

# Billings Area *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update*



City Council | March 3, 2025



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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.*

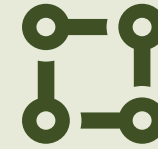
## VISION

*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

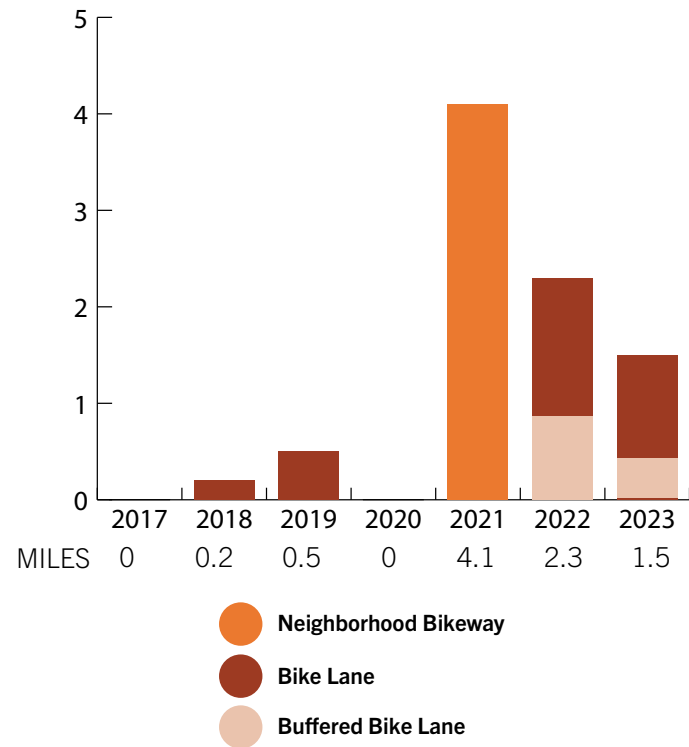


## Expand transportation choices

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

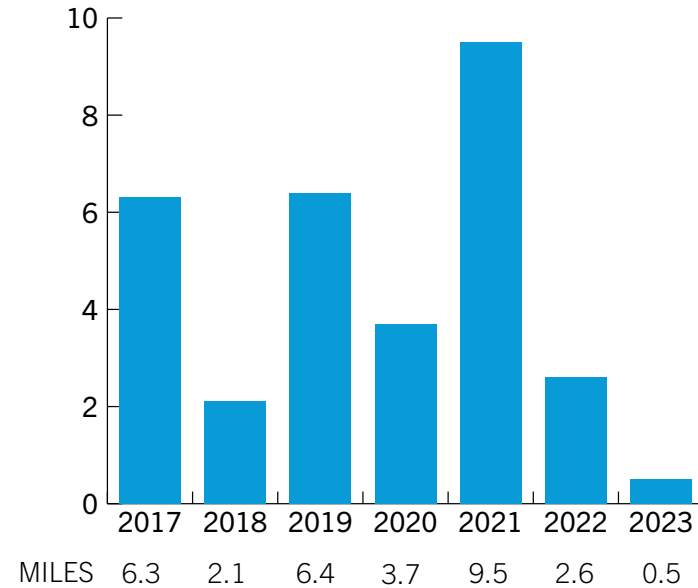
# MILEAGE BUILT SINCE 2017

## Bikeways



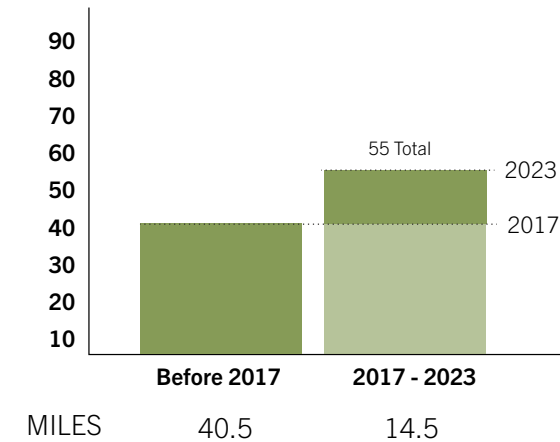
New Bikeway Miles: **8.6**

## Sidewalks



New Sidewalk Miles: **33**

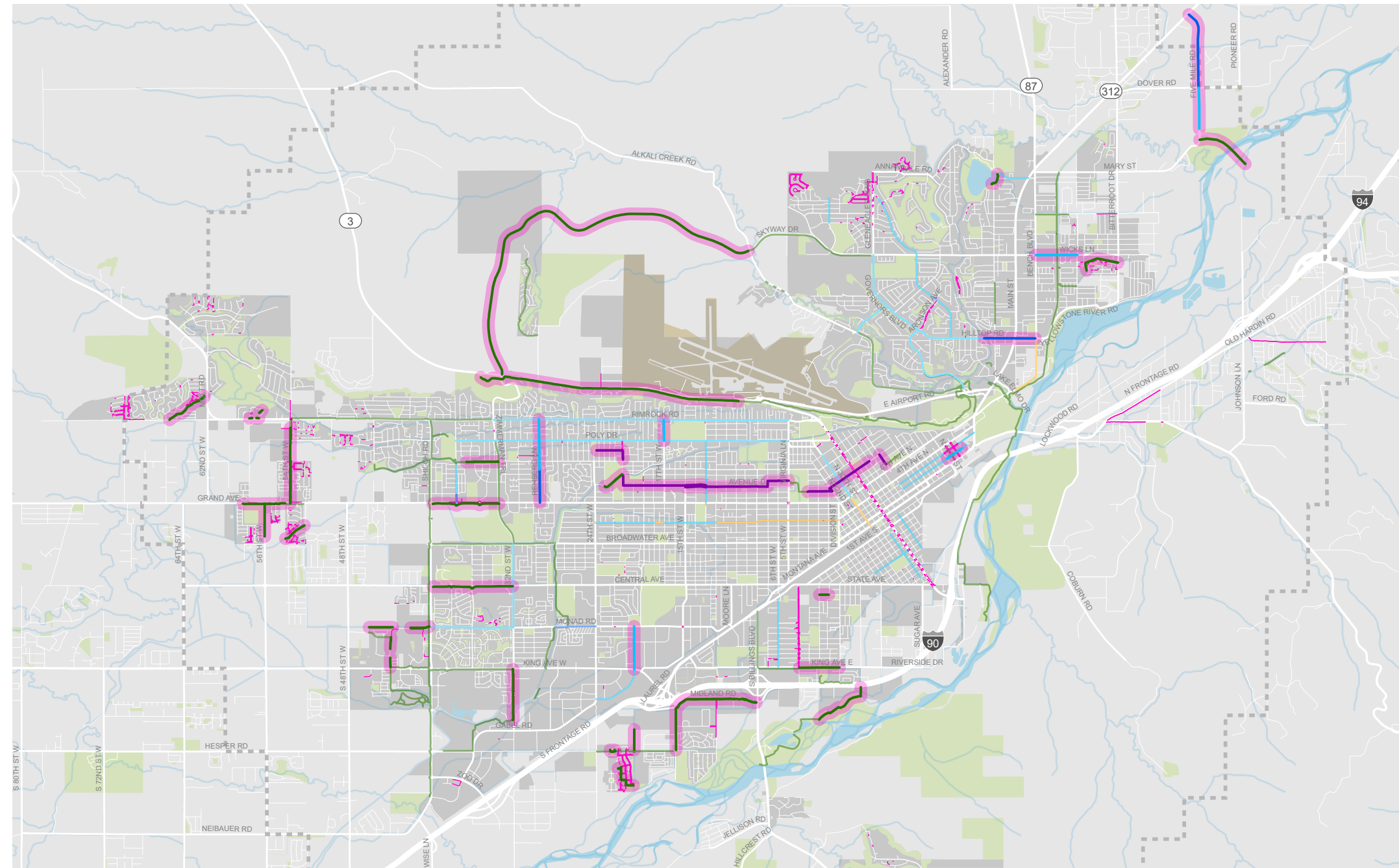
## Trails



New Shared Use Path Miles: **14.5**

PROGRESS REPORT

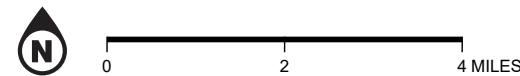
# LOCATIONS OF RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS



## PROJECTS COMPLETED SINCE 2017

### 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

Data source: Billings-Yellowstone County MPO, City of Billings

## 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 2025 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

# OUTREACH EFFORTS

## Phase I

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



## Phase II

- » July 2024
- » Website
- » Online comment map
- » Poly Drive pop-up event near Veteran's Park
- » Table at Strawberry Fest



# ONLINE COMMENT MAP

**Proposed Transportation Network**

**Pins:**

Choose your pin by selecting the pin marker icon on left hand side of the map. Click on the area of the map you wish to make a comment on and the pin will be automatically dropped in the desired spot, and leave us a comment about connections you may or may not agree with, connections we are missing, or a general comment on the proposed network.

**Routes:**

A route can be create by selecting the polyline tool icon on the left hand side of the map. Place your cursor on the map in the desired location and click on your initial starting point. Continue clicking on your desired path. Once you have drawn your line, drag your cursor to the polygon icon (the same icon you selected to begin your route) and click the finish button. You can also cancel the route or delete the last point you made and start over if you make a mistake.

- Supplemental Existing
- High Comfort Existing
- High Comfort Planned
- Supplemental Planned

NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

# PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

» Shared use paths & other high comfort routes benefit pedestrians

» Guidance for safe pedestrian crossings based on roadway context (FHWA)

» Previous efforts that identify specific pedestrian projects or policies:

- Safe Routes to School (SRTS), Phase I and II
- City of Billings Complete Streets policy
- City of Billings subdivision regulations

» Future City of Billings Transportation Master Plan

Roadway Configuration	Posted Speed Limit and AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic)								
	Vehicle AADT <9,000			Vehicle AADT 9,000–15,000			Vehicle AADT >15,000		
	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph	≤30 mph	35 mph	≥40 mph
<b>2 lanes</b> (1 lane in each direction)	① 2 4 5 6	① 5 6 7 9	① 5 6 7 9	① 4 5 6 7 9	① 5 6 7 9	① 5 6 7 9	① 4 5 6 7 9	① 5 6 7 9	① 5 6 9
<b>3 lanes with raised median</b> (1 lane in each direction)	① 2 3 4 5	① ③ 5 7 9	① ③ 5 7 9	① 3 4 5 7 9	① ③ 5 7 9	① ③ 5 7 9	① ③ 4 5 7 9	① ③ 5 7 9	① ③ 5 9
<b>3 lanes w/o raised median</b> (1 lane in each direction with a two-way left-turn lane)	① 2 3 4 5 6 7 9	① ③ 5 6 7 9	① ③ 5 6 7 9	① 3 4 5 6 7 9	① ③ 5 6 7 9	① ③ 5 6 7 9	① ③ 4 5 6 7 9	① ③ 5 6 9	① ③ 5 6 9
<b>4+ lanes with raised median</b> (2 or more lanes in each direction)	① ③ 5 7 8 9	① ③ 5 7 8 9	① ③ 5 8 9	① ③ 5 7 8 9	① ③ 5 7 8 9	① ③ 5 8 9	① ③ 5 7 8 9	① ③ 5 8 9	① ③ 5 8 9
<b>4+ lanes w/o raised median</b> (2 or more lanes in each direction)	① ③ 5 6 7 8 9	① ③ 5 6 7 8 9	① ③ 5 6 8 9	① ③ 5 6 7 8 9	① ③ 5 6 7 8 9	① ③ 5 6 8 9	① ③ 5 6 7 8 9	① ③ 5 6 8 9	① ③ 5 6 8 9

Given the set of conditions in a cell,

# Signifies that the countermeasure is a candidate treatment at a marked uncontrolled crossing location.

● Signifies that the countermeasure should always be considered, but not mandated or required, based upon engineering judgment at a marked uncontrolled crossing location.

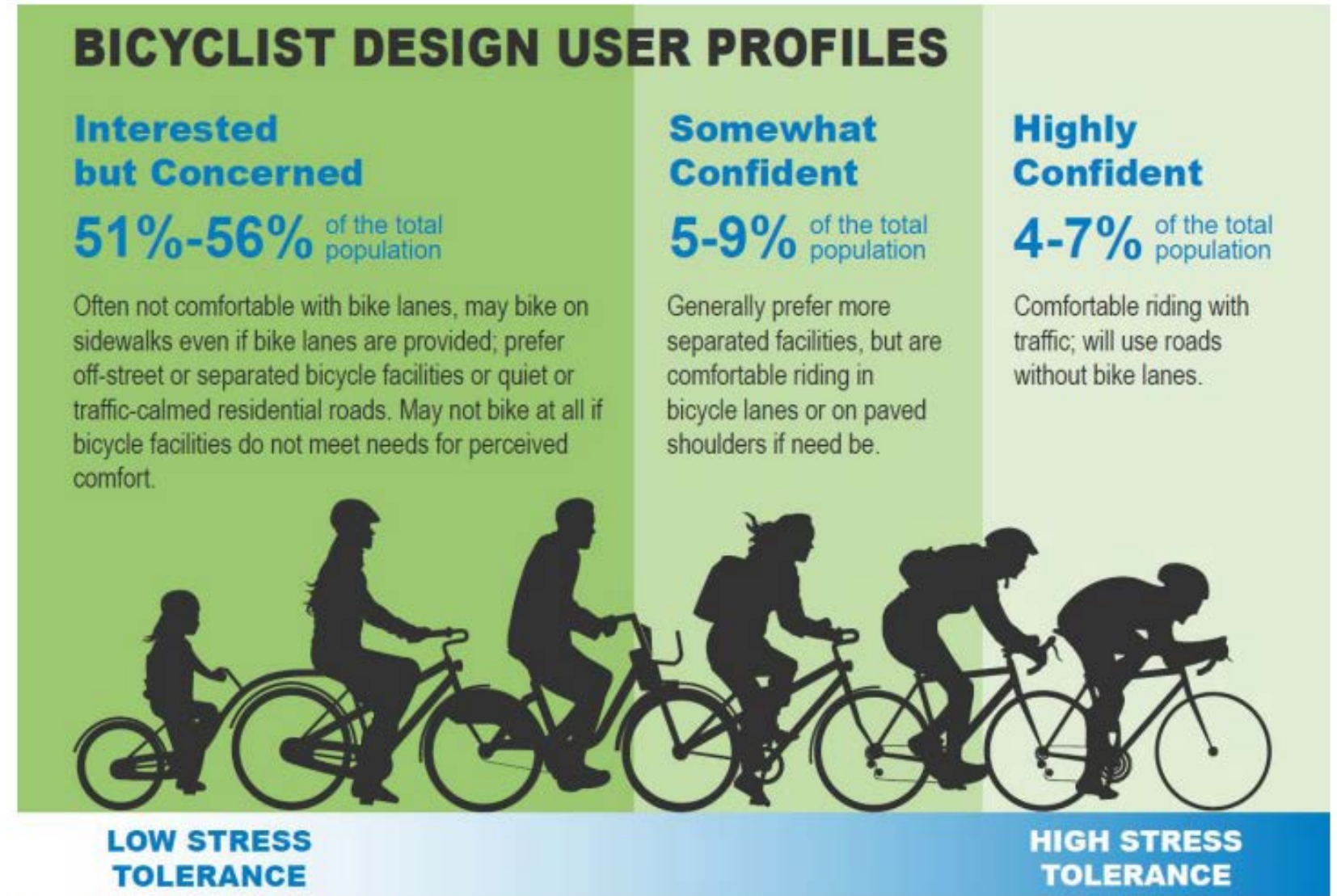
○ Signifies that crosswalk visibility enhancements should always occur in conjunction with other identified countermeasures.\*

The absence of a number signifies that the countermeasure is generally not an appropriate treatment, but exceptions may be considered following engineering judgment.

- 1 High-visibility crosswalk markings, parking restrictions on crosswalk approach, adequate nighttime lighting levels, and crossing warning signs
- 2 Raised crosswalk
- 3 Advance Yield Here To (Stop Here For) Pedestrians sign and yield (stop) line
- 4 In-Street Pedestrian Crossing sign
- 5 Curb extension
- 6 Pedestrian refuge island
- 7 Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB)\*\*
- 8 Road Diet
- 9 Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)\*\*

# FHWA APPROACH

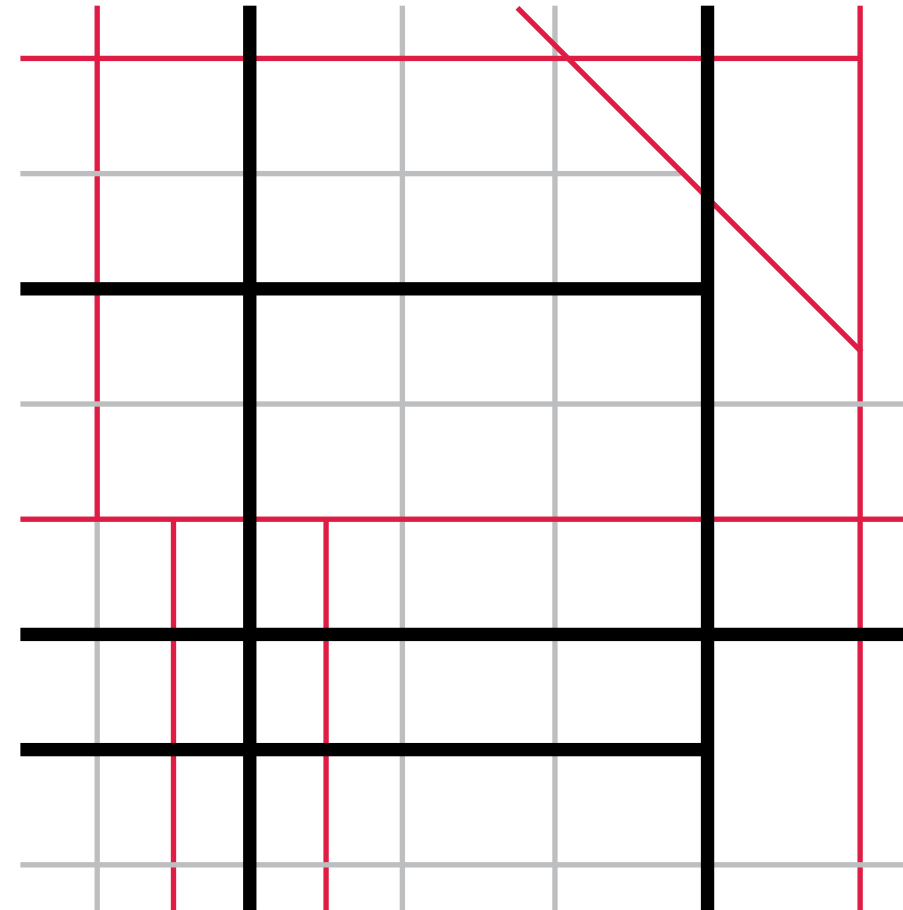
- » The majority of existing and potential cyclists have limited tolerance for exposure to motor vehicle traffic; and if they perceive that their exposure is too high, they'll choose not to ride a bike
- » Designing for the “interested but concerned” in every scenario is likely not feasible



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 upgraded through traffic calming or enhanced separation



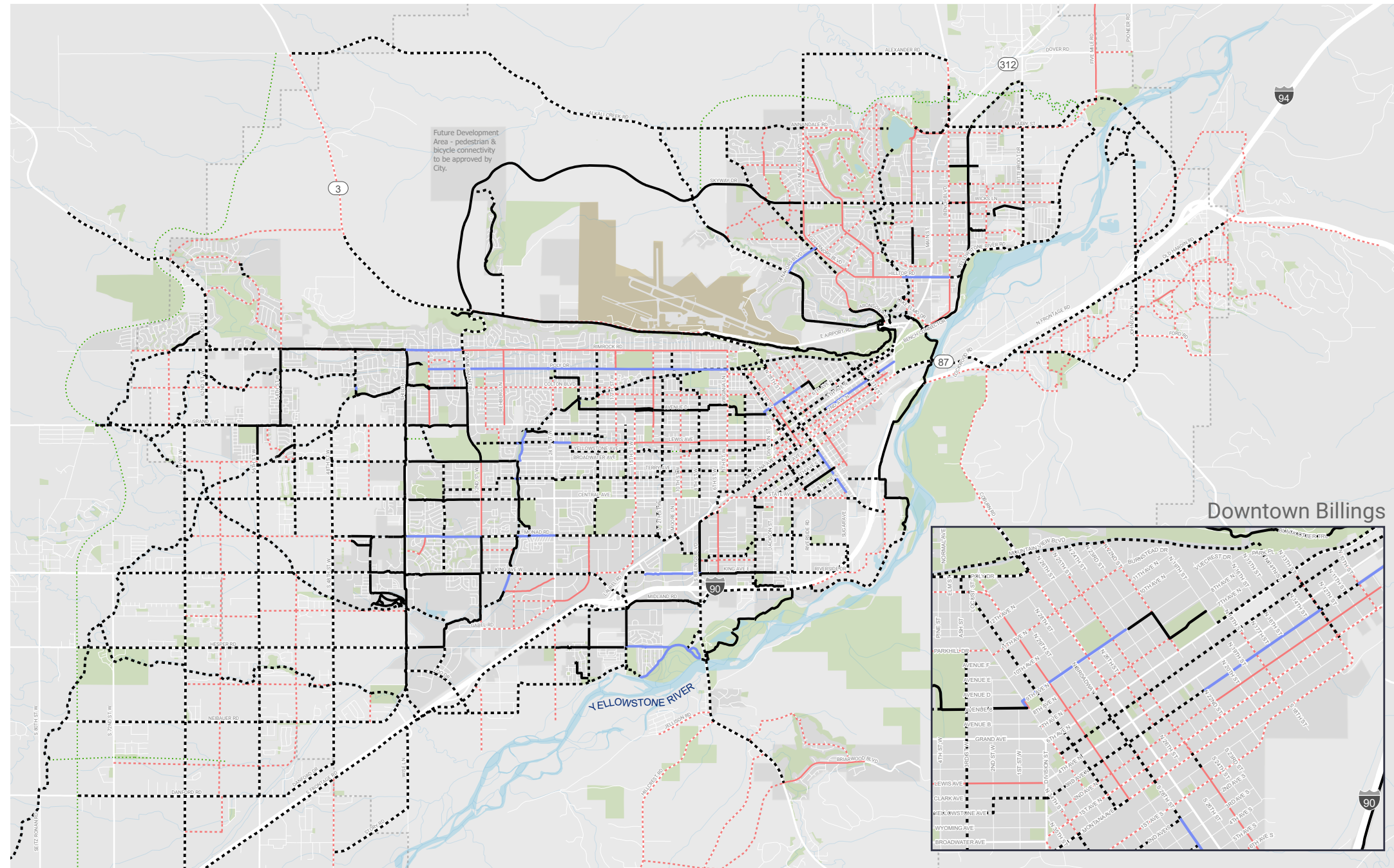
**NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS**

# 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

### BILLINGS AREA PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE MASTER PLAN



**Notes:**

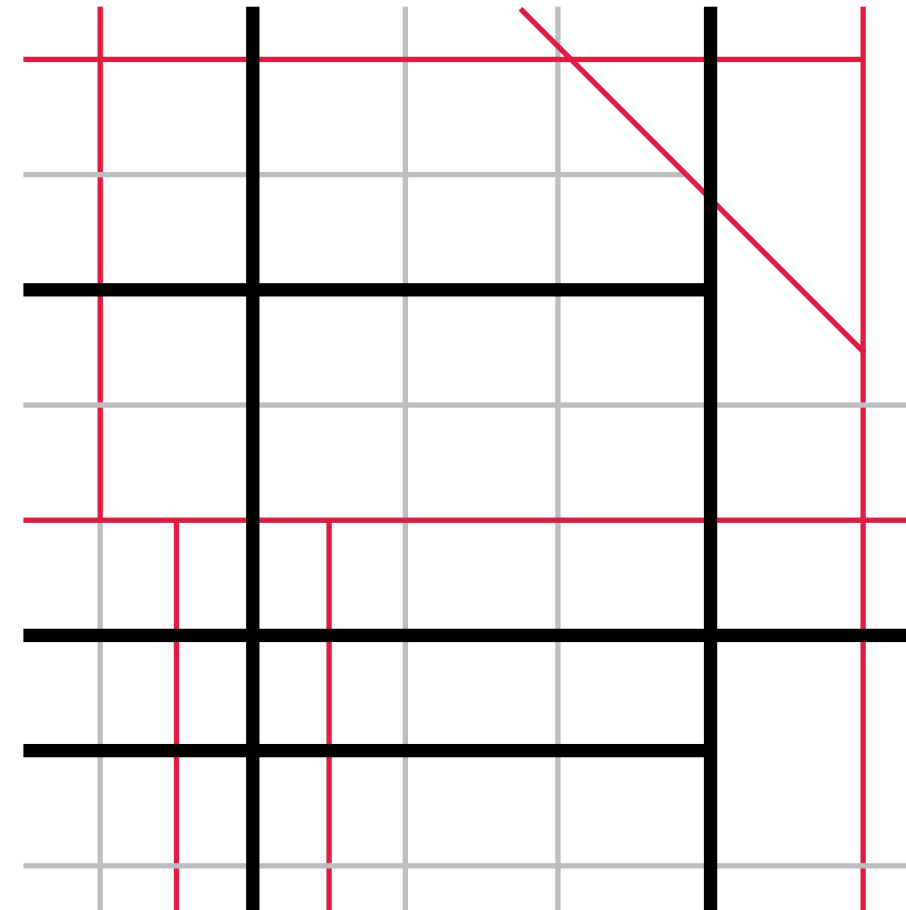
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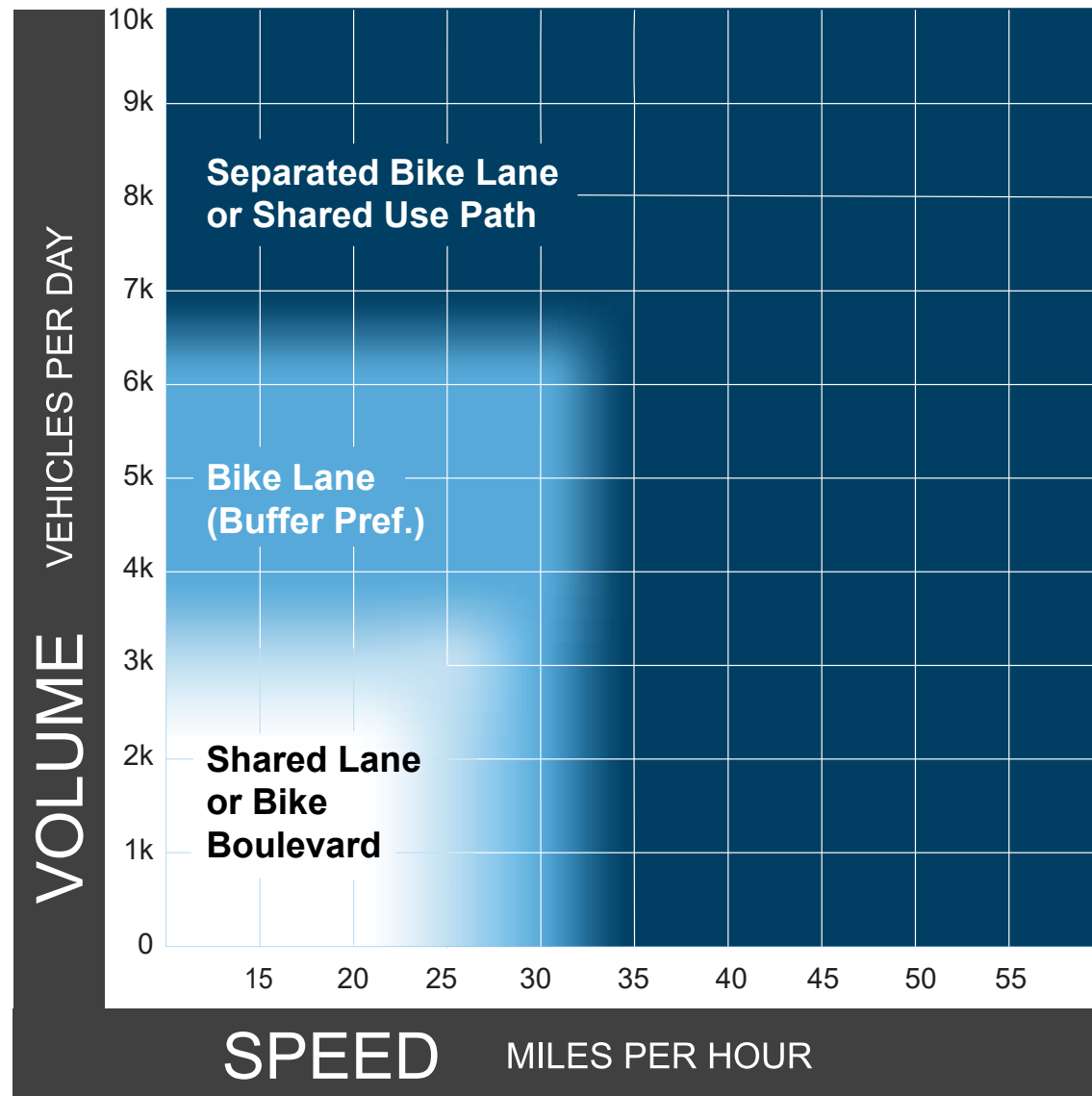
## WHY THIS APPROACH?

- » 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**



# BIKEWAY DESIGN GUIDANCE

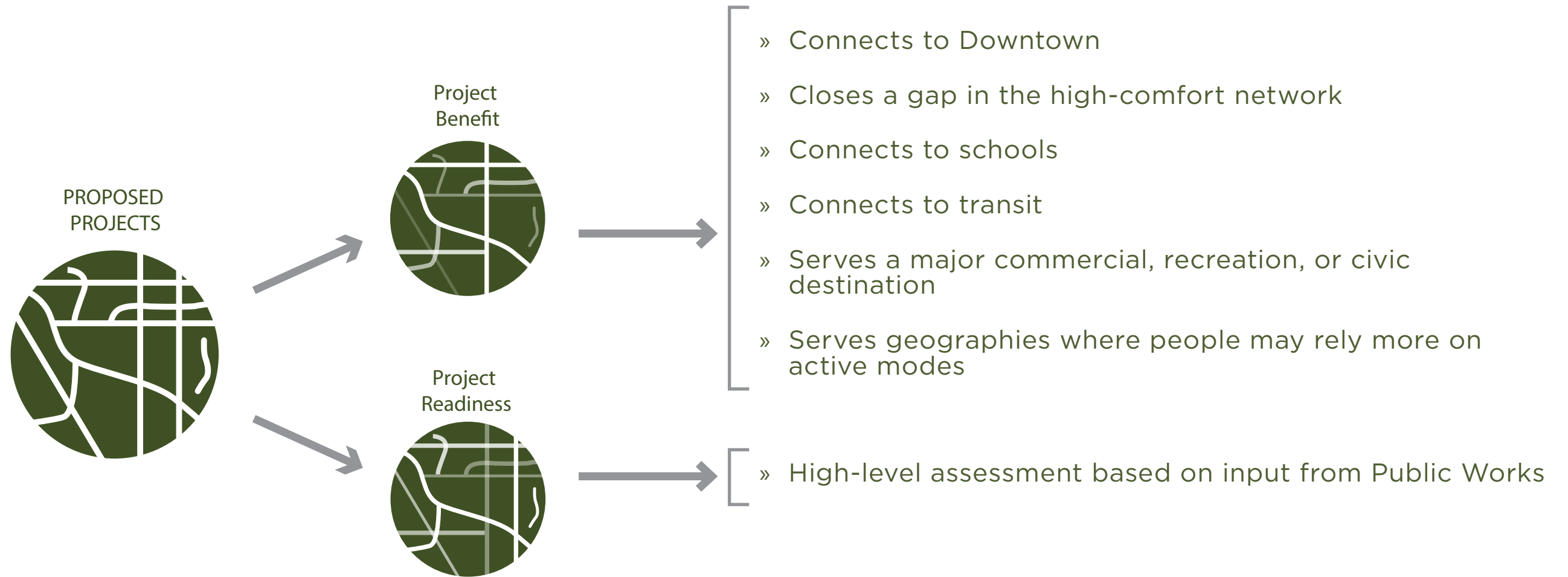


This section provides detailed design guidance for three types of bikeways:

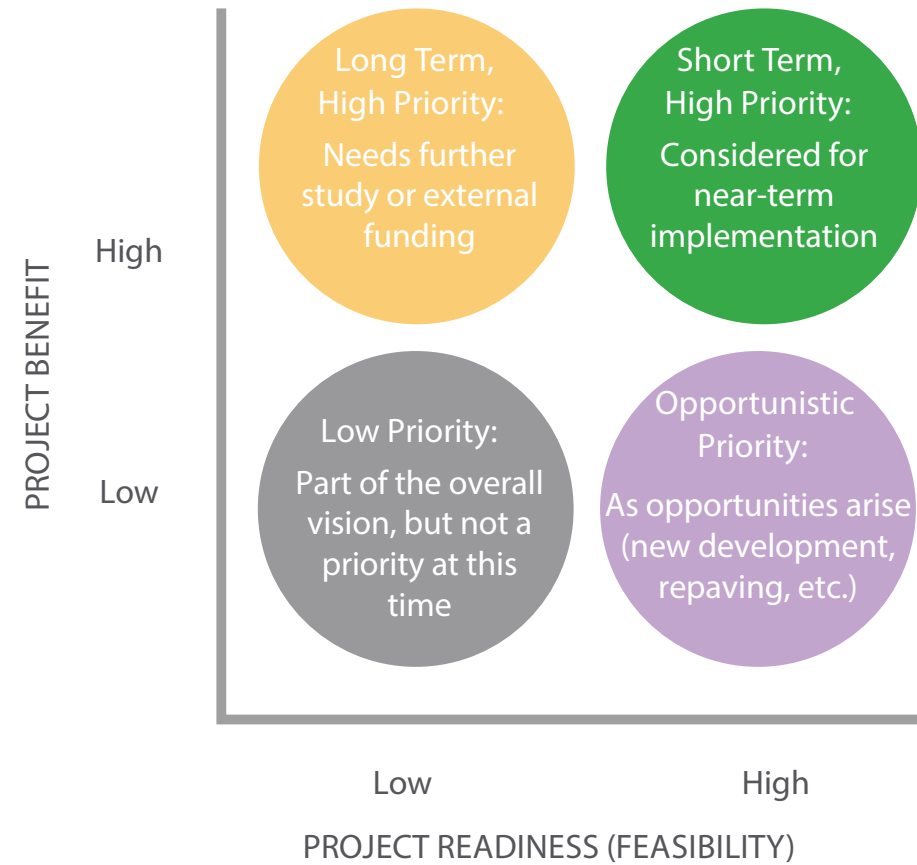
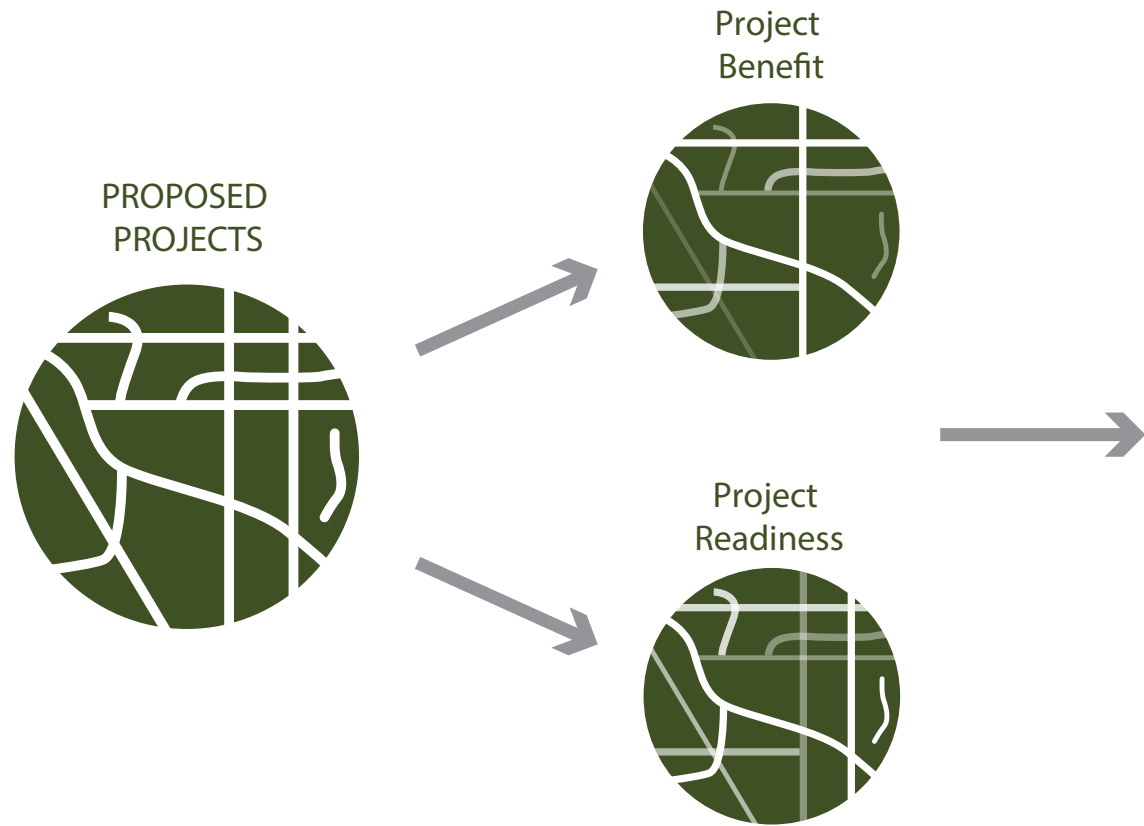
- Separated Bike Lanes:**
  - Conflict Markings:** If included, green conflict markings display the bicycle right of way and create continuity and connection of the bicycle facility through mixing zones, intersections, and driveway crossings.
  - Physical Barrier:** Materials for barriers may include concrete curbing, jersey barriers, bollards, planters.
  - Differentiated Barriers:** A physical barrier should be clearly marked at an intersection or driveway through the use of a colored surface and/or delineators.
- Buffered Bike Lanes:**
  - Buffer Striping:** If a buffer is wider than 3', diagonal hatching or chevron markings shall be applied.
  - Buffer Placement:** Buffers may be located between the bike lane and travel lane.
  - Sharrows:** Shared lane markings (sharrows) may be used to assist cyclists with lateral positioning, to alert road users, etc.
  - Signage:** Branded wayfinding signage from the approved Billings Wayfinding Signage Plan and regulatory signage as required by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) marks the route.
- Neighborhood Bikeways:**
  - Traffic Calming:** Traffic calming measures can be implemented as required to achieve the desired volume and speed criteria for neighborhood bikeways (e.g., curb bulbouts).
  - Signage:** Branded wayfinding signage from the approved Billings Wayfinding Signage Plan and regulatory signage as required by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) marks the route.

Additional notes include: "Separated are physical vertical elevation travel lane as the travel raised above" and "Refer to latest Guidelines AASHTO or FHWA".

# PROJECT PRIORITIZATION



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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

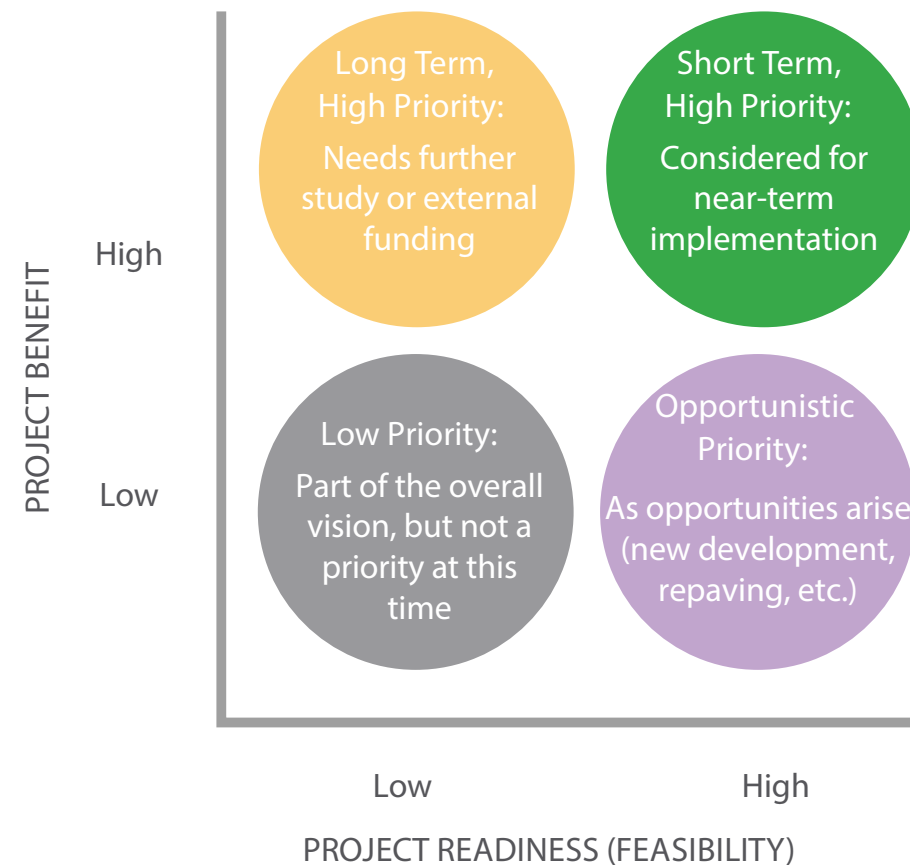
2. **Long term, high priority:** scores high on project value but low on project readiness

- 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



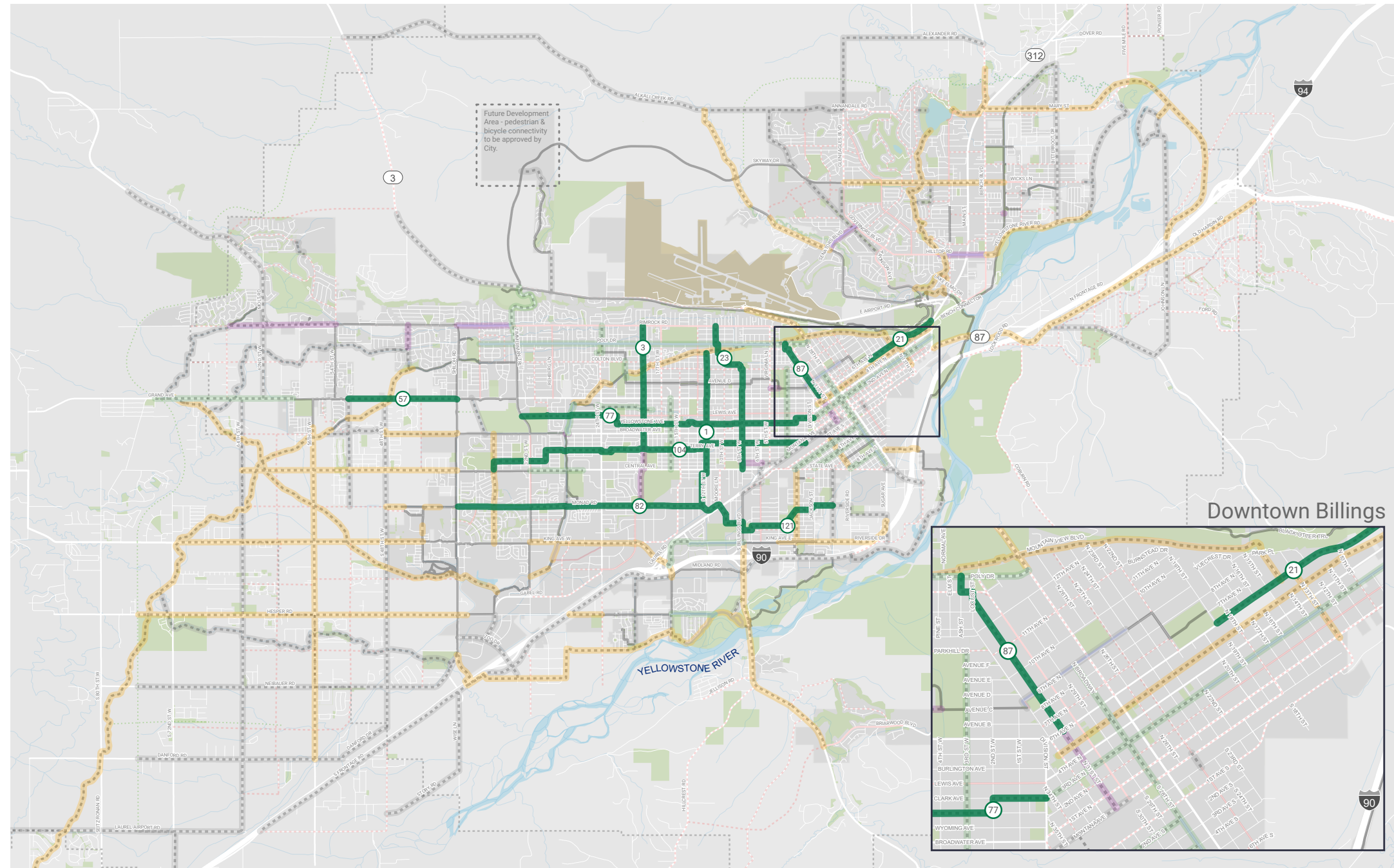
**IMPLEMENTATION**

# PRIORITY PROJECTS

**Facility Priority**

- █ Top 10 Priority Projects
- █ High Priority, Short Term
- █ High Priority, Long Term
- █ Opportunistic Priority
- █ Low Priority

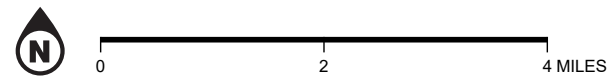
1. 12th St/Plainview St | BBWA Canal/Monad Rd (#1)
2. 6th Ave N | N 19th St/existing trail (#21)
3. 8th St | Rimrock Rd/Central Ave (#23)
4. Yellowstone Ave/Clark/Lewis | Zimmerman/Division (#77)
5. Monad Rd | 32nd St/Billings Blvd (#82)
6. N 31st St | Poly Dr/6th Ave (#87)
7. Terry/Miles/Howard | 36th St. W/1st St W (#104)
8. Phillips St | Billings Blvd/Washington St (#121)
9. 19th St | Rimrock Rd/Miles Ave (#3)
10. Grand Ave | 52nd St. W/Shiloh Rd (#57)



## PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

### BILLINGS AREA PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

#### TOP TEN PROJECTS HIGHLIGHTED



**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.

**Active Transportation 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

**Facility Priority**

- █ Top 10 Priority Projects
- █ High Priority, Short Term
- █ High Priority, Long Term
- █ Opportunistic Priority
- █ Low Priority

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## IMPLEMENTATION

# HOW WILL PROJECTS MOVE FORWARD?

- » Public works will continue to reference the master plan ahead of pavement preservation or reconstruction projects
- » High priority, short term projects can move into concept and design phase based on available resources; external funding may be needed
- » High priority, long term projects should be prioritized for future feasibility studies and external funding applications
- » Future development adjacent to identified projects should include bicycle and pedestrian improvements outlined in the plan