

Q: The plan should include empowered, full-time bike-ped staff at COH, including a Bike-Ped Coordinator who reports directly to the Director of PWE.

A: There are some City staff already focused on Bicycle planning and implementation. The Bike Plan recognizes that currently, relative to peer cities, there is not sufficient staff to meet the needs of carrying out all recommendations. In the plan, it is recommended that as resources allow, staffing will be a priority to ensure staff within the Planning and Development and Public Works and Engineering Departments has capacity and bandwidth to focus on these issues. The same is true for partners. Having a robust advocacy partner like BikeHouston helps make sure everyone is doing what they're best at. For example, certain educational and outreach activities may be best to be addressed by BikeHouston, while the City focuses on policies.

Q: Do you think that intersections are so complicated that they can confuse people?

A: While some intersection treatments may be new to Houston, when well designed and clearly marked, leveraging elements of the tool box developed in the Houston Bike Plan and other industry guidelines, intersections can be made clearer and easier to navigate for all users. This has been shown in other cities that have built intersections with specific consideration of all users including people walking, bicycling and driving.

Q: Intersections will be our biggest challenge for high comfort levels - we need smart solutions - traffic is already backed up all over the city during "rush" hour - designing facilities that promote daily commuting via bike will long term lower congestion across the city - number of daily commuters needs to be a metric we watch - and design to promote daily commuting via bike. Has the "box" concept - used all over in Japan - been considered as it is really the best way to handle multi-user major intersections? All traffic (vehicles) stops in all directions and foot/cycle users then have whole intersection aka box to cross however they want.

A: The City is actively looking at intersections as a part of the Rebuild Houston program to better design streets intersections that allow for safer movement of all users through intersections. If you go to rebuildhouston.org and look at the community engagement section you can see current and draft plans for upcoming projects. Shepherd/Durham is one such project, TC Jester is another, and there are more where intersection design, especially for streets with bicycle facilities, have been improved for people walking and bicycling. There are also existing intersections where we look at improvements. For example, Allan Parkway is being reconstructed and a number of those intersections are being designed improve walking and biking access to Buffalo Bayou. The challenge becomes how to redo existing intersections where there is no planned reconstruction. As we identify needs in the future, PWE is taking the Bike Plan and intersection design into consideration as part of their overall improvements program.

The boxes in Japan are also referred to as Scrambles. There are some locations in the US that have used these as well. They can be appropriate in situations where there is a significantly high volume of pedestrians and bicyclists. These are discussed in the Bike Plan toolbox as part of the Bicycle Signal Treatments, and could be considered for future projects.

Q: Through all of the phases the Kingwood and Summerwood areas do not connect to the main Houston network. Why not reduce some of the planned bike lanes to integrate Kingwood and Summerwood? Why not use the aqueduct from Lake Houston to the east side as a way to connect? The Park and Ride buses do not have bike racks.

A: One of the challenges is that there are large areas in Harris County between Kingwood and the rest of City of Houston. Where possible, the Bike Plan tries to make connections to transit to allow regional trips and identifies the need to coordinate with Harris County and other jurisdictions to ensure potential projects would align.

While METRO's Park & Ride buses do not have bike racks on the front of the buses, there is space to store bicycles in the compartments on the side of the bus. Some Park & Ride buses also have specialized bike racks in these areas.

Q: What incentives will be provided to businesses and commercial vendors to support this plan? How will they be encouraged to include bike facilities like parking and access to their buildings and storefronts? How can businesses be encouraged to become more bicycle friendly?

A: Recommendations of the Bike Plan include for the city and others to coordinate with businesses about permitting, providing bike racks, encouraging more people to ride, helping businesses achieve Bicycle-friendly certification and what the benefits of that are, including the application process, which itself is a very educational process.

Q: How is the City/Planning Department working with the Planning Commission to ensure variances aren't impeding the ability to implement bike facilities per the bike plan?

A: As a part of the Planning Commission's approval process for plats and variances, any variances requested along any bikeways recommended in this plan are reviewed and taken into consideration by the Planning Department. The Planning Department works to ensure that any variances do not prohibit opportunities for long term implementation of bikeways. The Planning Department also coordinates with the Public Works and Engineering Department to ensure proposed variances or future projects do not prevent implementation of the Bike Plan's recommended network and connectivity goals.

Q: Access to and through Galleria/Uptown area remains limited in the Plan. Why no bike lanes on Post Oak Blvd.?

A: Given limited right-of-way at this point along Post Oak Boulevard, it was decided to ensure good pedestrian access along the corridor first. The Bike Plan sets a first step to work with management districts and businesses in that area to work towards improving bicycle access. Access to the Galleria can be improved in the near future, but the City is taking this effort one step at a time.

Q: Will the recategorization of suggested bikeways be communicated to Google Maps?

A: As the City moves forward with implementation, bikeway maps will be updated. The City is working out how to appropriately show the network to encourage more people to ride and how to best share and coordinate with mapping software providers like Google.

Q: My comment on Brays Bayou extension is regarding the west portion. Your maps don't show it in the Programmed projects, but it is in the BGI 2020 plan.

A: We recognize there is a piece of Brays Bayou that is missing in a few of the maps shown today. The segment you refer to, roughly between Gessner and Eldridge, is shown on our interactive map, and will be in the next iteration of the plan maps and documents as they are updated with other comments and changes. We recognize that it is part of the Bayou Greenways 2020 plan and are updating the plan's information accordingly.

Q: How many percent of people use bikes as their transportation to work? How to make this number bigger so that we can literally get rid of car?

A: Slightly more than 0.5% of the city's residents currently bicycle as the primary mode of transportation to work. However, this understates the number of people that use bikes for various trips throughout the day or for some part of their commute trip. For example if you ride your bike to the train then take the train for a longer portion of the trip, that trip is counted in the survey as a transit trip and does not include bicycling as part of the commute mode. As a lot of people connect bike and transit, and have a variety of modes they use to get to work, we believe the 0.5% is an undercount.

Compared to other peer cities, it is a low percentage. One of the goals of the Bike Plan is to get to at least an average mode share from a set of a peer cities, approximately 2% over the next 5-10 years, and continue to increase beyond that.

That percent though is highly variable across the City. Some parts of the City have 5-7% of people biking to work. A lot of that is around the Texas Medical Center and along Brays Bayou. Higher percentage mode share areas tend to be in places where people have shorter trips, access to higher comfort bikeways like bayou trails for some or all of their trip trails and more access to nearby jobs.

Q: The utility corridors have the best potential for north/south connections - but will cross MANY major roadways - bridges or user induced street crossing light (like recently installed on Yale at Heights bike trail) - are really the ONLY options for high comfort crossings. Getting from the south side to Buffalo Bayou Park is MOST challenging - crossing at same time as vehicular traffic is a recipe for disaster as the number of foot/cyclist users increases.....

A: The utility corridors are a key component of the plan. As accurately recognized, there are challenges with these corridors at major roadway crossings. The toolbox provides approaches intended to help address those challenges through project that Public Works & Engineering, the Houston Parks Board and others will be working on. There is already a project to implement a bike facility along a utility corridor north of Simms Bayou and some of those challenges have been addressed through that project.

Q: Are there any plans to add B cycle stations outside of 610, like TC Jester Park or Alabonson?

Houston Bike Share is looking at expanding their coverage area through a current grant, investments by partners like developers and management districts, and future sponsorship opportunities. They are currently taking feedback on where people would like to see future bike share stations located.

Q: Are you getting the expected level of public input on the plan?

A: We have received good input at CIP meetings, through the work of Bike Houston outreach, and through our online feedback mechanisms. We are pushing for additional input through various online efforts, community meetings, and other formats for the remainder of the public comment period through April 11.

We encourage all of you to share the website link (www.houstonbikeplan.org) and Bike Plan information with people in your office and community. The Bike Plan is the first step to developing a more comfortable, safer and connected bikeway network in the city. It will be updated over time and regularly as we see new projects/activities/small area plans arise in the future.