



## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

City of Billings & Yellowstone County  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 25, 2024 MEETING TIME: 11:30 am  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room of 2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N

DRAFT

- Call to order:** Nikki Zimmer, BPAC Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 11:30 am.
- Members present:** Kristi Drake, City; Anna O'Donnell, City; Jason Wood, County; Joan Schey, County; Stephanie Donovan, City.
- Others present:** Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner; members of the public as listed on the sign in sheet.

### Public Comment Period:

**a. Comments on items not on the agenda and request to add items to future agendas**

Anna O'Donnell, BPAC member, requested that the installation of crosswalks on Rimrock Road be added to future agendas. She also suggested collaborating on a few focused projects for Rimrock Rd to present to Public Works.

Kristi Drake, BPAC member, suggested adding the issue of blind spots on the Skyline Trail and the subsequent risks to trail users to future agendas. She also requested that the issue of "turn and hit" be included in the social media campaign.

Stephanie Donovan, BPAC member, requested adding the discussion of future funding for striping the Big Ditch Trail to future agendas.

**b. Online comments and comments received by the Active Transportation Planner –**  
None

**Motion. Approval of the meeting minutes of May 28, 2024:** Stephanie moved to accept the minutes. Anna seconded. All voted in favor.

### New Business:

**a. Presentation. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update. Mack Drzayich, Alta Planning + Design, Inc. presenting. (11:45 am-12:10 pm).**

See presentation slides at the end of the minutes for information.

Kristi Drake, BPAC member, noticed a discrepancy in the total miles of trails in the presentation, noting that the number seemed insufficient. Kristi also requested the cumulative total number of miles for all the trails in Billings. Elyse suggested that the

discrepancy might be because Mack's number only accounted for the 10-foot-wide shared use paths and not the 6-9-foot neighborhood trails. Elyse mentioned that she has the cumulative number for both shared use paths and neighborhood trails and can share this with Kristi. Mack said he would update the label to "shared use paths" instead of just "trails" to be more accurate.

Kristi asked if there is a cumulative number of miles for sidewalks and bikeways that Mack could share with her. Mack said he could provide the number for bikeways but not for sidewalks. Kristi suggested adding the cumulative number of bikeways to the slide.

Anna asked Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, about the online outreach plans for the Ped Bike Masterplan. Elyse explained that there will be an interactive map where citizens can provide their opinions and mark problem areas. This interactive map will be promoted through a press release, social media posts, and events like the pop-up protected bike lane on July 10th. Elyse said she would send the interactive map to BPAC when it's completed.

Kristi mentioned that Kristy Halderman, the new marketing and development manager at Billings TrailNet, handles their social media, email, newsletter, and publicity efforts. Kristy can assist with promoting the Ped Bike Masterplan and promotional material.

**b. Discuss ADA Concerns/Audit**

Kristi mentioned that several people have approached her about ADA concerns in Billings. She asked Elyse if the city has ever conducted a formal ADA audit and suggested that doing so could proactively address widespread issues.

Elyse checked with a colleague in Public Works, who confirmed that while the city has not conducted a formal ADA audit, they work to address these issues during construction projects. All new projects are built to ADA standards and road reconstructions involve bring ramps up to standard. These audits aim to identify and prioritize issues for both immediate fixes and long-term projects. Elyse noted that in the past, she organized an inclusive interdisciplinary walk audit with LIFTT (Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow) where they walked a specific route to look at ADA issues.

Elyse encouraged Kristi to share specific complaints with her so she can relay them to Public Works for immediate attention and potential changes. If there are small changes like adjusting where a push button is that can be handled by internal staff, those changes may be able to be made relatively quickly.

Anna inquired about collaborating with organizations like LIFTT and Healthy by Design to gather data on ADA issues. Elyse suggested starting with a few specific areas of concern and potentially involving the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in future planning in something like an ADA transition plan. Regarding funding for a potential ADA transition plan, Elyse explained that the MPO has already budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year and is short by \$200,000, especially with other metropolitan planning organizations coming in Montana. Therefore, there will not be funding available for this initiative in the current year, but it could potentially be considered for next year. Kristi requested that this topic be reconsidered for the following fiscal year.

**c. Discuss move and August meeting**

Elyse noted that Planning will be moving out of the Miller Building and asked BPAC their thoughts on cancelling the August meeting due to the move and the desire to give

members a break at the end of the summer. Anna moved to cancel the August meeting. Jason Wood, BPAC member, Seconded it. All voted in favor.

### **Old Business:**

#### **a. Tree grant**

- a. Kristi recommended planting trees on 6th Ave. N where the plan is to widen the sidewalk into a trail along.
- b. Jason suggested placing trees near and on Hallowell and Jackson streets.
- c. Stephanie proposed planting trees on the King Ave S trail near Sams Club.
- d. Nikki recommended planting trees in areas near Colson Park.
- e. Stephanie and Jason recommended planting trees on the EBUD bike lanes on 2nd and 3rd St.
- f. Jason suggested placing trees near Garden and 27<sup>th</sup>.

Stephanie recommended prioritizing areas that overlap with the master plan, spines, or any short-term opportunistic spots. Elyse will make the final selection.

#### **b. Crash mapping**

BPAC members categorized May crashes which Emma Hardy, Transportation Planning Intern, will map later. Kristi requested adding a new category, "turn and hit," to the crash data map. Elyse noted that she will discuss with Emma to determine the feasibility of modifying the categories.

#### **c. Active transportation planner report**

Elyse reminded the committee about the upcoming Ped-Bike master plan. She also noted that the Commuter Challenge will conclude this month. Additionally, she informed the committee that this week, as part of the Commuter Challenge, there will be a scavenger hunt for bike water bottle cages.

Elyse updated the committee that the Mobilize the Magic City project's art installations are nearing completion. So far, three of the art pieces along the neighborhood bikeway have been installed and have been well received.

Elyse said she's has received further updates on the design of the trails that will connect Rose Park Elementary to Rose Park.

Elyse updated the committee that the public comment period for The West End Neighborhood plan is still open and is seeking a few more comments. Meanwhile, the Heights Neighborhood plan has just started, and they are in the process of establishing a steering committee. Additionally, preparations are being made for the Skyway Drive land use and utility study.

**Kristi moved to adjourn; Anna seconded. All voted in favor.**

BPAC Meeting  
June 25, 2024

Printed Name	Email/Address
Tony Chase	anthony.chase@riverstonehealth.org

# Billings Area *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update*



City Council Update | June 17, 2024



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# DISCLAIMER

*This is a planning level document only. It is not intended to obligate or mandate development of the projects in the plan or obligate any jurisdiction to implement any or the entire document. In addition, this document does not assume prioritization or commitment of any local funds unless authorized by local government agency.*

*This document outlines project recommendations as of the adoption date. However, the City of Billings is considering conducting a system-wide plan which, when completed, may contradict some of the recommendations in the Billings Area Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. If the new, system-wide plan contradicts this plan, the new plan will take precedence. If this is the case, the Billings Area Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan may be edited to eliminate contradictions between the two plans.*

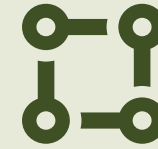
## VISION

*The Billings community envisions a safe, convenient, and connected active transportation network consisting of bikeways, trails, and sidewalks that serve people of all ages and abilities and trips of all purposes, improving the economic, physical, and mental health of the community and its citizens.*



# GOALS OF THE PLAN

*The Billings Area pedestrian and bicycle system should...*



## Make useful connections

- To transit
- To schools
- To commercial and civic destinations
- To parks, trailheads, destination trails (e.g., Marathon Loop), and recreation areas
- Close gaps between facilities



## Serve a wide variety of people

- The overall network should include a connected all-ages-and-abilities network that everyone from young children to seniors feel comfortable and safe using
- Infrastructure should be clean, easy to understand, and accessible (ADA & PROWAG compliance)
- The system should benefit both recreational and commuter/utility trips
- Emphasis should be placed on demographics that rely on active transportation for their daily needs



## Increase the safety and health of the community

- The system should enable physical activity as part of everyday life
- Improvements should contribute to a reduction in the number of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians and aim to make streets safer for all roadway users
- The system should increase awareness and visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists
- The system should contribute to improved air quality and a healthier environment



## Enable efficient and sustainable implementation

- Policies and initiatives should allow the City and MPO to build the pedestrian/bicycle network at a faster rate than in previous years
- The network should be expanded in a way that can be successfully maintained based on local resources

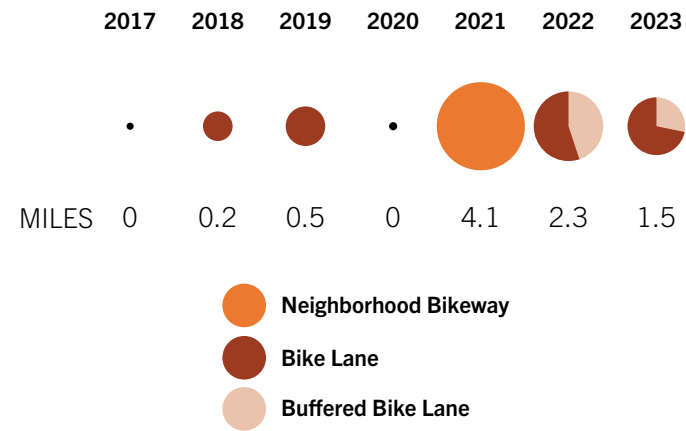


## Expand transportation choices

- The system should reduce reliance on motor vehicles
- The system should contribute to an increase in walking and bicycling mode share

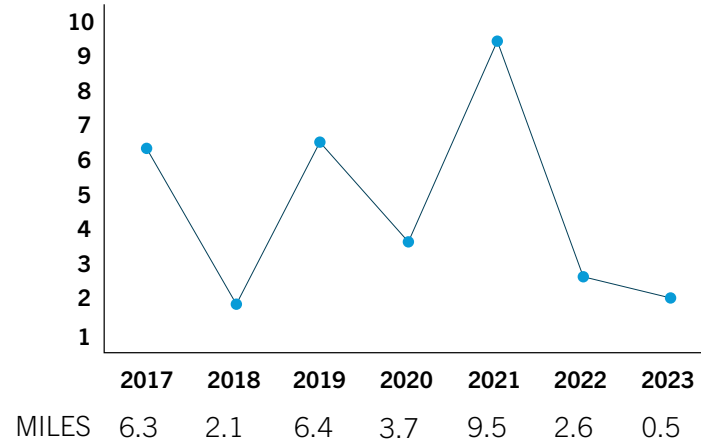
# MILEAGE BUILT SINCE 2017

## Bikeways



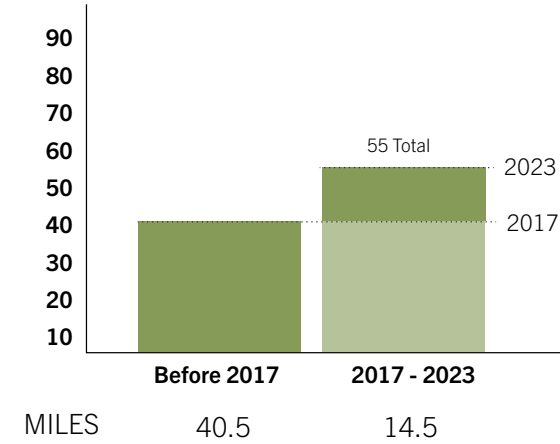
New Bikeway Miles: **8.6**

## Sidewalks



New Sidewalk Miles: **33**

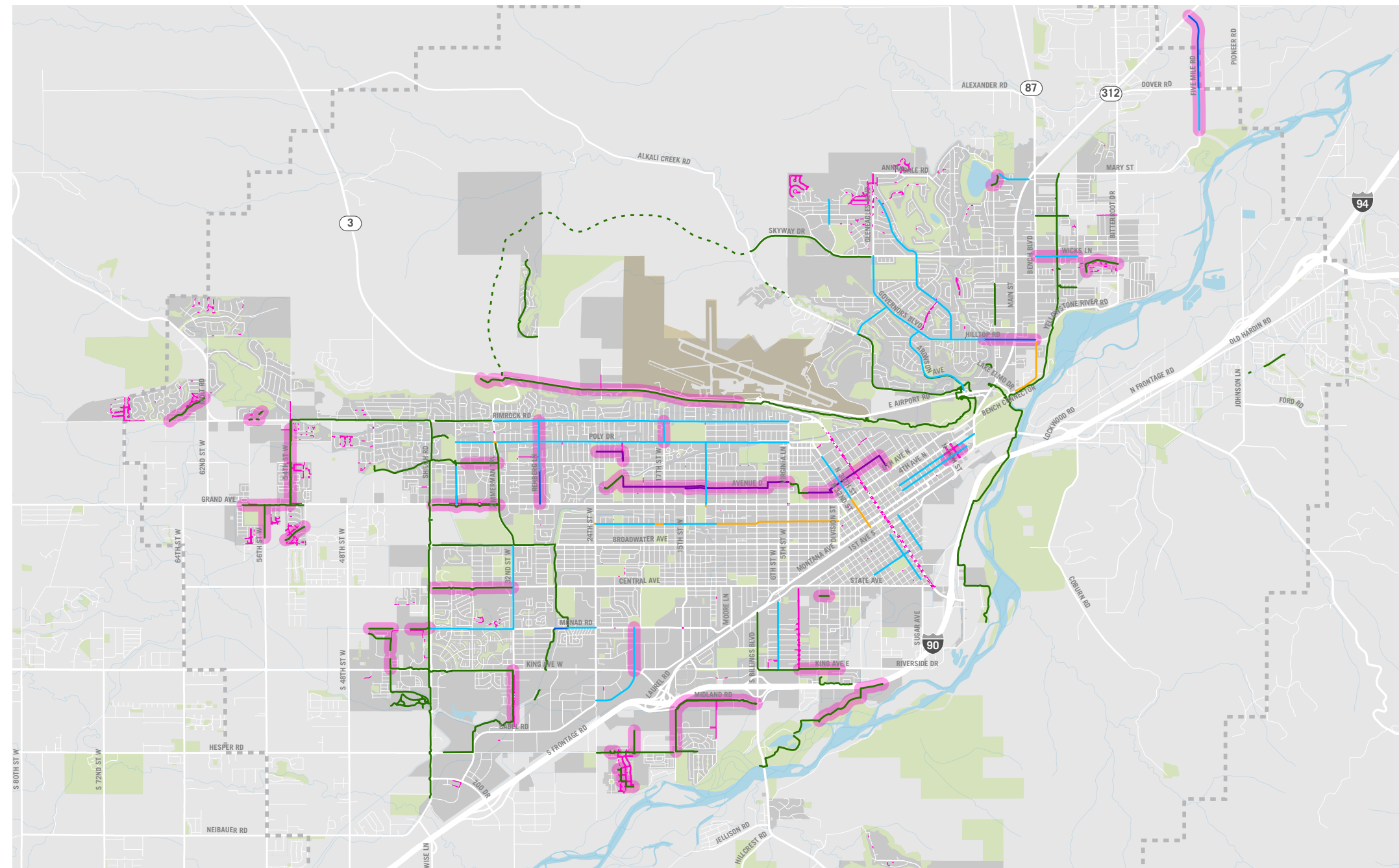
## Trails



New Shared Use Path Miles: **14.5**

PROGRESS REPORT

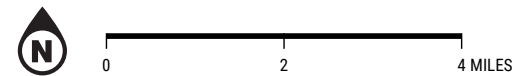
# LOCATIONS OF RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS



## RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS

### BILLINGS AREA PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

This map highlights Pedestrian and bicycle projects that have been completed since the adoption of the 2017 Billings Area Bikeway and Trails Master Plan



#### EXISTING FACILITIES

- Shared Use Path
- Buffered Bike Lane
- Bike Lane
- Neighborhood Bikeway
- Shared Lane Marking
- - - Shared Use Path (in progress)
- Built Since 2017
- Sidewalks completed since 2017
- Billings-Yellowstone Co MPO Boundary
- City of Billings Boundary

## SOME LESSONS LEARNED

- » Funding and staff capacity continue to be limiting factors
- » The MPO has shown it can be successful in obtaining external funding
- » The majority of completed projects came from synergies with other roadway construction and maintenance projects led by Public Works
  - Implementation has been opportunistic as opposed to following 2017 priority list
  - The 2024 plan should more closely consider committed projects (e.g., in the CIP) when determining priority projects
- » Public Works is doing a good job of referencing the Bikeways & Trails Master Plan to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian improvements are included when roadways are reconstructed or repaved
  - But funding for maintenance is not keeping up with demand created by new facilities

COMMUNITY INPUT

# OUTREACH EFFORTS

- » November 2023 to January 2024
- » Website
- » Online survey
- » Online comment map
- » In-person open house

## PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW



**201**  
survey responses



**189**  
map comments

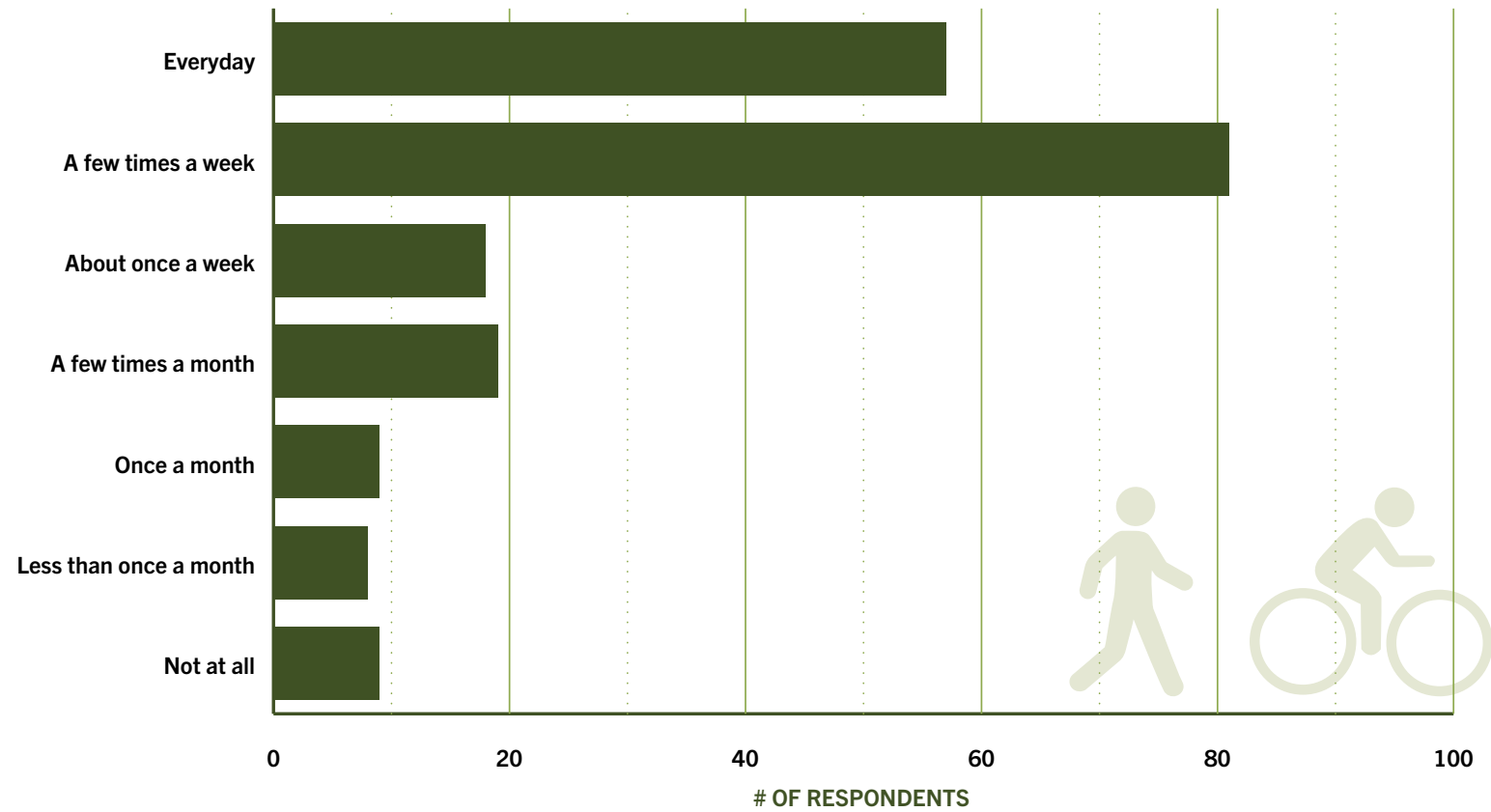


**74**  
event attendees

# WHO WE HEARD FROM

» People who walk or bike for recreation on a regular basis

*On average, how often do you walk or bike for recreation?*

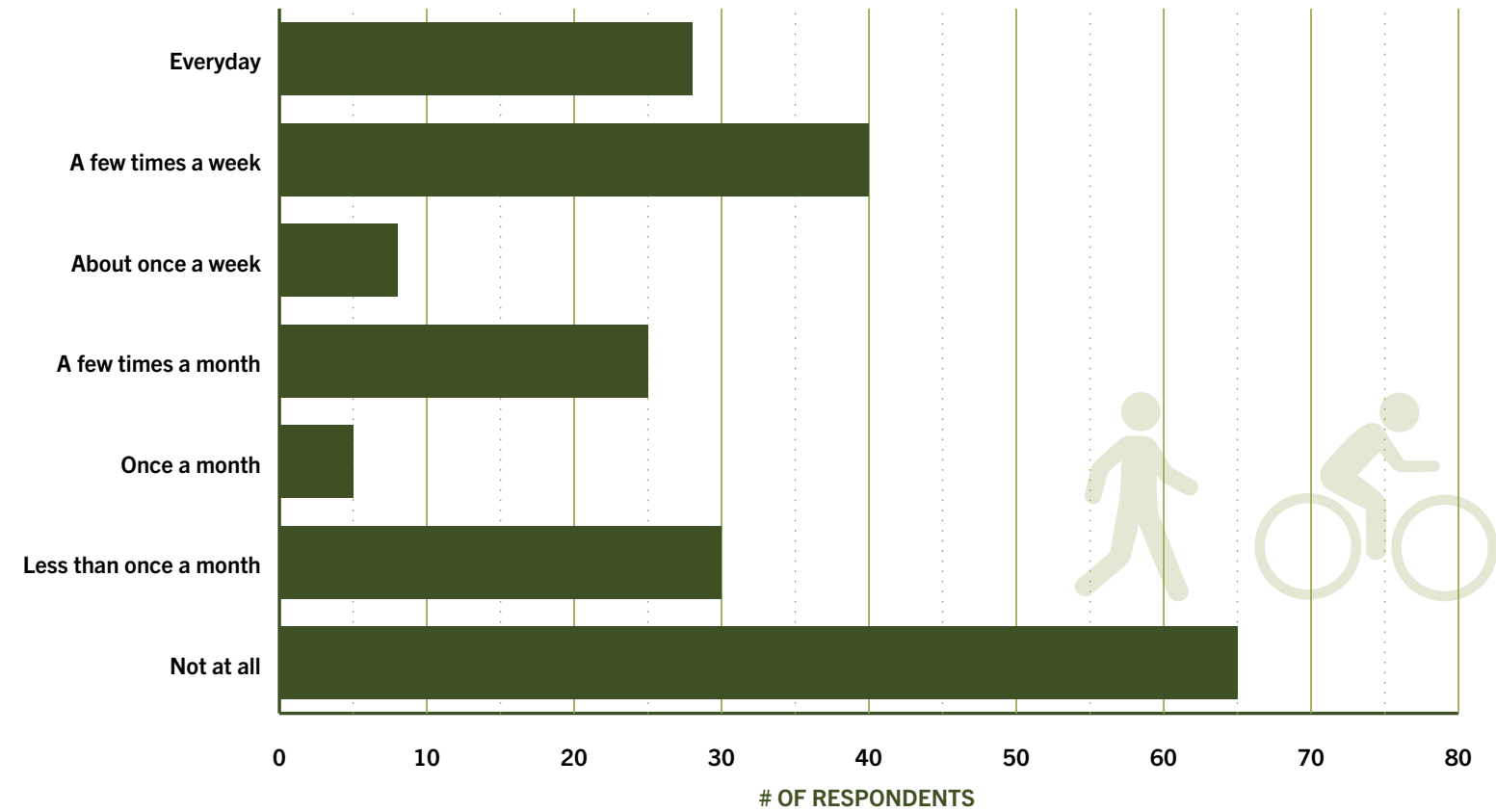


COMMUNITY INPUT

# WHO WE HEARD FROM

- » People who walk or bike for recreation on a regular basis
- » Some of them walk or bike for transportation, but many of them don't

*On average, how often do you walk or bike for transportation, including to access transit?*

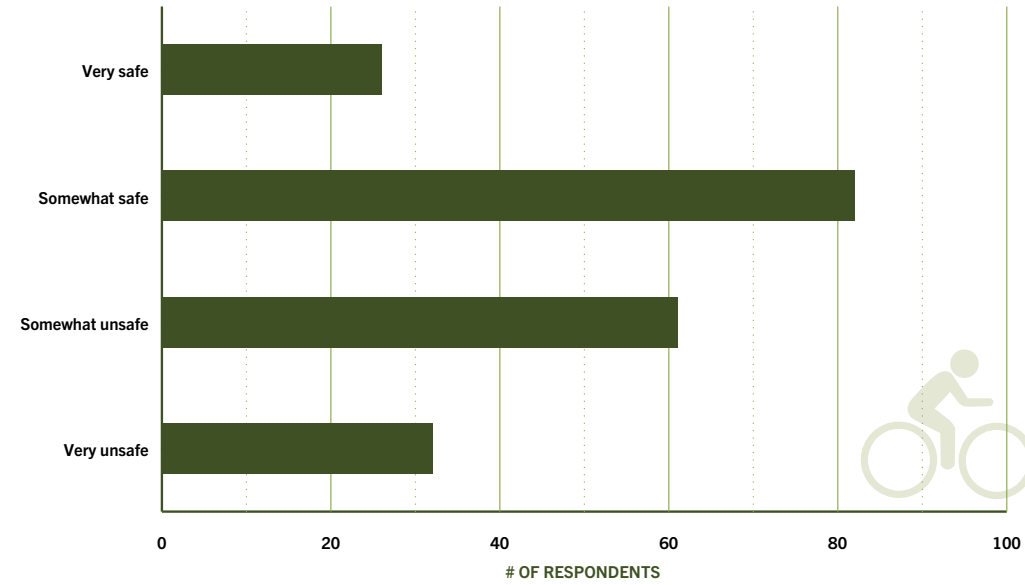


COMMUNITY INPUT

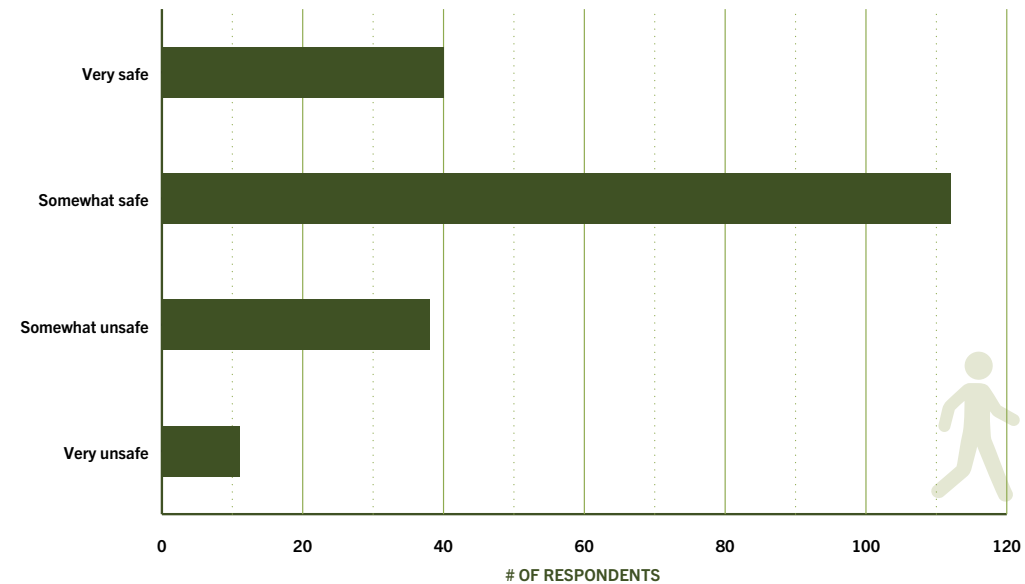
# WHO WE HEARD FROM

- » People who walk or bike for recreation on a regular basis
- » Some of them walk or bike for transportation, but many of them don't
- » Mostly people who feel walking and biking in Billings is safe, but several who think it is unsafe

*In general, how safe do you feel when biking in Billings?*



*In general, how safe do you feel when walking in Billings?*

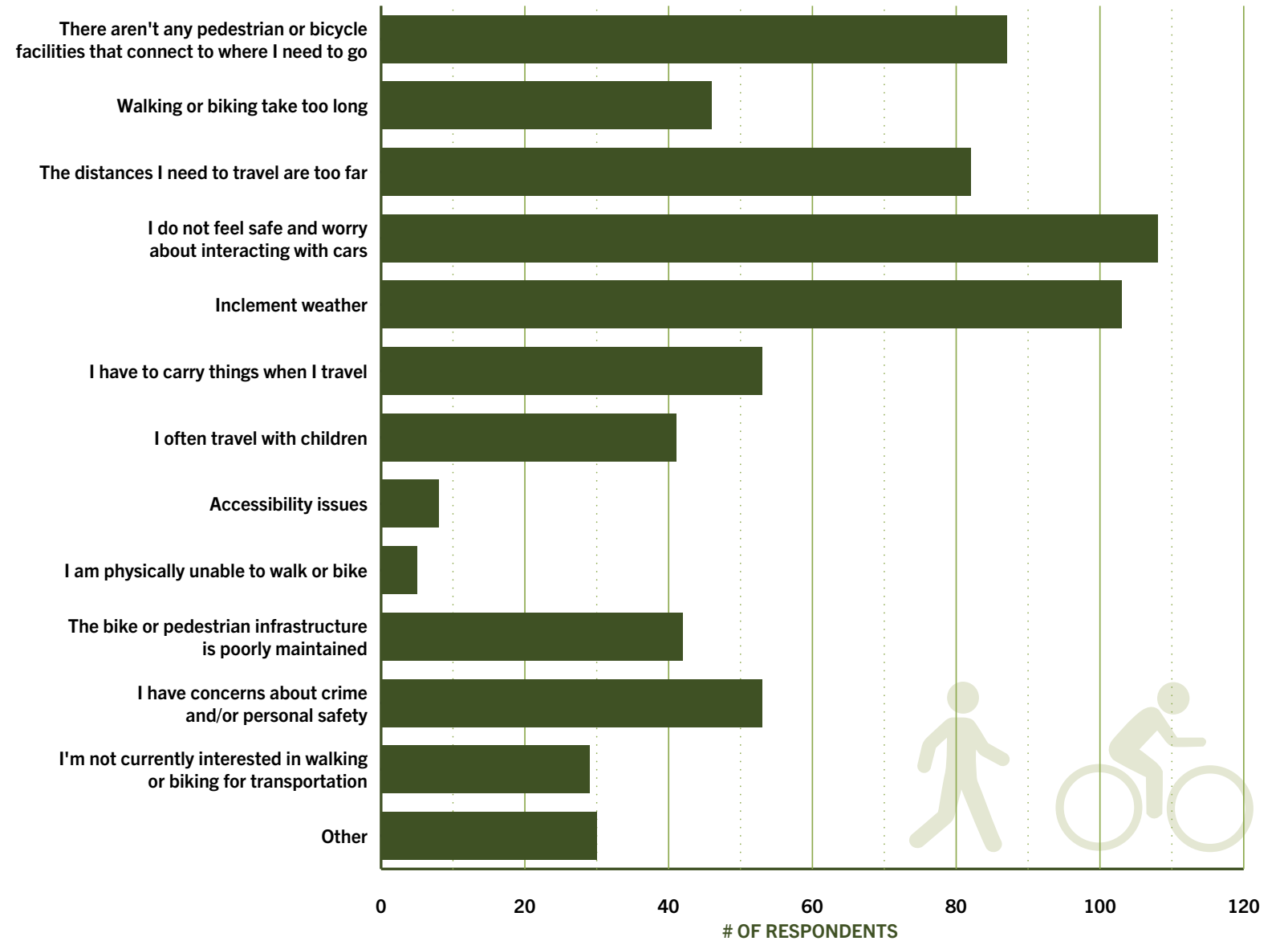


COMMUNITY INPUT

# SOME THINGS WE HEARD

» Exposure to cars, inclement weather, lack of connectivity, and travel distances being too far are the biggest obstacles to walking/biking

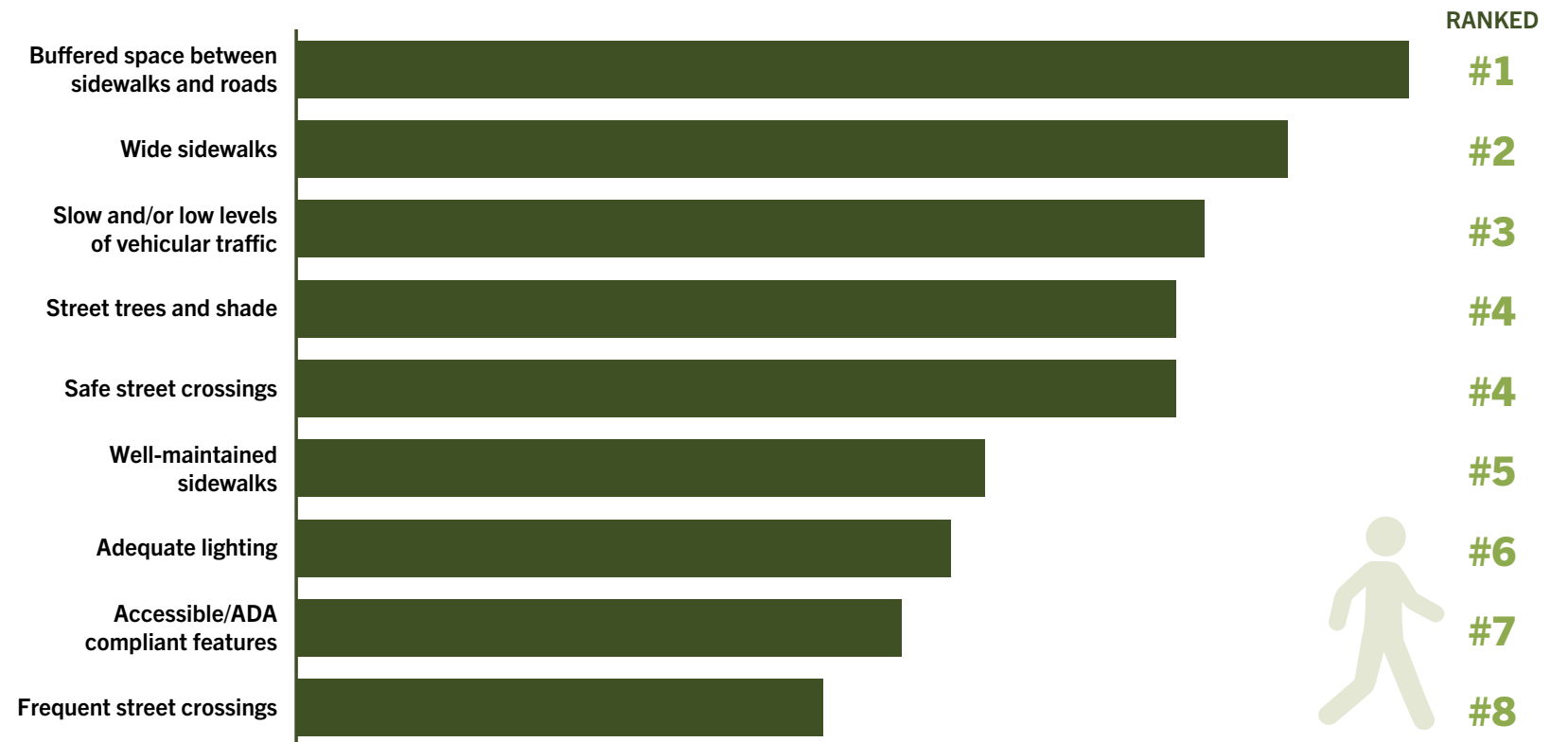
*What are some things that prevent you from walking or biking more often?*



# SOME THINGS WE HEARD

- » Exposure to cars, inclement weather, lack of connectivity, and travel distances to destinations being too far are the biggest obstacles to walking/biking
- » Pedestrians would prioritize separation from cars, wider sidewalks, and low traffic environments

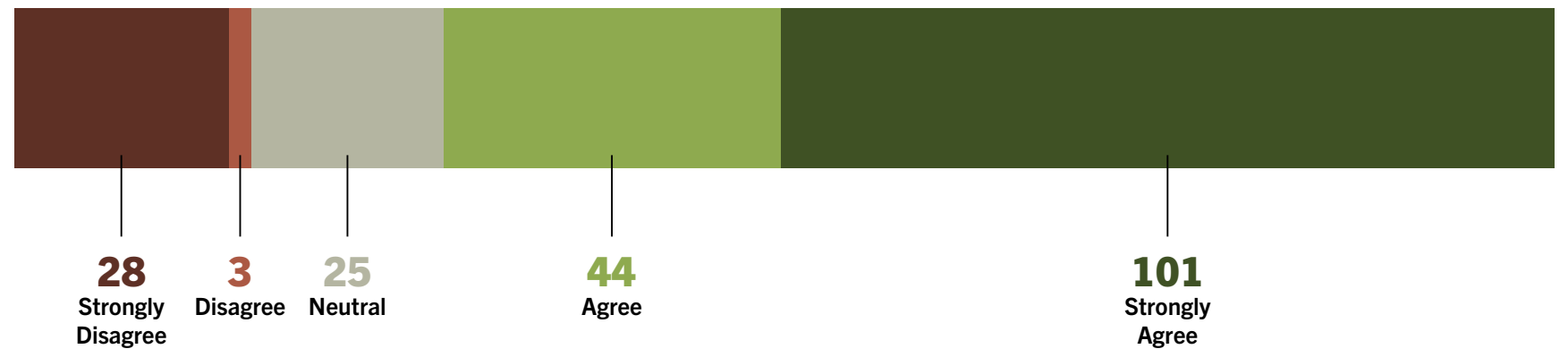
What is most important to you for a comfortable walking experience? (Ranking question)



## SOME THINGS WE HEARD

- » Exposure to cars, inclement weather, lack of connectivity, and travel distances to destinations being too far are the biggest obstacles to walking/biking
- » Pedestrians would prioritize separation from cars, wider sidewalks, and low traffic environments
- » About 70% of respondents would like to dedicate more investment dollars towards walking and biking

*I would like to dedicate more investment dollars towards bicycle or pedestrian facilities such as walkways, paved pathways, restrooms, wayfinding signage, etc.*



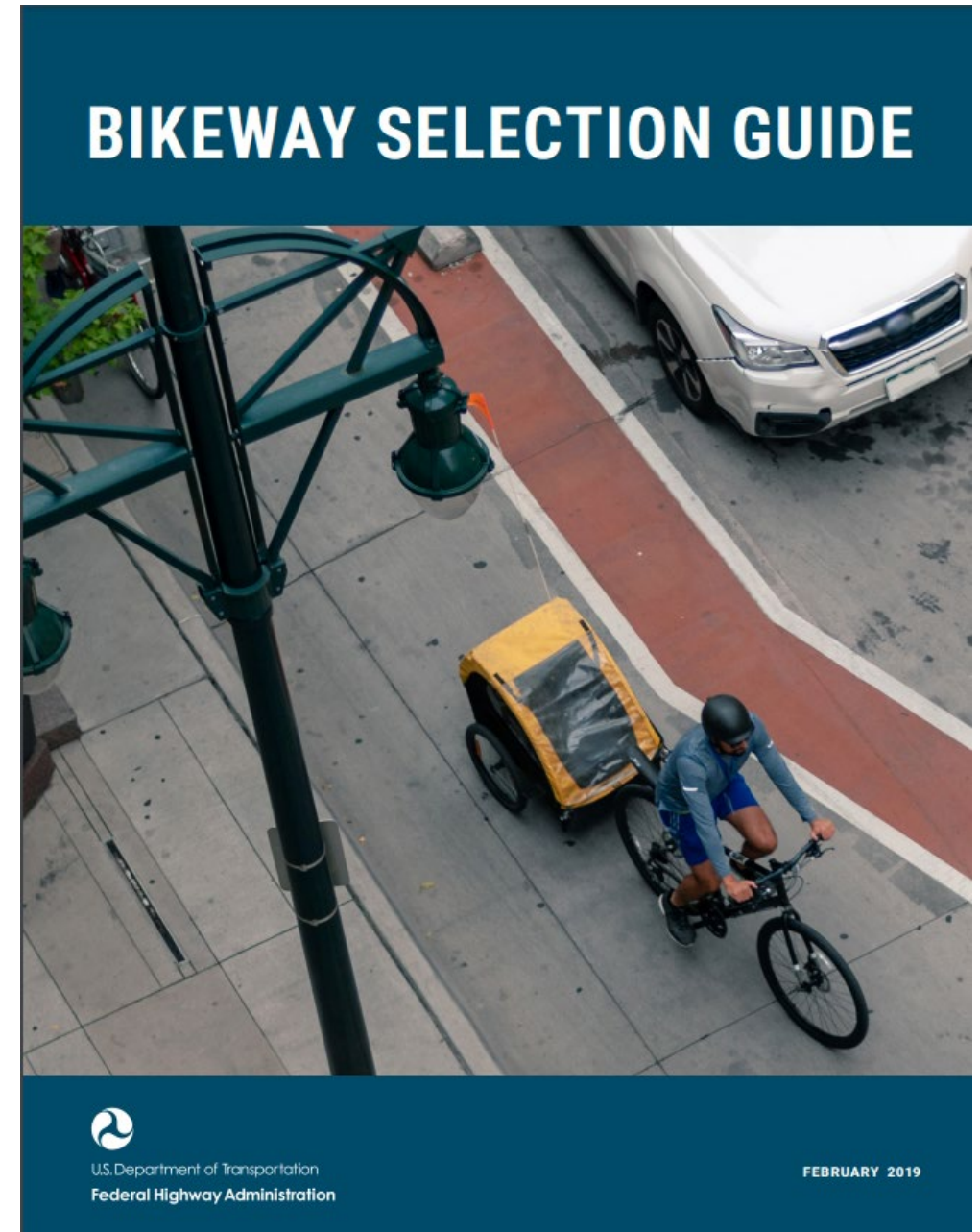
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NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

# FHWA APPROACH

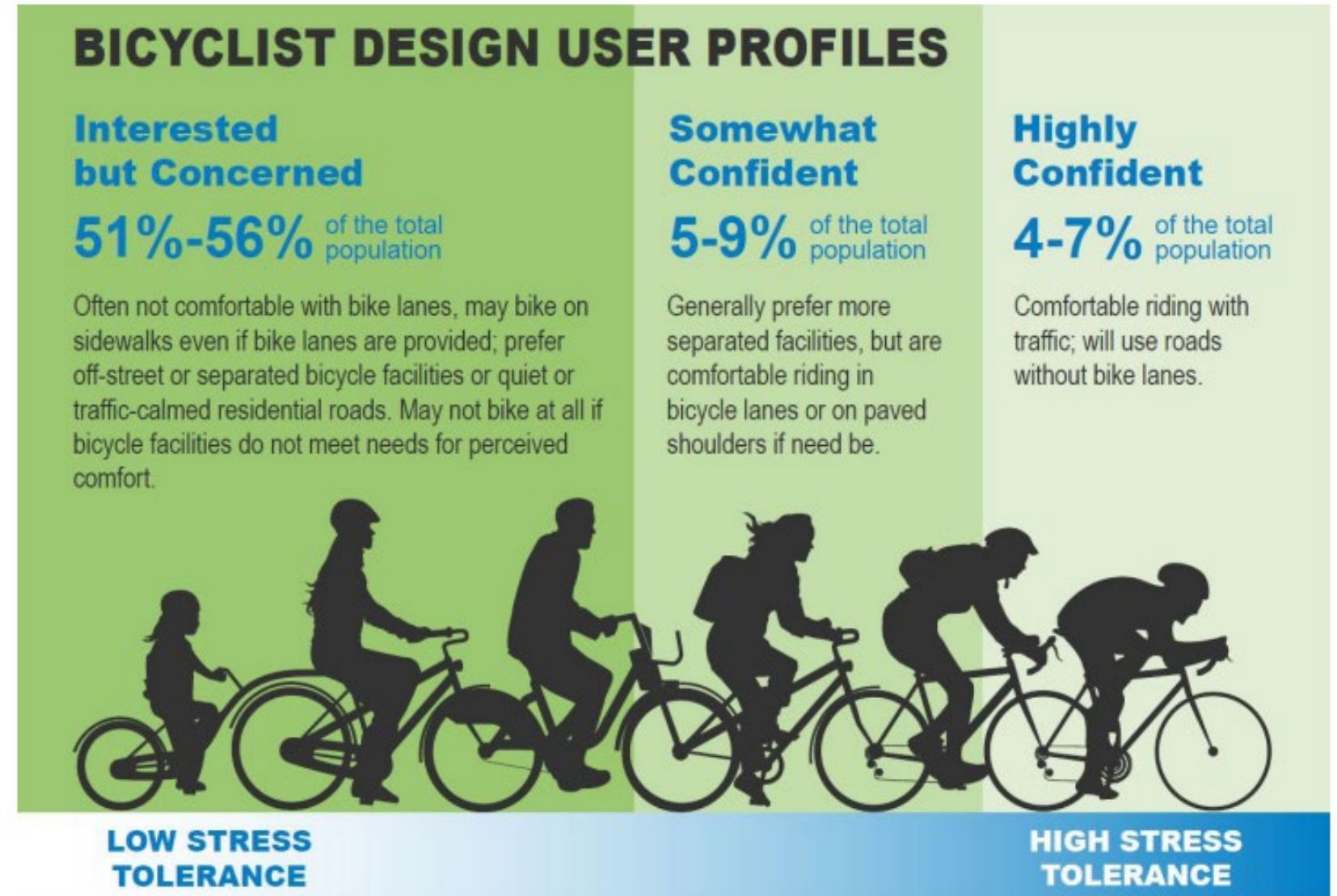
» FHWA Bikeway Selection Guide (2019)

- Target design user & the needs and preferences of varying design users
- Network design approach
- Case-by-case guidance for selecting the appropriate facility type



# FHWA APPROACH

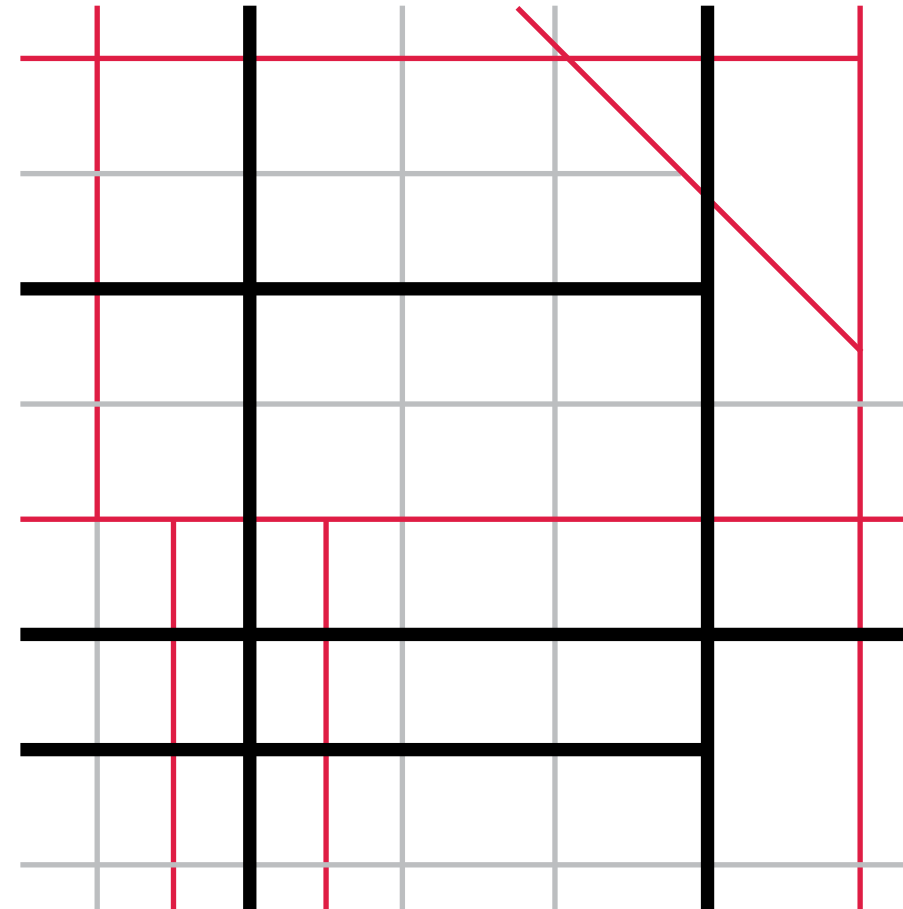
- » The majority of existing and potential cyclists have limited tolerance for exposure to motor vehicle traffic; and if they perceive that their exposure is too high, they'll choose not to ride a bike
- » Designing for the “interested but concerned” in every scenario is likely not feasible



Note: the percentages above reflect only adults who have stated an interest in bicycling.







## CREATING A “SPINE” NETWORK

- » Create a **high-comfort** network that creates the most important connections (black)
  - “Interested but concerned” group is the target user
  - “high-comfort” implies separation from motor vehicle traffic or mixed traffic on quiet neighborhood streets
  - Typically prioritized before other connections, but may require more effort and resources
- » Augment with **supplemental** bikeways that make additional connections (red)
  - Supports “highly confident” cyclists and some “somewhat confident” cyclists
  - “Supplemental bikeways” primarily consist of bike lanes and shoulders
  - These can be improved later through traffic calming or enhanced separation



**NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS**

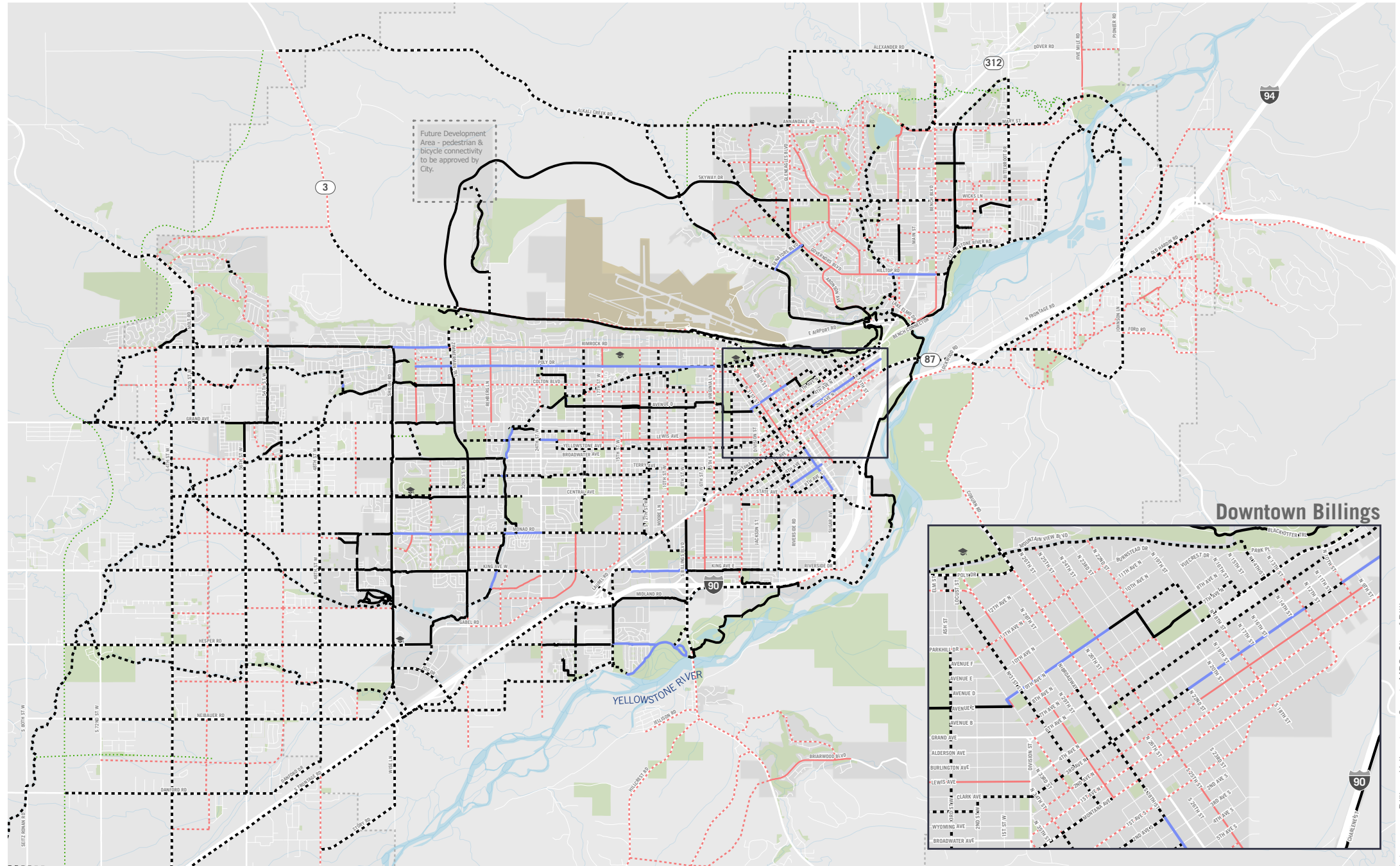
# DRAFT NETWORK

-  High Comfort: Existing, to remain
-  High Comfort: Existing, future improvement
-  High Comfort: New connection
-  Supplemental: Existing, to remain
-  Supplemental: New connection
-  High Comfort: Future concept

**Notes:**

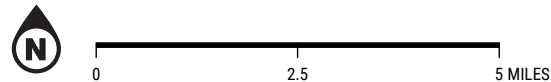
1. Route alignments and facility types are subject to change pending further study and public input process.
2. "High-comfort" facility types vary depending on context, but imply physical separation from motor vehicle traffic OR a low-speed, low-volume mixed traffic environment.

3. For "supplemental" routes, high-comfort facilities should always be considered and studied for feasibility.









## RECOMMENDED NETWORK (DRAFT)

### BILLINGS AREA PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE MASTER PLAN



**Notes:**

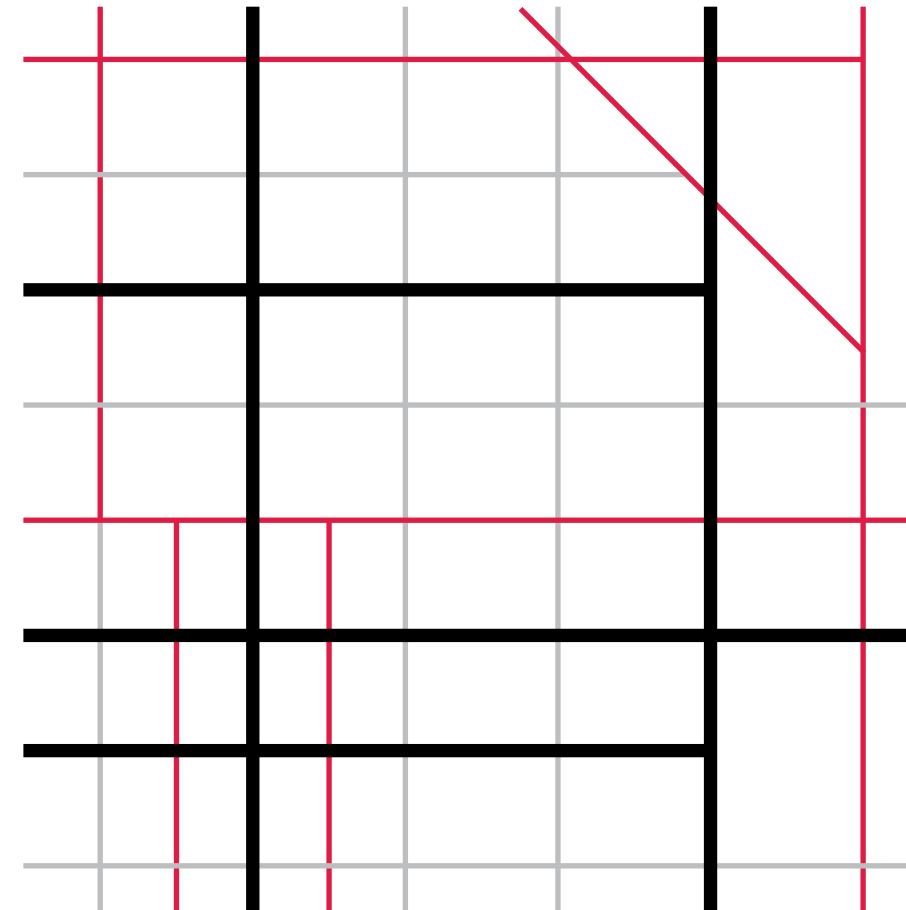
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-  High Comfort: Existing, to remain
-  High Comfort: Existing, future improvement
-  High Comfort: New connection
-  Supplemental: Existing, to remain
-  Supplemental: New connection
-  High Comfort: Future concept

## WHY THIS APPROACH?

- » Gives Public Works more flexibility to assess each corridor for feasibility and implement the most appropriate facility type on a case-by-case basis
- » Helps the City and County simplify and focus on the most important connections while also making other connections as opportunities arise
- » Achieves the goal of creating a network for people of all ages and abilities while recognizing that it's not feasible for all routes to be low-stress

**High Comfort** | **Supplemental**



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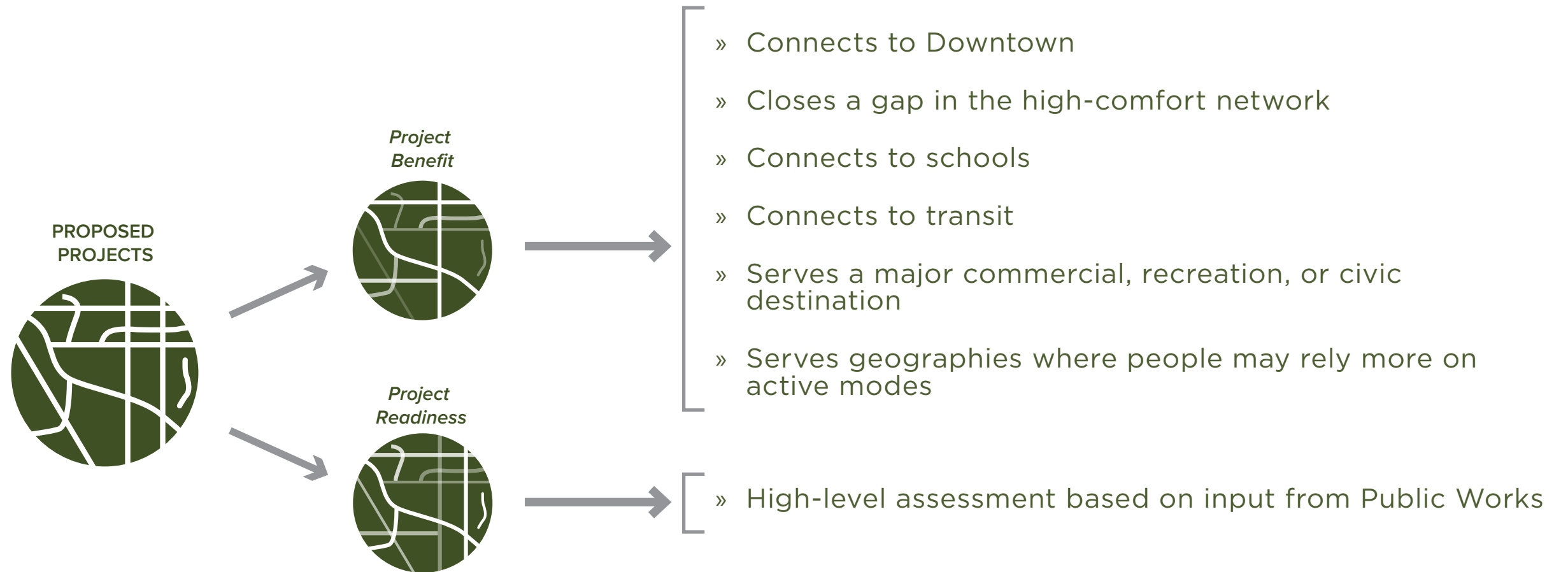
**NEXT STEPS**

# PUBLIC FEEDBACK

- » Online outreach: June 26 - July 24
- » Pop-up event & demonstration project: July 10
- » Solicit feedback on the recommended network

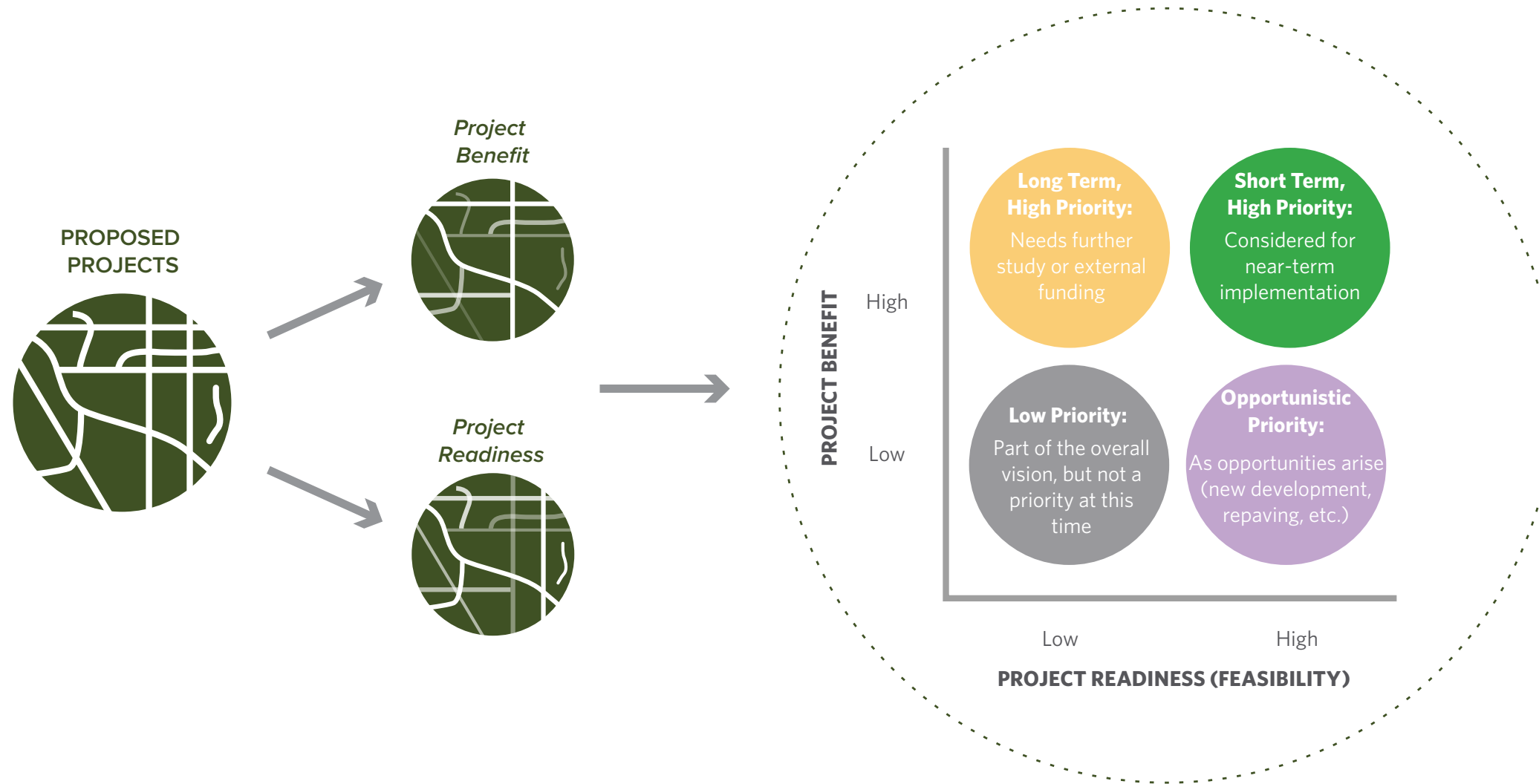
NEXT STEPS

# PRIORITIZE RECOMMENDED PROJECTS



NEXT STEPS

# PRIORITIZE RECOMMENDED PROJECTS



NEXT STEPS

# PRIORITIZE RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

1. **Short term, high priority:** scores high on project value and high on project readiness

- First on the list to implement
- Ready for design or implementation based on available funding

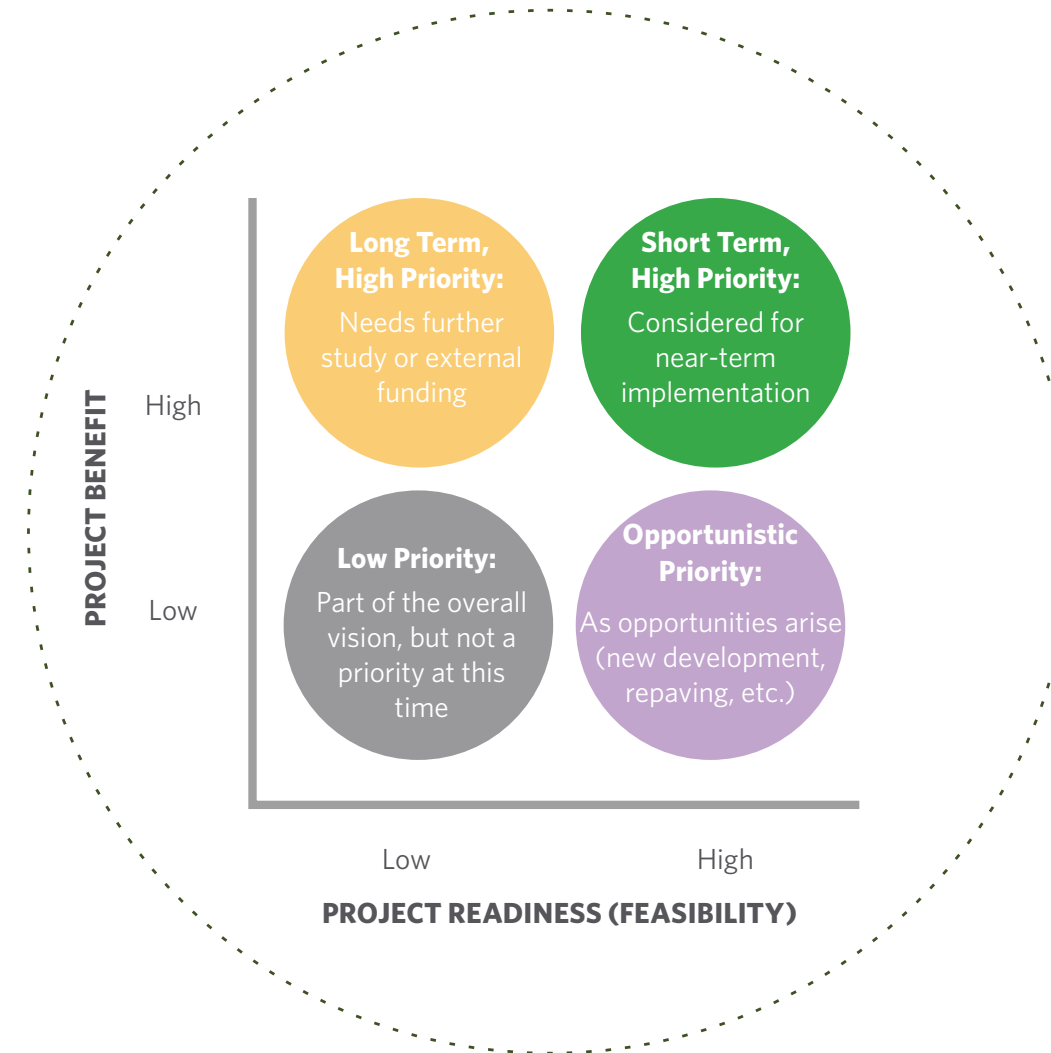
2. **Long term, high priority:** scores high on project value but low on project readiness

- Priority for further study to determine feasibility, constraints, and cost
- Likely requires external funding source

3. **Opportunistic priority:** scores low on project value, but high on project readiness

- May become a priority if an opportunity arises, such as redevelopment or pavement preservation projects

4. **Low priority:** scores low on project value and low on project readiness



NEXT STEPS

# ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE

