



Bisbee Woman's Grassroots Path to National Recognition

Bisbee, Arizona — Meggen Connolley, founder of Bisbee Bikeways, is proving that one woman from a small desert town can take on outdated systems—and win. Since 2018, Connolley has led a one-woman charge to create a safer, more connected Bisbee by advocating for shared-use paths in a community where car culture and motor-normativity have long dominated.

With no institutional financial support from local agencies, Connolley built a movement from scratch—relying on grassroots partnerships, grant funding, and the support of neighbors who believe in a healthier, more walkable future. She spearheaded the 27-mile Bisbee Area Master Mobility Plan, connecting all four neighborhoods of Bisbee with neighboring Naco. The City of Bisbee has formally adopted the plan, and Cochise County is actively involved in the initiative.

Like many rural communities, Bisbee is connected primarily by state highways. However, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) does not currently include pedestrian or bicycle pathways as part of its standard infrastructure. This gap leaves small towns with few safe, active transportation options—one of the very challenges Connolley set out to solve.

Through sheer persistence, she has secured nearly \$10 million in grants and donations to bring the plan to life. Most of this work has been done on volunteer time, while raising two young children—made possible only by the deep belief that improving community well-being is worth the sacrifice. Her family has stretched to make it work, with Connolley often donating thousands of hours to advocate for infrastructure that will benefit generations to come.

In recognition of her work, Connolley received the 2024 Distinguished Citizen Planner Award at the Arizona State Planning Conference, affirming her leadership in community-driven planning.

Now, her David-vs-Goliath story is reaching national audiences. She is a finalist in Nexstar Media's Remarkable Women contest, which honors women driving positive change across the country. Out of thousands of nominees, Connolley is one of 125 finalists invited to Los Angeles for a red-carpet awards ceremony.

Bert Whitehead, a Bisbee native and longtime supporter of Bisbee Bikeways, encouraged Connolley to apply for the Remarkable Women award. Her nomination was written by Stephanie Peavey, a Bisbee Bikeways Board Member, who praised Connolley's relentless vision and ability to get big things done for a small town. **Her story will be broadcast nationally:**

- CW Network – April 20, 9–10 PM
- NewsNation – April 27, 10–11 PM

The first trail segment—the Lavender Pit Path, connecting Old Bisbee to Historic Lowell—breaks ground in 2026. Right now, Connolley and her team are working to raise the final \$177,183 by April 2026, the required cash match

for the west segment of the Lavender Pit Path.

Connolley's motivation is deeply personal. Inspired by her children, she envisions a future where they—and all residents—can safely walk or bike through their community. This vision aligns with pressing health needs: Cochise County reports higher rates of chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and respiratory illnesses compared to state averages. Additionally, 24% of residents are physically inactive, surpassing the state average of 22%.

Shared-use paths not only promote physical activity but also contribute to economic growth. Studies have shown that such infrastructure can boost local economies by attracting tourism and increasing property values.

Community support is vital to making this happen. Every donation—big or small—helps bring this visionary project to life.

To donate or learn more: www.bisbeebikeways.com

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