

Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee factsheet

What is a BPAC?

A bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee (BPAC) is typically composed of volunteers that serves as a liaison between the public and a sponsoring agency, such as a department of transportation, planning department, or city council, regarding matters of importance to bicyclists and pedestrians. A well-rounded committee will include representatives who bike and walk, as well as the physically challenged and appropriate government agencies.

Potential roles and responsibilities¹

The role of a specific BPAC may vary depending on the needs and resources of the community served. Some basic functions include:

- Seek funding for pedestrian and bicycling network from federal, state, and regional sources as well as private foundations, organizations, and individuals.
- Advise sponsoring agency regarding allocation of funds for bicycle and pedestrian projects, including infrastructure, education, and promotion. Help to prioritize these projects.
- Monitor and advise on the updating and implementation of the city's bicycle master plan, pedestrian master plan, and/or transportation element of the city's general plan.
- Review proposed bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects and advise sponsoring agency regarding practical implementation.
- Work to coordinate pedestrian and bicycle planning with other jurisdictions.
- Receive input from the public regarding bicycle and pedestrian transportation, recreation, and education issues.
- Generally advise sponsoring agency on promotion of bicycling and walking as modes of transportation and recreational activities.

Additional responsibilities may include:

- Review and advise on all public works projects with regard to bicycle, pedestrian, and complete streets functionality.
- Establish design and maintenance standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the jurisdiction.
- Identify all barriers to walking and biking within the jurisdiction, including road hazards, dangerous barrier crossings, site access restrictions, and other circulation impediments.
- Develop a bicycle and/or pedestrian master plan in collaboration with the sponsoring agency.

¹ In part from: Todd Litman, et al., Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning Guide to Best Practices: Appendices, VTPI (www.vtppi.org), 2009, p. 5.

- Develop a bicycle/pedestrian education program in collaboration with other community organizations.
- Work to integrate bicycles into the local transit system.
- Coordination and/or promotion of events, such as a bike commute day.

How can a BPAC help your community?

Bicycle advisory committees (BACs), bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees (BPACs), bicycle commissions (BCs), and other variations of such advisory organizations are established as a means to ensure agencies consider the needs of people who bike or walk, and implement sensible policies to accommodate them. Without proper input, projects could go forward that lead to unsafe or undesirable conditions for people who bike or walk. A BPAC contributes to transparency and accountability in policy decisions. In many instances, BPACs can additionally ease the decision-making process by vetting and prioritizing potential projects and ensuring community support.

In June 2013, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission approved resolution 4108 regulating procedures for the submission of claims for funding for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The rules require counties and cities to have a Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) to review and prioritize TDA-Article 3 bicycle and pedestrian projects and to participate in the development and review of comprehensive bicycle plans.

How can your city fulfill the TDA-Article 3 BPAC requirement?

Resolution 4108 specifies that city BACs should be composed of at least three members who live or work in the city, are appointed by City Council, and are bicyclists and/or pedestrians. A city agency is permitted to apply for an exemption if they can show that a countywide BAC provides for expanded representation. A county BAC shall be composed of at least five members who live or work in the county and are appointed by the County Board of Supervisors or the Congestion Management Agency.