns
- Decide who will be responsible for researching your city's current bicycle policies and actions (ideally more than one person)
- Brainstorm potential campaigns and goals the team can work on and volunteer roles.

Step 3: Understand the Landscape

Before developing a campaign goal, research what the city is currently doing to promote bicycling to help determine which solutions your team should campaign for.

1. Arrange a meeting with your Public Works Director or related staff to build your relationship with the city and find out which goals they are working toward (Ask SVBC staff about existing relationships with city staff).
2. Prepare for your meeting by reviewing your city's website and bike plan, if one exists.
3. Develop questions prior to the meeting, and come prepared to talk about SVBC's goals.
Potential questions to ask include:
 - a. What is the city doing to become more bike friendly for residents?
 - b. Where can I find more information about the city's bicycling goals?
4. Take notes and send them to your team and be prepared to discuss what your next steps might be at your following meeting.
5. Acknowledge which actions your city is taking by sending a positive letter to the editor of your local paper and/or writing a thank you letter to your city council and the staff that you met with.

Team Leader Responsibilities

1. Hold regular (typically monthly) meetings and set and send out an agenda prior.
2. Ensure that new members feel welcome and understand team's vision and goals.
3. Find out the passions and skills of individual members and develop a role for them as soon as they join.
4. Keep the team on track in setting and achieving goals.

Tip: Strong teams typically have 2 leaders and at least 5 active members.

Learn more about your city council and decision makers. It is important to understand who on your city council or city commission typically votes in favor of bicycle improvement projects and policies, who does not, and who can be swayed. Have at least one member of your team regularly attend relevant public meetings to find out if there are any major projects that the team should participate in and which arguments individual decision makers favor.

Step 4: Develop a Campaign Goal

Campaign: A discrete project that is S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound). Examples include:

- Safe Routes to School: Decreasing private automobile use (by X Date) by promoting biking, walking, transit and other modes of transportation for students at a specific school
- Infrastructure: Constructing a protected bikeway on a specific street (by X Date) by building neighborhood support
- Women and Biking: Increasing bike ridership of women (% increase measured by X Date) throughout the city through encouragement programs
- Many cities have adopted Bicycle Master Plans, which outline the timetable and prioritize projects. If your city has not yet adopted a Bicycle Plan or has not updated it for more than five years, an ideal goal is to work with the city to develop or update one (by X Date).

A successful campaign starts with a plan. Developing an effective plan will help you capture successes and identify when you are going off track. A campaign should be big enough to make a difference and manageable enough to get short-term results. If a city council will not be voting on your issue until next year, make sure you have monthly action items so your team can stay motivated by short-term successes. **SVBC staff can provide a campaign plan worksheet at the first meeting.**

Objectives

Objectives are measurable steps to achieve each goal; they should be as specific as possible.

- *e.g., "One objective to achieve our goal is to recruit five San Mateo residents to speak in support of the San Mateo Dr. bike lanes at the next City Council meeting."*

Tactics

Tactics are specific actions that your team may take to move toward its goals and objectives. Make use of existing resources and choose tactics that are reasonable, fun, and encourage group participation.

- *e.g., Tabling at farmers markets, educational events, meeting with individual city council members, speaking at city council meetings, letters to the editor, house parties, writing to city council, analyzing policy documents, etc.*

Step 5: Engage the Community

A local campaign representing a diverse coalition of interests and backgrounds is more effective than one coming only from Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. It is important to reach out to partners from many different communities (such as faith, business, affordable housing, labor, schools, etc.) to help plan and participate in the campaign.

Ask local community groups who may be interested in your effort if you can present at their next meeting. A presentation can be a five-minute talk about your campaign or a detailed PowerPoint presentation. SVBC can provide presentation templates and some information on local allies.

Demonstrate to the city council that there is broad support for the SVBC Local Team's recommendations by strategically choosing partners. For example, if your mayor is particularly sensitive to economic and tax relief arguments (as most are), then highlight that bike infrastructure can bring increased sales to local businesses. Ask a local business leader or an employer who understands firsthand that bikes are good for business to make an economical argument, either by letter or in a meeting with the mayor or a city council member.

Step 6: Request What You Want and Make It Public

When ready, draft and request that SVBC send a letter to City Council with information about your team. Recognize what the city is doing to promote bicycling, and what you wish them to attempt. Follow up by meeting with individual city council members or city staff to provide a clearer idea of your efforts. If possible, make the initial request, in writing or in person, with partners outside the bicycling community.

Step 7: Moving Your Campaign Forward

Until your city is safe and comfortable to bike around, there will always be a purpose for your SVBC Local Team. The key to keeping your campaign moving forward is to stay involved in your city's bicycling decision-making process, and to communicate regularly with fellow volunteers and partners. You may even want to add social events like bike rides or restaurant outings.

Methods to keep team members involved

Personal relationships matter. These activities and others serve to connect you and your fellow volunteers so that your work becomes stronger. People respond well to personal outreach, one on one conversations, and group activities to bond. Be mindful of this as you're building your team.

Several methods exist to help members involved in the campaign plan:

- Serve as city watch by attending city council and bicycle advisory committee meetings.
- Develop new campaigns as issues arise
- Show and discuss short bicycling films. (i.e.: see www.streetfilms.org)
- Hold a book discussion group
- Send out regular updates on the email forum
- Initiate a letter-to-the-editor campaign
- Organize group bicycle tours and rides (contact SVBC for insurance and waiver information)
- Ask your local community newspaper for a regular column about bicycling issues
- Start a bike path maintenance day

Step 8: Meeting Agendas and Minutes

A well-organized SVBC Local Team typically holds monthly meetings to check in on action items and discuss upcoming steps to move the campaign forward. It is each team leader's responsibility to organize regular team meetings and work with the team to create an agenda.

Agendas are one of the most important elements for productive meetings, as a balanced agenda keeps the conversation going. The most important part of creating an effective agenda is to follow it during the meeting!

Here are a few steps to follow:

- Send an e-mail announcing a meeting. State the goal of the meeting as well as the logistical details, and request agenda items from your group, potentially offering your own. Include agenda items continued from or proposed at the previous meeting. See "Minutes" below.

- Compose the agenda. Ensure all items are directly related to the goals of this particular meeting. Be realistic in the amount of time you allocate to each presenter.
- Send the agenda to your group one week before the meeting, with a reminder of goals, location, time and duration of the meeting.

Minutes capture the essential information of a meeting – decisions and assigned action items. Minutes keep attendees on track by reminding them of their role in a project and defining what happened in a group session.

- Before the meeting: Use SVBC template for recording minutes, which includes date/time, attendees, agenda items, action items, and decisions made.
- During the meeting: Focus on what is being discussed and record action items and decisions as they happen. If you don't understand a decision or action item, ask for clarification. Be sure to record all action items and commitments made by team members.
- After the meeting: Review and type your notes. Add additional comments while the information is fresh in your mind. When you finish typing the minutes, ask the team leaders to review them for errors. Send the final copy of the minutes to the entire team (including those who couldn't attend) within 1-2 days of the meeting. Also, send the final copy to SVBC to post on the website.

Step 9: Engaging Volunteers

An important part of becoming an effective organizer is to successfully recruit and motivate team members. Again, these personal relationships are key to the success of your movement. Reach out to new participants personally after a meeting, ask why they are interested and how they'd like to engage. Build in bonding and social activities so people can get to know each other.

To engage and motivate any team member (including yourself), we recommend to:

- Have at least one goal your team is currently working toward.
- During your next team meeting, decide upon and record your vision with at least one goal.
- Post the information to the website, send it to the email group, and make it accessible at every team meeting for reference (you may even want to read it before every meeting).
- After deciding upon your vision and goal(s) for your team, choose the volunteer roles needed to achieve your goal(s).
- The trick to keeping volunteers on your team is to engage anyone who says, "I want to join your team!" immediately in a meaningful role that suits their skills and personal interests.

Before you engage a volunteer, you should know the following information about your SVBC Local Team so you may relay important information:

- What your SVBC Local Team is: Our SVBC Local Team is an organized grassroots group of residents that work toward bicycling improvements in our city.
- What your team's goals and related volunteer roles are.

Working with SVBC

Because your Local Team is part of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and can benefit from using our reputation, a part of building a successful SVBC Local Team is working with us. In exchange, SVBC can offer your team staff support, event support, and connection with our members. Follow these sections to help build a strong bond with SVBC.

Staff and Volunteer Support

SVBC staff and volunteers are ready to fully support your SVBC Local Team. Many volunteers have been active for decades and have a wealth of knowledge and experience dealing with different political bodies and community groups. Staff and volunteers may be able to help guide your team based on past experiences dealing with a similar issue. If you have a particular request for support, but are unsure of whom to contact, e-mail: advocacy@bikesiliconvalley.org to get started. SVBC's reputation is useful when you work with decision makers or recruit volunteers.

To effectively work with SVBC, do the following:

- 1) Locate the related SVBC position:
 - Go to our website and find the position that relates to your issue.
 - Read through the SVBC's position on your issue.
 - If we *do not* have a position related to your issue or if you want us to formally oppose or support a project, submit a "Position Recommendation Letter"
- 2) Work with staff to draft a position letter: Draft the letter and submit it to staff with a "Position Recommendation Form."
- 3) Staff will determine final position and notify you and your group.

Taking Positions

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition is committed to building a strong, cohesive, effective organization that our members can be proud of. However, SVBC contains a vast, diverse group of members and some opinions may differ on how goals are met. This section outlines current protocols on taking positions. **Anyone may speak in support of a position already taken by SVBC that is published online. However, only SVBC Staff can represent the organization. In public meetings and letters, your statements are your own and not SVBC's.**

- Only SVBC Staff may take an official position on specific proposals.
- Only SVBC can officially represent SVBC.
- Positions must be consistent with any applicable SVBC policy.
- The Policy Advisory Committee and SVBC Local Teams may recommend a position to become official.
- Volunteers should familiarize themselves with SVBC policies and/or undergo a training.
- SVBC can have only one position on any proposal.
- Individual member advocates do not "make new policies" — they apply existing policies.
- Positions taken in any letter in support of or against a local project or policy must come from SVBC staff. They must be consistent with SVBC positions and be requested by the Local Team through staff. If the letter involves a regional issue that extends beyond the boundaries of a single SVBC Local Team, the group wishing to sign on must coordinate with SVBC staff.
- You may not send a letter as "[City's] SVBC Local Team" but can send letters as individuals.

III. Resources

Sample personal letter

City of [CITY NAME]

Mayor [NAME] and City Council

[CITY HALL ADDRESS]

[DATE]

Dear Mayor [NAME] and Council Members:

I ask for your approval of the [CITY NAME] Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. First and foremost, we would like to thank the City Council, staff, consultants and community for the patience, understanding, and hard work required to complete the plan. Such outstanding leadership indicates that the City Government is deeply committed to making [CITY NAME] a safer and more livable community.

You will find that a Bike Master Plan is an extremely valuable asset to your City's development policy. It provides the guidance necessary to develop [CITY NAME] in a manner that directly improves the economic, physical, and environmental health of your community.

Finally, with State and County approval your Bike Master Plan will make [CITY NAME] eligible for additional infrastructure grant funding. Our past experience on such grants has assisted with accessing millions of dollars in funding for bike projects in throughout [COUNTY].

Thank you very much for all of your time and considerations.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[CITY OF RESIDENCE], Enthusiastic Bicycle Supporter

Sample script for city council meeting

Intro: Formal hello, [YOUR NAME], [clearly stated ask AND/OR Position].

Good evening [TITLE OF COMMISSION] (Honorable Mayor [NAME] and Council Members, Chairperson [NAME] and Commissioners, etc.), thank you for hearing our comments this evening. My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am here speaking as bicycle advocate. Tonight, I request that you approve (or reject) [PROJECT NAME] in accordance with the staff recommendation [or insert project changes advocates recommend].

[INSERT Talking Points about Why Bike Improvements are Smart]

Biking, walking, outdoor recreation and active transportation are essential elements of why people like to live, work, visit, and play in our area. Maintaining low levels of congestion directly connects to our economic vitality and community well being.

[INSERT Specific Plan/Project Critique or Praises]

This plan is an incredible example of the concepts that our community wants. Nevertheless... We believe that it should only be approved with the following changes...

[INSERT COMMON TALKING POINT*]

Conclusion: We invite your thoughts and feedback but ask for your approval of [PROJECT NAME].

**We want efforts to improve our bike and pedestrian infrastructure to accommodate people of all ages and abilities.*

**We want you to keep in mind how important this broad reach is. While only expert bike riders feel comfortable riding on roads with motor vehicles, everyone, grandparents with grand kids, moms with strollers, feel safe on complete streets.*