
Houston Bike Plan

FAQs



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

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.

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 includes 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.

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 lines 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. The Plan includes a Key Recommendation that public engagement on bikeway projects begin no later than preliminary engineering (design phase) of the project. The community will also have opportunities to provide input on future Plan amendments.

What do the colors on the map mean?

Green Lines represent off-street bikeways.

Such bike facilities include off-street trails and dedicated side paths/shared use paths in public rights-of-way (ROW). Examples include bayou trails, Rails-To-Trails, utility corridor trails, and shared use paths.

Blue Lines represent dedicated bikeways within public street right-of-way.

Such facilities provide a dedicated space within a street right-of-way, and may or may not be actually within the street pavement. Such facilities include bike lanes (including buffered bike lanes), separated bike lanes, and in some cases may be implemented as side paths, which is a path alongside a street but outside the roadway curbs and often shared with pedestrians. The exact configuration will be determined through future design and engineering of the right-of-way (corridor).

Magenta Lines represent shared on-street bikeways.

Such facilities include neighborhood bikeways or neighborhood shared streets. Such bike facilities are recommended for residential streets with lower traffic volume and where speeds are 30 mph or less. Thoroughfares and higher speed collector streets are not suitable as high-comfort neighborhood bikeways.

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.

Why does the Houston Bike Plan map place some bicycle facilities on already busy major thoroughfares?

The Bike Plan Map recommends a network of corridors and general facility types to meet the vision and goal of the Plan. As a result, it recommends bike facilities along a broad range of on and off-street corridors. Every attempt has been made to use local and collector streets; however, local and collectors streets do not always provide direct, convenient connection across multiple neighborhoods. In order to create a well-connected network that people will actually ride, some major thoroughfares must be included. Many bike facilities on major thoroughfares may be achieved without a change to the number of traffic lanes. Any modifications to the number of travel lanes would occur only after traffic analysis verifies that adequate vehicular capacity can be maintained.

There is a street in my neighborhood that is a good bicycle route. Why isn't it included in the Bike Plan map?

Many local streets in Houston are fairly comfortable for bicycling. The Houston Bike Plan map focuses on identifying routes that offer potential city-wide connections or routes between neighborhoods or to key destinations. It is not meant to map every possible local neighborhood route. The Bike Plan also suggests a process to develop more refined neighborhood-level bicycle recommendations for future planning.

Who will implement the Houston Bike Plan?

The Houston Bike Plan recommendations include Projects, Policies, and Programs. Planning and implementation 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. Other project recommendations will be implemented by City partners and non-City agencies such as the Houston Parks Board, TxDOT, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ's), management districts, and others. Advocacy and non-profit organization could lead programs such as outreach, education and awareness campaigns.