



What is the Houston Bike Plan?

The Houston Bike Plan is a guide for the City of Houston to achieve the vision of making Houston a safer, more accessible gold-level bike-friendly city within 10 years. The vision is supported by 4 goals: Improved Safety, Increased Ridership, Increased Access, and Improved Development and Maintenance of Facilities. The Plan provides recommendations on the general location and types of bicycle facilities, projects, policies and programs that support the goals and vision. The Plan includes maps showing how the bike network might develop over time. More information is available at houstonbikeplan.org.

Is the Houston Bike Plan a regulatory document? Does a line on the map mean that the facility will be built?

No. The Bike Plan is not a regulatory document. It serves as a guide, or a starting point, for describing how to achieve the vision of making Houston a safer, more accessible gold-level bike-friendly city within 10 years. The facilities shown on the map are recommendations for future facilities, representing corridors along which bicycle facilities should be considered. Final decisions on the design and location of bicycle facilities will only happen after additional analysis and further public engagement. In some cases, detailed planning, design and community feedback may determine that there is a more appropriate route to serve the same connection. If so, the proposed bikeway may be relocated elsewhere within the same general corridor.

Will there be future opportunities to provide input on individual projects or facilities?

Yes. As stated, the Plan is only a guide, and final decisions on design and location of bicycle facilities requires additional analysis and further public engagement. For example, in the case of bicycle facilities built as part of Public Works capital projects, the City's Public Works and Engineering (PWE) Department uses an established annual process, including public meetings, during the engineering design and construction phases of street reconstruction projects. PWE also conducts meetings in each Council District as part of developing the Capital Improvement Plan. The local district Council Member will also be consulted prior to any major implementation effort. Community feedback and future planning projects will also be reviewed for incorporation into the Bike Plan. The community will also have opportunities to provide input on future Plan amendments, as required in the proposed amendments to Chapter 33 of the Code of Ordinances.

Does the Houston Bike Plan commit the City to funding specific projects?

No. The Houston Bike Plan is a planning-level document. It contains planning-level cost estimates for building out portions of the citywide high-comfort bicycle network. Funding will be programmed by the City or other implementing agencies at a later date. The Plan itself does not commit any funding.

What is meant by a high-comfort bicycle network?

A high-comfort bicycle network is a connected set of bikeways (also called *facilities*) that provide attractive and low-stress transportation routes for a broad range of people. This includes bikeways that connect neighborhoods to jobs, schools, parks, and other key activity centers across the City. The current bikeway network in Houston is made up of trails that are attractive places for many people to ride, but it is supported by many bike facilities that do not meet current standards. This makes it difficult for many riders to reach their destination safely and comfortably. This incomplete network of comfortable and safe bicycle facilities was identified by the community as one of the main barriers to increased biking.

A high-comfort bikeway network expands the existing trail system and provides separation from high speed traffic either through dedicated bike facilities or by routing people to lower volume neighborhood streets that provide good connectivity. A high-comfort bikeway network is a key component of the goal to increase the number of people riding bicycles in Houston and has been a critical element in communities that have increased the amount of people biking.

Who will implement the Houston Bike Plan?

Planning agencies and community organizations throughout Houston will be involved in implementing the Plan. Much of it will fall to City departments such as the Public Works and Engineering (PWE), Parks and Recreation (HPARD), and Planning and Development Departments. Policy recommendations are likely to be implemented by the City and partnering public agencies. Other project recommendations will be implemented by City partners and non-City agencies such as the Houston Parks Board, the Texas Department of Transportation, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ's), management districts and others. Programmatic (non-capital) recommendations such as education programs may also be implemented by the entities listed above and other organization such as BikeHouston or AARP.

Will the design of facilities be coordinated with the Fire and Police Departments?

PWE ensures that all streets and bicycle facilities follow the design standards and guidelines set in the City's Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM). National design guidelines published by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) are also referenced in the City's IDM. The City's design standards take into account the design requirements of public safety agencies such as police and fire departments.

What was included in the release of the draft Plan for public comment in February 2016?

The public comment draft of the Bike Plan released in February included drafts of all chapters of the Bike Plan including drafts of all maps for download or online viewing in PDF format. It also included an online interactive map with additional information, including Super Neighborhood and Council District boundaries, populations and employment densities, transit facilities, etc. The interactive map has been viewed over 15,000 times since it was posted. An Interactive Plan Walkthrough Guide was also developed to help readers review the components of the plan.

The public comment period ran from February 19 through April 11, 2016 and also included an online survey and online webinar. The Bike Plan project team and partners actively engaged the public including attending CIP meetings in all Council Districts, as well as attendance at many other public events and significant outreach through study partners, online, and social media.

Where there any changes made to the draft Houston Bike Plan as a result of public comment?

Yes. Following the close of the public comment period on the draft Plan in April 2016, the project team considered each and every comment submitted during this period. Many of the comments were incorporated into the final document. The final draft network maps added facilities in areas like south Houston along Sims Bayou where new connections to that growing trail were provided.

In all, the study team made approximately 60 changes and added 133 miles of additional facilities to the initial draft map based on the comments. These changes increased ½ mile access to the long range bicycle network by about 87,000 people. The final draft Plan also included greater detail on access to the bayou network and on neighborhood-level bicycle planning.