

# CITY OF MADISON ALL AGES AND ABILITIES (AAA) BICYCLE NETWORK

Network Development Overview – April 2026



# What is the AAA Bicycle Network?

The City of Madison is defining a **priority network** of paths and low-stress on-street bikeways for an enhanced level of comfort for biking and micromobility.



# The Bicycle Network...

## ...is:

- a **long-term vision** for a backbone network.
- composed of high comfort (low stress) routes, both separated paths and on-street bikeways.
- designed to connect people to key destinations.
- a framework for prioritizing projects.
- a living plan – this is an update to a prior network, and it will be updated again.

## ...is not:

- **going to be developed instantaneously** – this is a long-term vision.
- intended to include all current and future bikeways.
- intended to include all high comfort bikeways in the City.
- design-specific – it does not recommend specific types of bikeways.
- solely for bicycling – it also serves micromobility users.

# What modes are included?

- People riding bicycles are the major user group.
- The network is also designed for people using **micromobility devices that move at bicycle speeds**, including e-bikes, scooters, and electric skateboards.

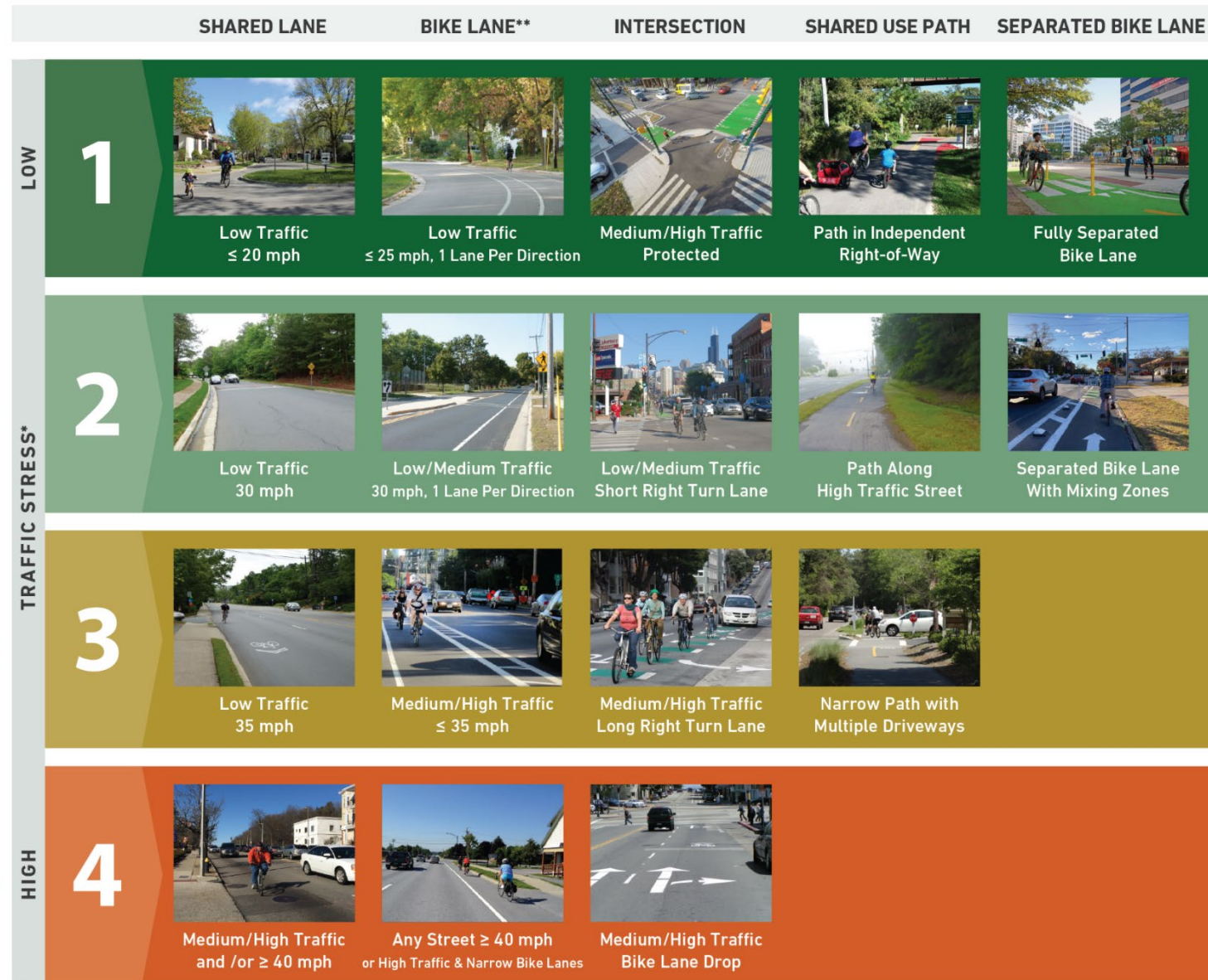


# What is High Comfort?

- Bikeways that present low levels of stress for people biking.
- Bicycle level of traffic stress (BLTS) is a four-point scale for **rating a bicycle facility's perceived comfort.**
- High comfort equates to BLTS levels 1 and 2.
- This rating is based on street design factors and use. Higher comfort is associated with:
  - Lower vehicle speeds
  - Lower vehicle volumes
  - More separation from vehicles



## Level of Traffic Stress (Urban Contexts)

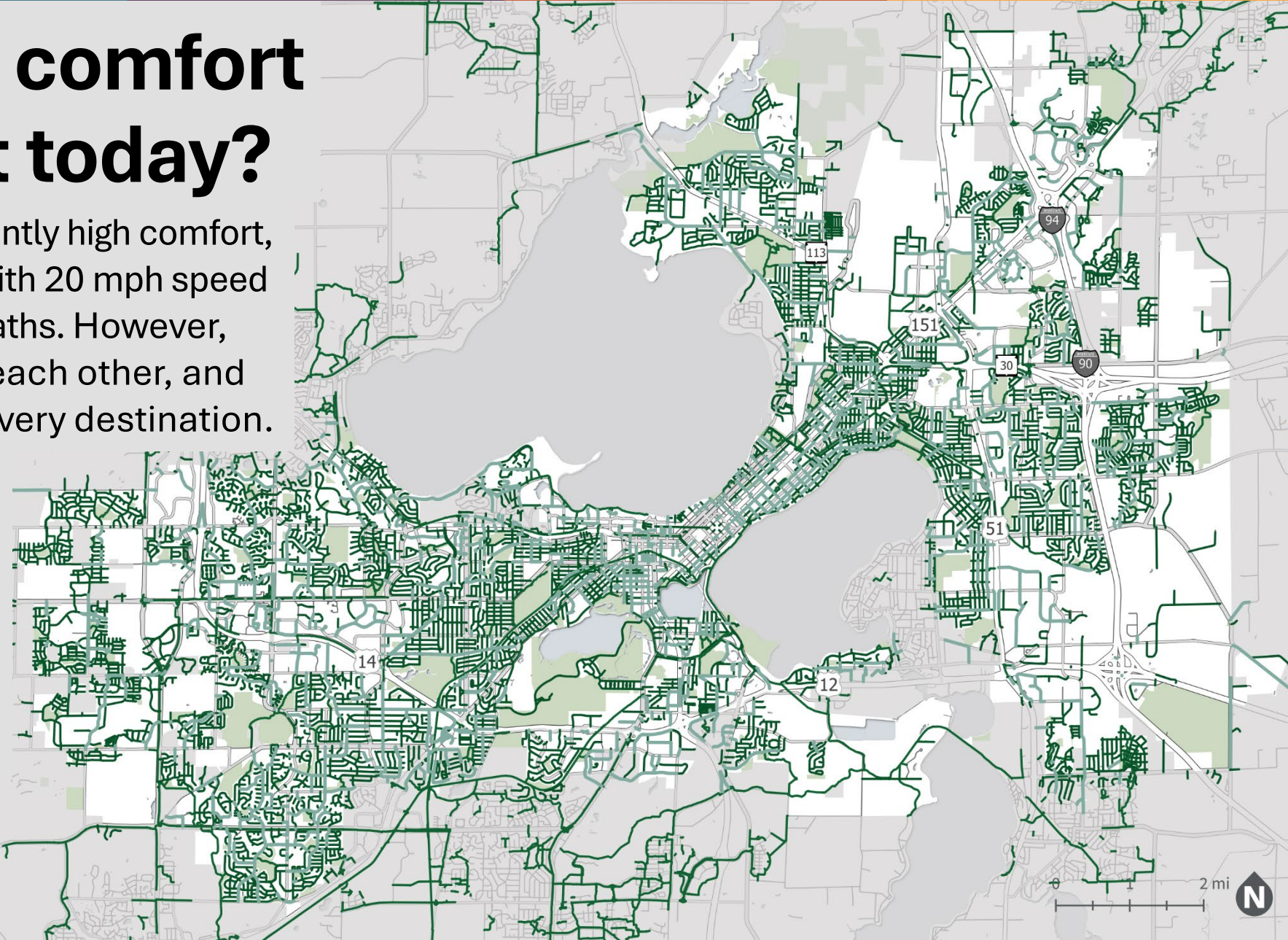


\*The traffic levels, speeds, and configurations listed on this graphic are generalizations of a much more nuanced methodology  
 \*\*Presence of on-street parking increases traffic stress while wider bike lanes decrease traffic stress

# Where do high comfort bikeways exist today?

Many places in Madison are currently high comfort, including neighborhood streets with 20 mph speed limits and the City's network of paths. However, these are not all connected to each other, and they do not provide access to every destination.

The High Comfort Network is planned to serve as a citywide spine which will connect existing high comfort routes. For more information, review the [2025 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan Existing Conditions Summary](#).

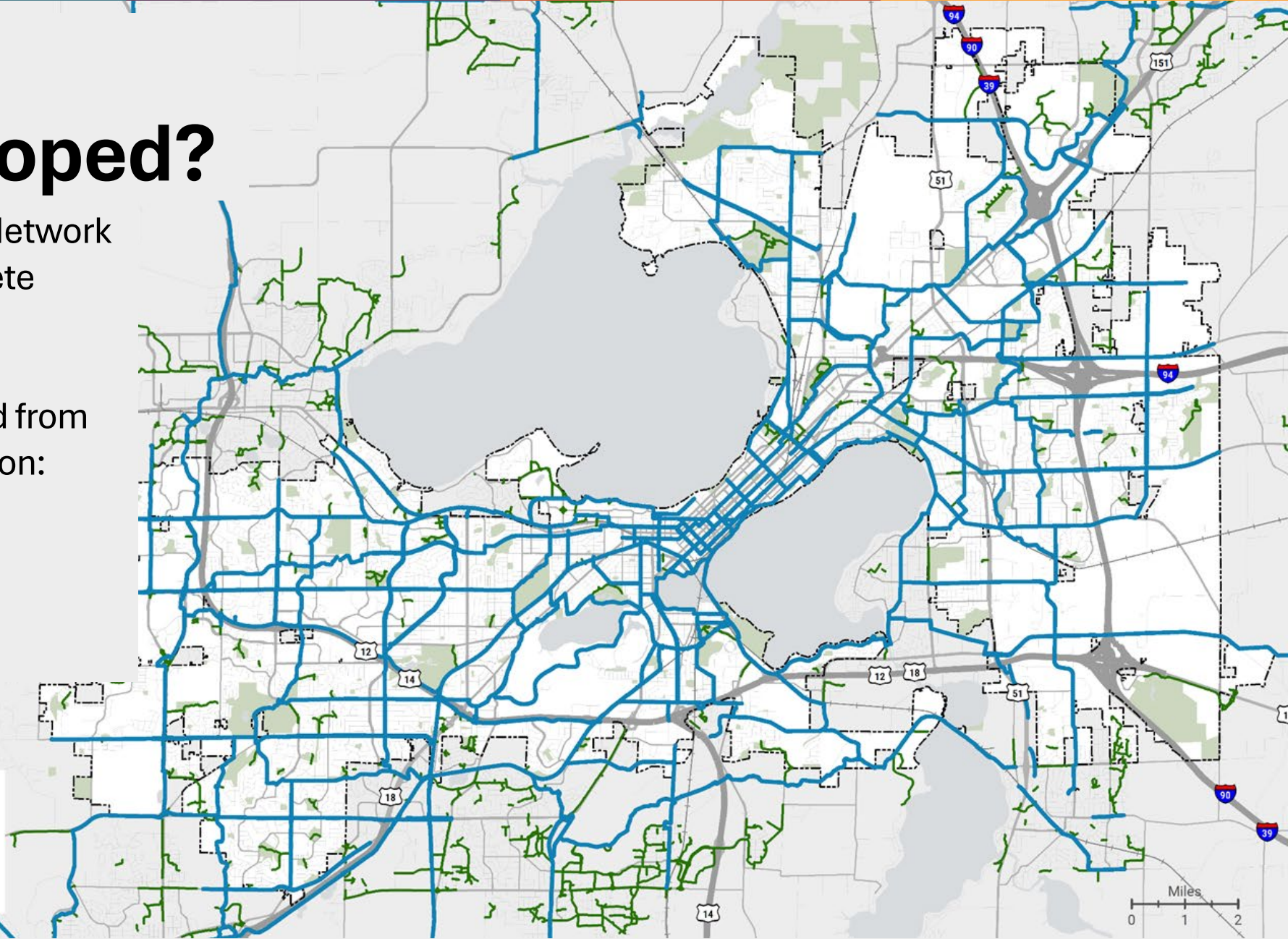
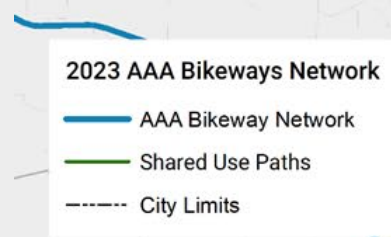


# How was the network developed?

The original draft AAA Bikeways Network was included in the 2023 Complete Green Streets Guide.

A number of routes were removed from or added to the 2023 draft based on:

- Public input
- Review of existing conditions
- Key network connections
- Other analyses



# Public Input

Network development was informed by public input conducted in 2025 and summarized in the [Pedestrian Plan and AAA Bike Network Engagement Summary](#).



### FOCUS GROUP: BIKE NETWORK

- 15 participants (diverse group of bike advocates)
- Participants indicated that biking carries deep personal meaning and identity.
- The current network develops organically, often reacting to construction rather than being driven by a proactive plan.
- Participants felt this led to gaps, inconsistent designs, and lost opportunities.

### SURVEY LEARNINGS

- 557 respondents (various modes of outreach)
- Affirmation of modal prioritization from Let's Talk Streets: **people feel as if bike and pedestrian paths currently come secondary to roads.**
- Community focus vs infrastructure focus: **people view paths as community connections, not just infrastructure.**
- Multiple meanings of safety (e.g. traffic vs fear of harassment)
- Traffic enforcement as a safety concern is a consistent theme

### FOCUS GROUP: BIKE NETWORK

- A major repeated theme: **Continuity in language, signage, color, and appearance is essential.**
  - Users should be able to navigate the system like a bus or transit route: recognizable cues that clearly show where to go next.
- Participants emphasized evaluating the network in **low-income and historically marginalized areas, ensuring access and safety metrics are tracked.**

- Network must be **complete & destination-oriented**
- Need better **inter-municipal coordination**
  - better tools for alders and policymakers, including improved online maps that show gaps clearly.

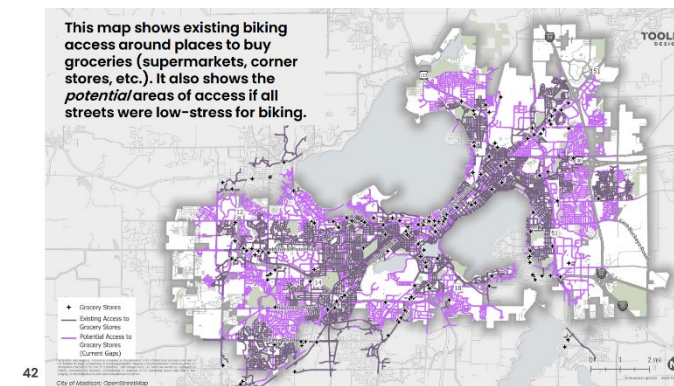
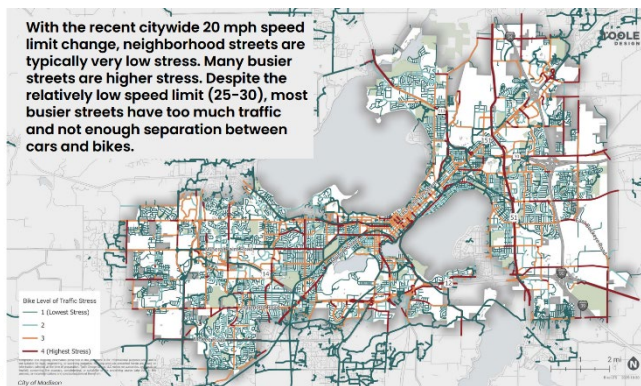
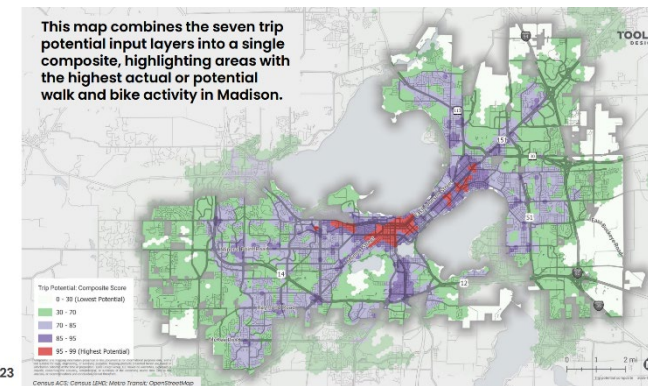
# Existing Conditions and Analyses

Network development was informed by the analyses performed for the [2025 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan Existing Conditions Summary](#).

**Summary of Existing Conditions & Challenges**  
 Pedestrian Plan and All Ages & Abilities Bikeways  
 November 2025



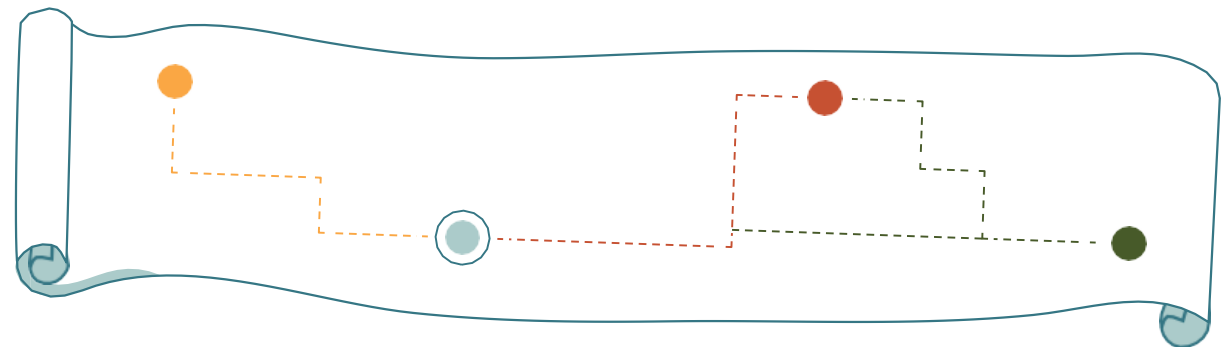
CITY OF MADISON



# Network Design Principles

## Connectivity

- The network should connect people with destinations, with no gaps or missing links. Destinations include places of work, schools, parks, and commercial areas.
- Routes connecting to destinations are preferred over those that do not.
- Routes should connect existing pockets of high comfort routes, such as the City's 20 mph residential streets.

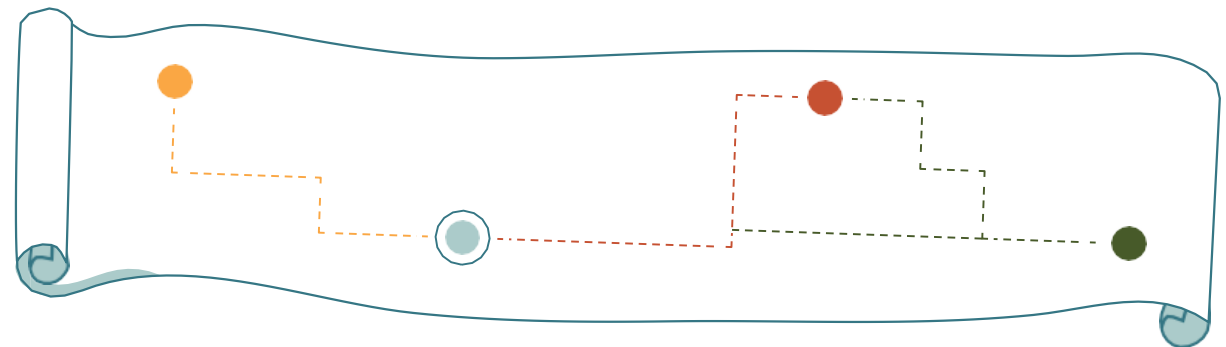




# Network Design Principles

## Directness

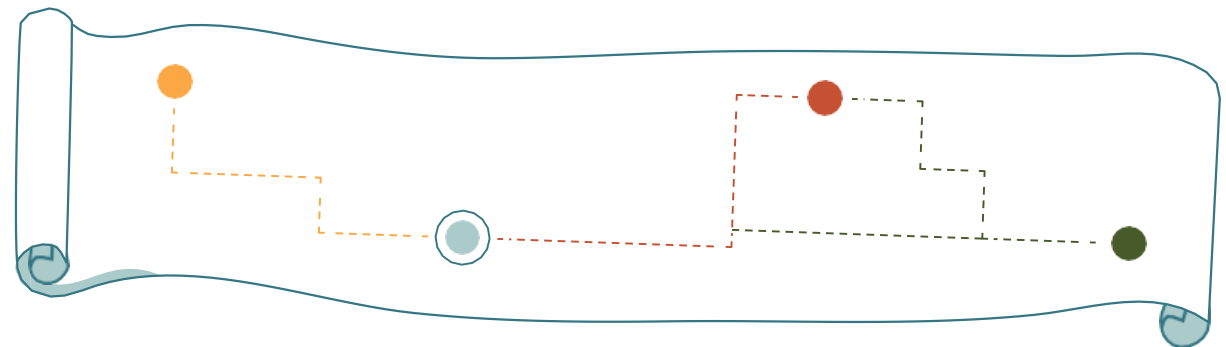
- Direct routes are generally preferred over less direct routes with detours.
- This acknowledges that people biking experience additional travel distance as both added time and effort.



# Network Design Principles

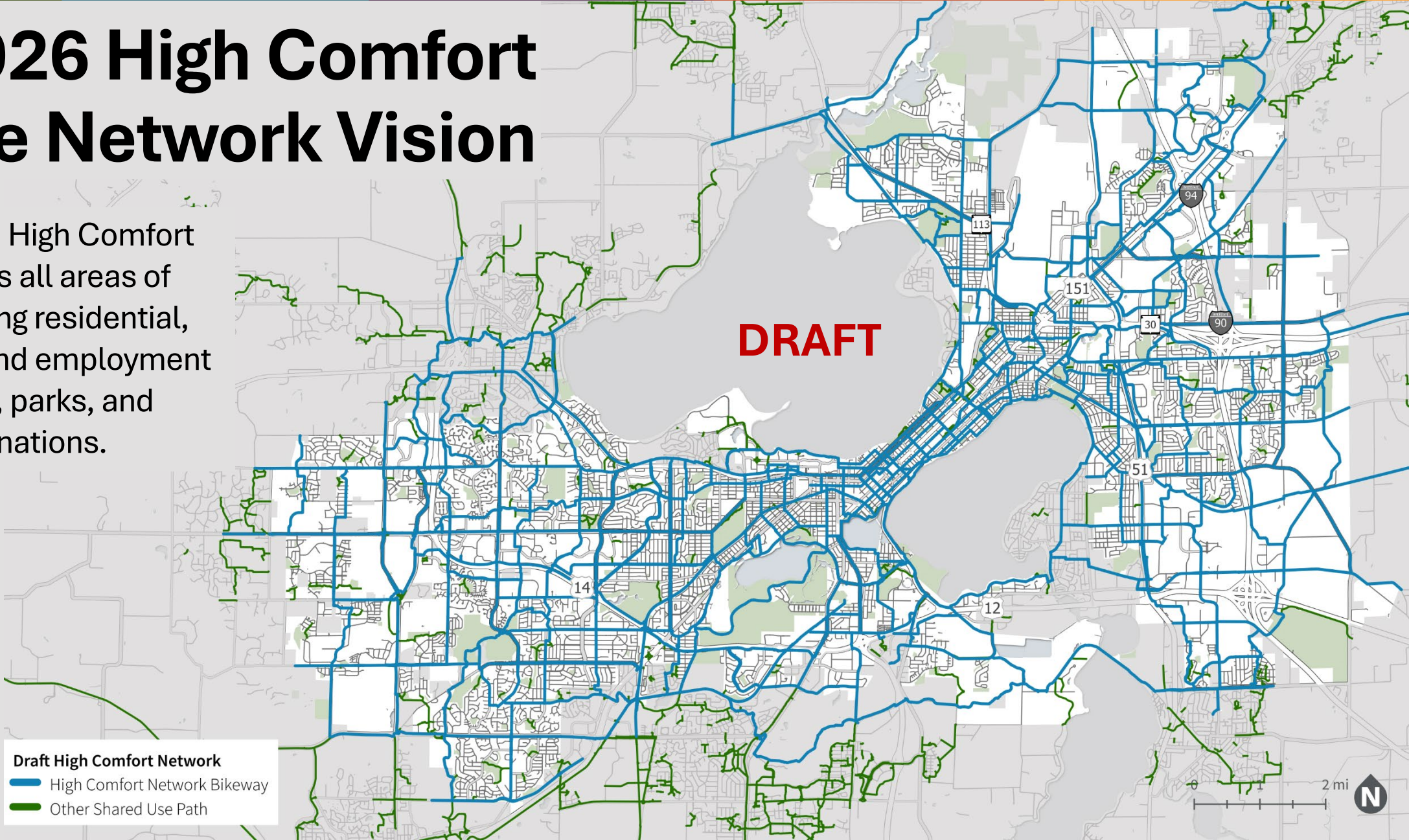
## Parallel route spacing

- In Madison's densest urban areas, parallel routes are spaced approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile or less, so the nearest high comfort route is often no more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away.
- In less dense areas, spacing of up to 1 mile between parallel routes is used, so the nearest high comfort route is often no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away.
- This spacing results in a network of priority routes while maintaining coverage of the City. Other high comfort connections exist, including most of the City's 20 mph residential streets.



# The 2026 High Comfort Bicycle Network Vision

The envisioned High Comfort Network covers all areas of Madison, serving residential, commercial, and employment areas, schools, parks, and other key destinations.



**Draft High Comfort Network**

- High Comfort Network Bikeway
- Other Shared Use Path

# The High Comfort Network will be implemented using a variety of bicycle facilities, described on the following pages.

Shared Use Path



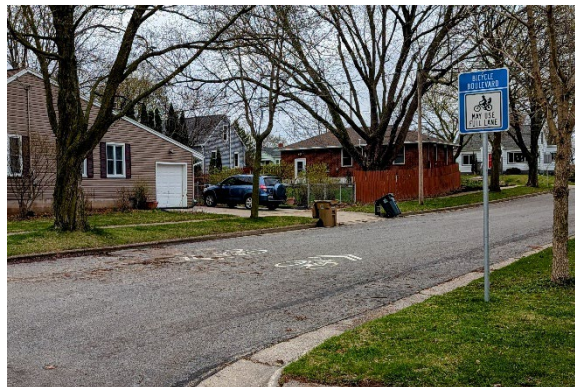
Cycle Track



Separated Bike Lane



Bicycle Boulevard



Bike Lane (Buffered/Standard)



# Shared Use Path



- This is a facility for walking, bicycling, or using a micromobility device.
- Where the total volume of people is lower, all modes can share the space.
- Where higher volumes are expected, the path may have painted lanes to separate people walking from people biking or using micromobility devices.

# Cycle Track



- This is a two-way bicycle lane running next to a street. A cycle track is level with the adjacent sidewalk.
- The direction of travel is typically marked.
- Unlike shared use paths, these are for bicycling (and comparable micromobility devices) only.

# Separated Bike Lane



- This is a bike lane that is physically separated from moving traffic using features like curbs, posts, or even parked cars.
- This physical separation helps reduce conflicts with vehicles and creates a safer, more comfortable space for people biking.
- Protected bike lanes are designed for people of all ages and abilities, especially on streets with higher speeds or traffic volumes.

# Bicycle Boulevard



- This is a low-traffic neighborhood street designed to be safer, quieter, and more comfortable for people biking.
- Cars are still allowed, but the street is engineered to prioritize safe, comfortable biking over cut-through car traffic.
- Tools like traffic diverters, speed humps, and clear signage discourage through-driving while maintaining local access.

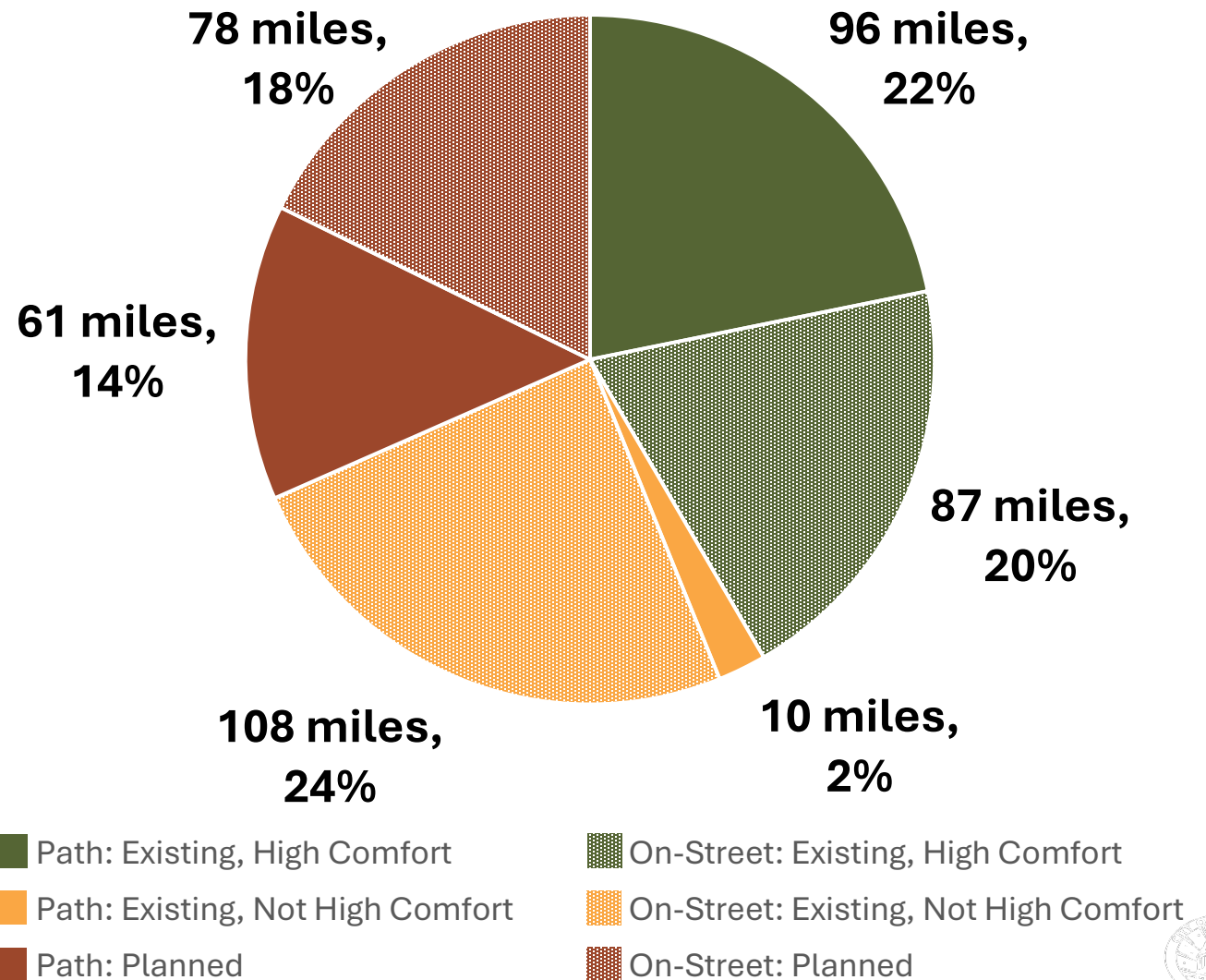
# Bike Lane



- Buffers between the bike lane and vehicle traffic are preferred. Buffers increase comfort but do not provide physical protection.
- Striped bike lanes, with or without buffer space, are only considered high comfort when there is relatively little vehicle traffic and when vehicle speeds are low.

# What's the status of the network today?

- Approximately 42% of the High Comfort Network currently meets high comfort standards.
  - 96 miles of paths
  - 87 miles of on-street bikeways
- The remaining 58% of the network either exists but does not meet high comfort standards or is planned.
  - 71 miles of paths
  - 186 miles of on-street bikeways



# Bicycle Network Status

The envisioned Network is in various stages of completion. Portions of the network are already high comfort and low stress, while other portions are high stress, and some areas have yet to be built.

**Draft High Comfort Network Status: On-Street Facilities**

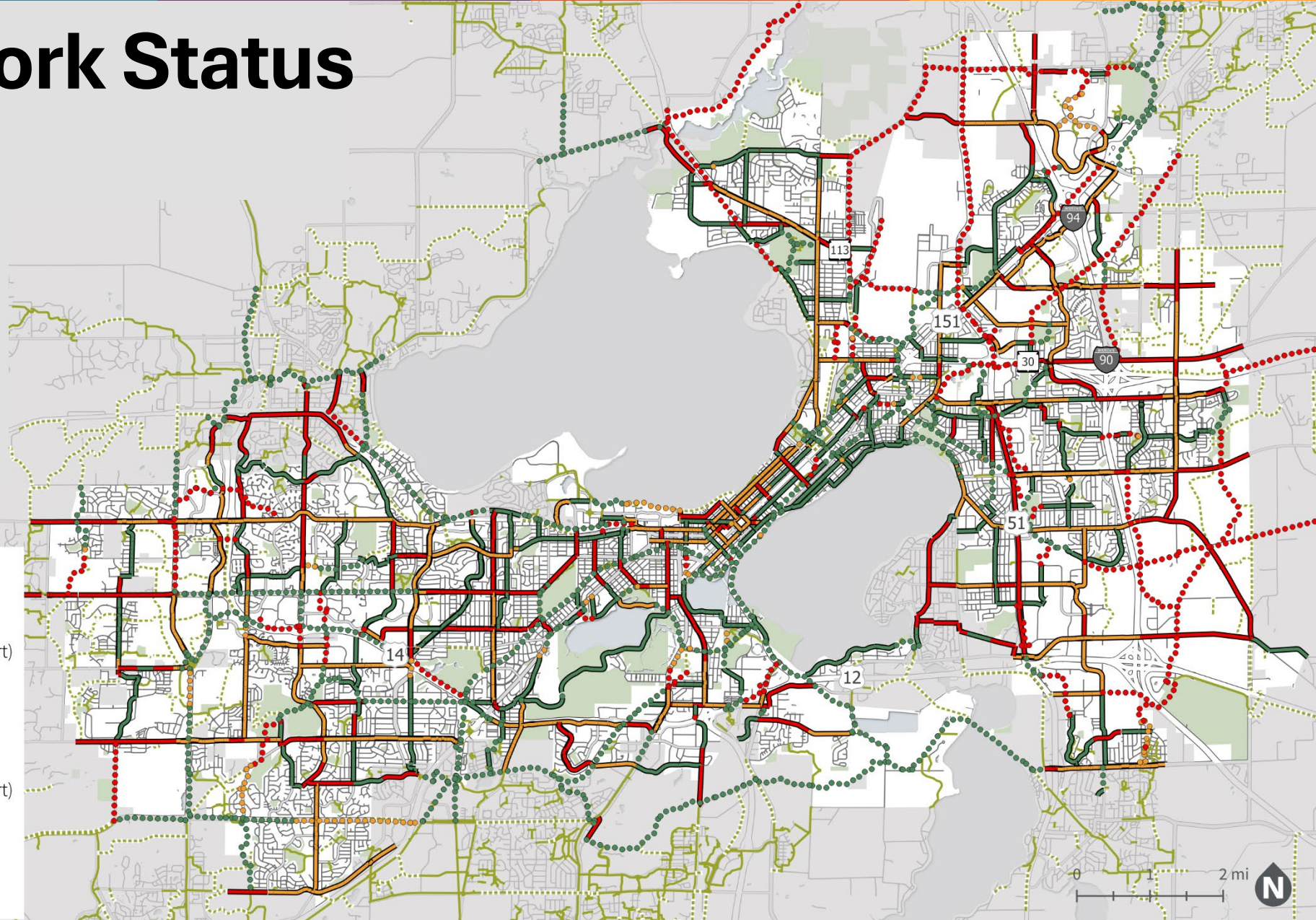
- Existing (High Comfort)
- Existing (Not High Comfort)
- Planned

**Draft High Comfort Network Status: Paths**

- Existing (High Comfort)
- Existing (Not High Comfort)
- Planned

**Non-AAA Network Paths**

- Other Path Existing
- Other Path Planned



# What will network implementation look like?

- The majority of the network will be implemented as street projects arise. The Complete Green Streets Guide will be used to prioritize limited space.
- Some portions of the network will be constructed as [stand-alone bike projects](#), as funding allows.
- Larger path projects are generally dependent on grant funding.
- Full network buildout will likely take decades.



# High Comfort Network Plan Timeline

- **Monday, April 20:** Draft Network Plan released for public review and comment
- **Thursday, April 23:** Virtual Public Information Meeting for draft plan overview
- **Monday, May 11:** Public comment period closes
- **May–June:** Plan revisions
- **Summer:** Plan adoption

# Comment on the Draft Network Plan

Visit the [Bicycle Network Plan website](https://www.cityofmadison.com/traffic-engineering/biking-walking/get-biking/bicycle-plan)

- <https://www.cityofmadison.com/traffic-engineering/biking-walking/get-biking/bicycle-plan>
- **Click the link** to Explore the Network Map
  - Comments can be added to an interactive map
- Comments will be accepted until noon on Monday, May 11