



# Marin County, Calif.

## PROFILE:

POPULATION: 250,725

MEDIAN INCOME: \$89,948

MEDIAN HOME VALUE: \$839,100

% W/ BACHELORS DEGREE: 31.8%

## STATISTICS:

→ Saw a 64% increase in biking mode share, a 21% increase in walking mode share, and a 4.7% reduction in driving under the NTPP. ([NTPP Final Report to Congress](#))

→ A half-cent sales tax was passed in 2004 with 71% support to raise approximately \$330 million over 20 years for transit, complete streets, and safe routes to school. ([MCBC](#))

## QUOTES:

*"(This project) has given opportunities for people to move safely through our community, away from traffic. Most important, it is providing commuters with a reliable, time-saving alternative that connects directly with our transit hubs."*

—[STEVE KINSEY, Marin County Board of Supervisors](#)

*"As we watch the population age, if we don't start to get on the ball with regards to planning...we're going to find ourselves at a disadvantage and we're not going to be able to meet the demands of the county."*

—[David Rzepinski, General Manager, Marin County Transit District](#)



Both photos are courtesy of David Hoffman, Marin County

## Concentrated Strategic Investment Delivers Results

Despite challenging topography with steep valleys and ridges, Marin County, Calif., has been doggedly working to expand and connect its network of pathways, bike lanes and sidewalks for more than a decade, and has great support from its residents for a continued transformation. In 2004, Marin County voters passed the Traffic Relief and Better Transportation Act — a half-cent sales tax that supports transit, complete streets, and Safe Routes to School. The measure passed with 71 percent support. With encouraging active transportation as an ongoing community goal, Marin was selected in 2005 as one of four regions participating in the federally funded Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program ([NTPP](#)), a mode-shift demonstration grant.

[WalkBikeMarin](#), the County initiative created to implement the NTPP, was able to leverage funds and utilize existing plans and a citizens' advisory committee process to identify high-impact projects building on the existing network. Despite a long-held commitment to biking and walking, many necessary larger infrastructure projects in Marin had remained previously unfunded by traditional grant sources. Dedicated pilot funds resulted in a deepened community commitment to closing these key gaps in Marin's non-motorized transportation system.

Highway 101 through Marin County is the [third most congested](#) transportation corridor in the San Francisco Bay Area, and [surveys](#) of [local residents](#) frequently identify transportation as a primary concern. While Marin County is one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, 7 percent of the [population](#) is still under the poverty level and the majority of the county's current job growth is in low-wage service industries. A commitment to building active transportation capacity promises to both improve congestion problems, and provide safe, healthy, and affordable transportation options for all Marin County residents. The pilot program has already demonstrated itself as a success, with initial results showing 64 percent increase in biking mode share, a 21 percent increase in walking

## MORE INFORMATION

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mode share, and a 4.7 percent reduction in driving. The reduction in automobile trips was the largest seen among the four pilot communities between 2007 and 2010.

Enthusiasm for infrastructure improvements is evident throughout the county. Hundreds of cyclists and walkers celebrated the long-awaited opening of the Cal Park Tunnel in December of 2010. The multi-use path will [share the tunnel with local commuter trains](#) when they start running. The facility connects the two major transit nodes of Marin County: the Larkspur ferry terminal to San Francisco, and the Bettini Transit Center in San Rafael. This project demonstrates the transformative impact that infrastructure improvements can have on the viability of walking and bicycling as transportation modes. A 30-minute on-road bicycle commute becomes an attractive, safe, and convenient 10-minute ride on a separated facility, opening up this option for a broad spectrum of travelers.

The Cal Park Tunnel is just one part of a 73-mile multiuse path that will ultimately connect communities from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to the San Francisco ferry terminal in Larkspur along the [SMART train](#) right of way. This [rail-with-trail project](#) will largely be constructed by the railroad as part of a new transportation vision for the North Bay area, connecting two counties with each other and the nearby metropolitan center. This transit and active transportation corridor will provide a healthy, green alternative to Highway 101, funded by a local sales tax revenue bond that passed in 2008 with a 70% majority. However, ambitious transformation and infrastructure investments do not come about easily—the first bond measure to support the project did not pass in 2006. Advancing the phasing of the construction for the multiuse path was a key part of the adapted ballot measure that won widespread public support.

Because much of the NTPP effort was focused on infrastructure projects, it's likely that the biggest gains for active transportation are yet to be realized in Marin. Marin's success is the result of persistence, building momentum, aiming high, and pounding pavement—a journey on foot or by bicycle writ large.