



Chicago Cycling Strategy



Spring 2023



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Letter from CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi

We are excited to share this latest update of our *Chicago Cycling Strategy*. The pages that follow tell the story of where we’ve been and where we’re headed on this journey to build the best bike network of any big city in the county. We reflect on lessons learned over many years of success and a few setbacks along the way. We share our lived understanding that local knowledge and know-how can make all the difference in delivering a bike system that connects people to meaningful destinations in their lives, and in turn, makes our city a better place for us all.

This is a **CHICAGO** Cycling Strategy. Not a strategy forged someplace else by people who don’t know our city or live in it. To be sure, we’ve studied and built relationships with our peers in cities all over the world. And while our work is informed by that knowledge, it is no substitute for the wisdom of neighbors, the people who live on the block, the folks who want to make cycling a part of their everyday life, and the community of people—cyclists or not—that form the network of support that makes it all possible.

This is a Chicago Cycling **STRATEGY**. We recognize the limits of a singular, codified plan from a particular time and place that attempts to predict a decade or more into the future. Our approach is one with an openness to change. The maps will evolve as projects emerge and our conversations with communities deepen. Make no mistake: we are staking out our vision for the next 150 miles of bikeways. But more important than that, we are sharing the analysis, experiences, and practiced methods that inform that vision and will help us get there in a matter of a few years.

And, of course, this is a Chicago **CYCLING** Strategy. It’s more important than ever that we work together to make our city a more equitable, safe, and inviting place for people to bike.

We hope you will join us on this journey.

Onward!



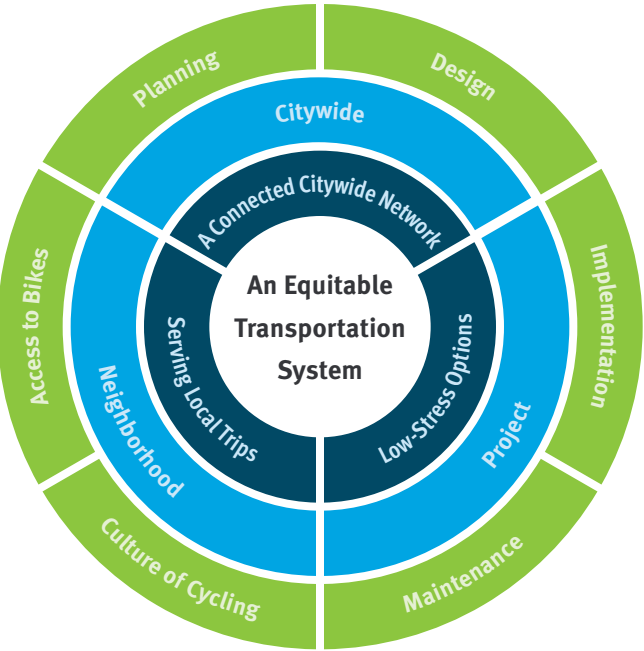


Logan Square Open Boulevard

Why We're Here

The *Chicago Cycling Strategy* represents a new path toward achieving an equitable transportation system through cycling. It is a Chicago-specific strategy tailor-made for moving cycling forward. The *Strategy* will guide the planning and implementation of our bike network and reflects the rapidly evolving nature of the transportation landscape. Not only are mobility technologies changing quickly, but best practices for engagement and design will continue to evolve.

The *Chicago Cycling Strategy* is built around three **Strategic Pillars** for everyday biking, requires working at multiple **Network Scales**, and advances cycling through six foundational **Building Blocks**. It is dynamic and flexible, focused on achieving the larger vision without being overly prescriptive of particular routes. This allows for individual communities to be active participants in the development of a more equitable transportation system. Chicago truly is a diverse city of neighborhoods, so we won't rely on a one size fits all approach to planning and implementing our bike network.



- THE STRATEGIC PILLARS
- THE NETWORK SCALES
- THE BUILDING BLOCKS

About This Strategy

The *Chicago Cycling Strategy* represents an equitable and efficient approach to implementing a cycling system that better serves everyone. Our cycling system must function for all trip types and a wide cross-section of people. This document outlines our commitment to a low stress network—protected bike lanes, neighborhood greenways, and off-street trails.

The *Chicago Cycling Strategy* offers **Our Vision for the Next 150 Miles of Bikeways** to be designed and implemented by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) in partnership with stakeholders in the next couple of years. **Of the identified projects, 85% are protected bike lanes and neighborhood greenways.** This map of projects will continually evolve and expand so that Chicagoans can have an understanding of the near-term direction of network growth.

Whether you are biking to citywide destinations such as downtown or to places in your neighborhood like schools, parks, and local businesses—**every resident and visitor of our city deserves to have the option of a comfortable, safe, and convenient bike ride.**

The **Building Blocks** to achieve our vision of an equitable system and ensure long-term success are both centered on roadway infrastructure investments and dependent on community partnerships, increasing access to bikes, and maintaining everything that we build together.

Chicago's cycling network has grown incredibly over the last decade and will soon reach 500 miles of on-street and off-street bikeways. Almost 75% of our network growth over the last few years has occurred on the south and west sides.

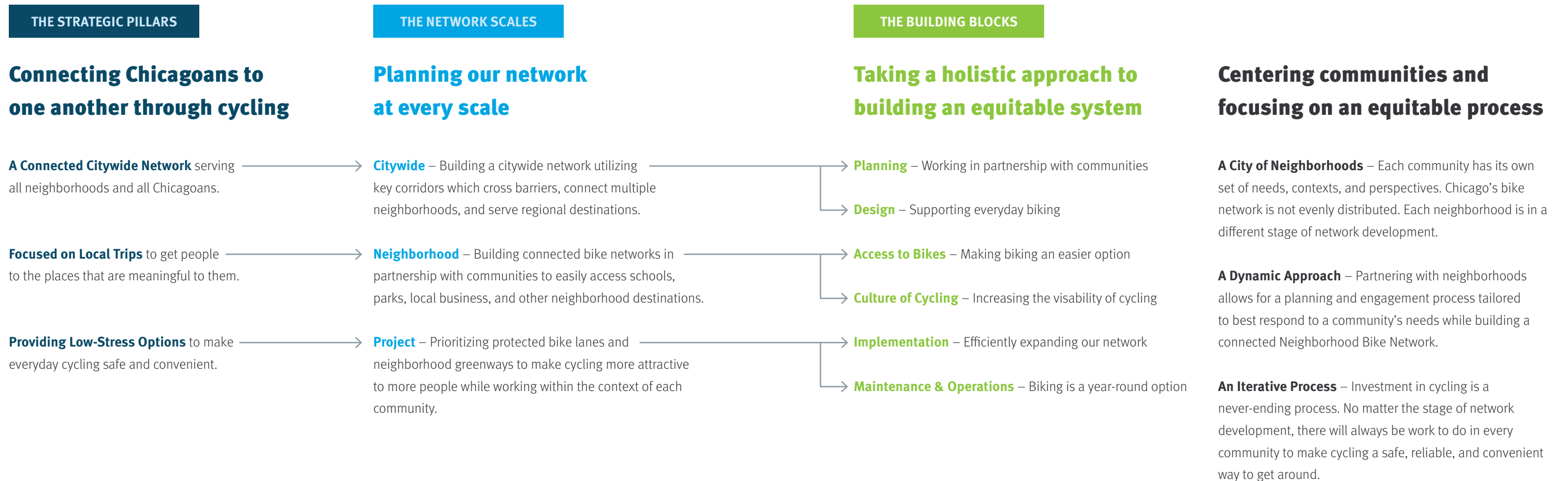
We must continue to expand our network and grow the visibility of cycling in all communities, particularly those that have historically had less bike infrastructure. In communities where the network is more established, we will identify and fill critical gaps and create opportunities to upgrade.

Chicago has a rich history of bicycling. By working together we can build a better transportation system today and an equitable cycling network for generations to come.



Jackson Boulevard protected bike lane through Columbus Park

Building the Best Bike Network in the Country





Where We're Going

Building the best bike network in the country

- The Vision
- The Value of Cycling
- The Strategy
- The Building Blocks of a Great System
- Our Vision for the Next 150 Miles of Bikeways



Argyle Shared Street

The Vision

We are building an equitable transportation system that provides people with mobility options and is focused on keeping our most vulnerable users of the street safe.

A safe, comfortable, and connected cycling network that serves all of Chicago not only improves and expands our city’s transportation system—it also helps to make our communities healthier, cleaner, more vibrant, and more equitable. Building a comprehensive citywide system requires a diverse cross-section of partnerships, collaboration, and strategies that are relevant for a variety of neighborhoods. Building a cycling network that benefits everyone—regardless of trip purpose or level of experience—requires a system that functions at every scale.

The Value of Cycling

Bicycling in Chicago continues to grow – Chicago’s bike network includes over 420 miles of on-street bikeways and off-street trails and CDOT is working to install the next 150 miles of new and upgraded cycling infrastructure. The Divvy Bike Share system continues break ridership records with more than 5.6 million Divvy trips taken in 2022 alone. Divvy is also finishing a citywide expansion, providing affordable and reliable access to bicycles for Chicagoans in every neighborhood.

The way Chicagoans are biking is changing – We’re witnessing a tremendous shift in who is riding a bike, the types of trips made by bike, and how biking is recognized as an essential transportation option. There is growing interest and enthusiasm for biking in communities throughout Chicago. More people than ever are getting around their neighborhood by bike, with an emphasis on recreation, exercise, and short trips. Most importantly, grassroots efforts are bringing biking to the forefront.

The more that Chicagoans bike, the healthier, cleaner, and safer our communities will become – Bicycling is more than just a way to get around—it’s a crucial ingredient to building great communities. A safe and well-organized network of bikeways improves access to local businesses, schools, jobs, cultural institutions, neighborhood destinations, and surrounding communities. Giving more people safe and convenient options to get around by bike directly supports community initiatives focused on economic development, public health, and overall quality of life.

The benefits of biking have not been spread evenly throughout our city – Some communities are still not well served by Chicago’s bike network. It’s not enough to add bike lanes to a few streets—these neighborhoods won’t experience the vast benefits of biking until people have convenient access to all the places most important to them.



Kinzie Street Protected Bike Lane

The Strategy

The *Chicago Cycling Strategy* allows for flexible approaches which can change over time to best meet our needs.

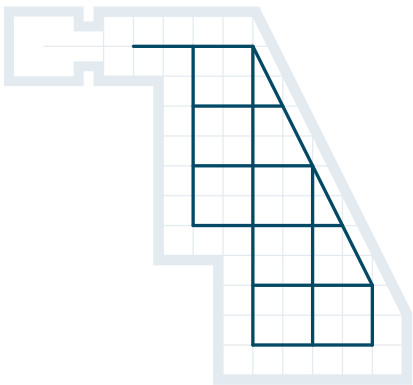
This strategy emerges from over a decade of community engagement and project experience – This strategy is based on years of learning what does and does not work when building bike lanes in Chicago. The three **Strategic Pillars** are the culmination of hard-earned experience—both successes and setbacks—working in neighborhoods throughout Chicago.

This strategy provides the flexibility needed to adapt to future conditions – This strategy establishes the long-term vision for Chicago’s bike network while recognizing that many individual locations will be identified through community partnerships, emerging opportunities, and evolving standards.

This strategy is focused on implementation and long-term success – Building relationships and connecting cycling to the community issues at the forefront of most people’s minds is how we can expand our network and grow a culture of cycling as efficiently as possible.

Our streets represent one of our city’s greatest public space assets and opportunities. **The *Chicago Cycling Strategy* is not just another planning document—it is a road map for how we can transform the way we use our streets.**

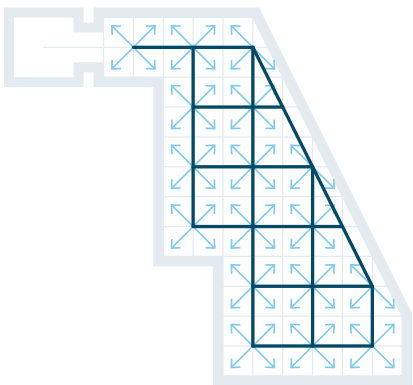
The Strategic Pillars for Everyday Cycling



A Connected Network serving all neighborhoods and all Chicagoans

What this means – Every neighborhood is connected to a citywide network of continuous bikeways that connect to regional destinations.

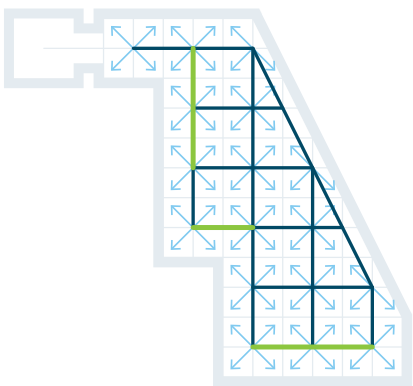
How do we make it happen – By prioritizing long crosstown corridors which cross barriers and connect multiple neighborhoods together. We will continue filling gaps to ensure continuous bikeways.



Focused on Local Trips to get people to the places that are meaningful to them

What this means – Every neighborhood has a network of connected bikeways so more people can use biking as a way to get around for local trips.

How do we make it happen – By expanding the bikeway network through connected Neighborhood Bike Networks in communities with low bikeway density, building momentum from one neighborhood to the next.



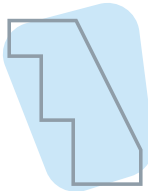
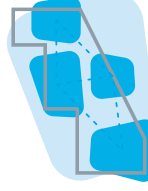
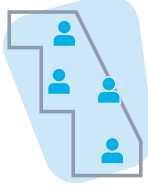
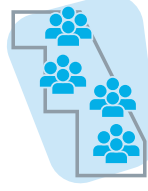
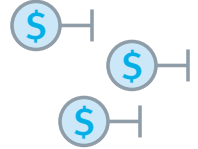



Providing Low-Stress Options to make everyday cycling safe and convenient

What this means – Every Chicagoan has access to the low-stress bikeway network (trails, neighborhood greenways, and protected bike lanes).

How do we make it happen – By developing connected low-stress networks and continuous low-stress corridors throughout the city.

The *Chicago Cycling Strategy* is different than past planning efforts. It will guide the implementation of our network moving forward and reflects the rapidly evolving nature of the transportation landscape.

	Traditional Bike Plans	Chicago Cycling Strategy
Adaptability	<div><p>Static Traditional bike plans are static. As time passes they cannot keep up with new and emerging trends and adapt to new circumstances.</p></div>	<div><p>Dynamic This strategy guides long-term network development with flexible approaches to implementation which remain responsive to changing conditions.</p></div>
Scale	<div><p>Citywide only Traditional bike plans are mostly planned at the city level and lack nuance and context to identify meaningful local connections within individual neighborhoods.</p></div>	<div><p>Citywide & Neighborhood We are planning our cycling network at both the citywide and neighborhood scales, building upon local expertise within each community.</p></div>
Engagement	<div><p>Limited Citywide Engagement Traditional bike plans have a limited citywide engagement period which does not allow for enough meaningful conversations within each neighborhood.</p></div>	<div><p>Ongoing Neighborhood Engagement This strategy includes ongoing localized coordination through Neighborhood Bike Networks. This allows us to cultivate community relationships and trust.</p></div>
Funding	<div><p>Ad-hoc Ad-hoc funding means buildout is slow and inconsistent. Each funding source has its own requirements and limitations, and funding cannot be relied upon year after year.</p></div>	<div><p>Dedicated Local Funding Chicago Works provides CDOT with dedicated local funding for Complete Streets projects. This is crucial for the fast and continuous buildout of our bike network.</p></div>

CASE STUDY – PUTTING THE STRATEGY TO ACTION



The Biking Out Negativity community bike ride in the North Lawndale neighborhood.

NORTH LAWDALE – TRIPLING THE BIKE NETWORK IN TWO YEARS

North Lawndale is a community that for far too long had been left out of the decision-making process for transportation and cycling infrastructure. The neighborhood experienced high economic and mobility hardship, was identified as a High Crash Area in the *Vision Zero Chicago Action Plan*, and was not well connected to Chicago’s bike network. Previous efforts to upgrade bike infrastructure were done so without collaboration with the community.

CDOT partnered with the North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council, Boxing Out Negativity, and other neighborhood-based organizations for the North Lawndale Neighborhood Bike Network. Through that effort, CDOT nearly tripled the number of bikeways in North Lawndale in just two years.

- This effort included:
- **Increasing access to bikes** – Expanding Divvy Bike Share to the neighborhood and installing over 100 new bike racks.
 - **Building a culture of biking** – Partnering with the community for Open Boulevards events and community bike rides.
 - **Providing citywide connections** – Installing new bike routes connecting to nearby neighborhoods.
 - **Serving local destinations** – Developing a grid of routes serving community-identified destinations.
 - **Low-Stress Bikeways** – Building new protected bike lanes and neighborhood greenways

We achieved more in two years with this strategy than had been accomplished in the previous decade.



The Bike Chicago bike distribution program is giving away 5,000 free bikes to eligible Chicago residents.

The Building Blocks of a Great System

Building a great system takes more than just infrastructure. We’re taking a holistic approach to building the best bike network in the country.

Planning

Different Approaches for Different Neighborhoods – Expanding our bike network and building long-term success is not a one size fits all approach. Every neighborhood has different opportunities, challenges, and perceptions of biking. We’ve learned that network development is most successful when we work in partnership with communities, responding to their needs and feedback along the way.

It’s not enough to add bike lanes to a few streets. A neighborhood needs a connected network to truly experience the benefits of cycling and neighbors can access the destinations most meaningful to them. We’ve developed a process for building connected Neighborhood Bike Networks while also rapidly expanding our citywide connections.

Planning at Every Scale – We’re planning our bike network at multiple scales to create a Network of Networks.

1. **Citywide** – Together we’re building a connected citywide network serving all neighborhoods and all Chicagoans. This citywide network is focused on facilitating cross-neighborhood trips, crossing barriers, and providing access to regional destinations, such as our trail system and the Loop.
2. **Neighborhood** – Together we’re building local networks within each neighborhood, facilitating short trips to get people to the places most meaningful to them. Each neighborhood is different, and we will build Neighborhood Bike Networks through collaboration with community stakeholders.
3. **Project** – Together we’re building more low-stress options than ever before to make everyday bicycling safe and convenient for all Chicagoans. We are working block by block at the local level to ensure projects fit within the context of each community.

Southwest Side Neighborhood Bike Network – CDOT began the South Lawndale Neighborhood Bike Network in 2022 through an extensive engagement effort in Little Village and Marshall Square. Our team attended dozens of community events and hosted Learn-to-Ride events in Piotrowski Park and La Villita Park. We also worked closely with community partners to identify a quick-build network of bikeways to get people to local destinations most important to them. Many of these routes will be installed in 2023.

A new Neighborhood Bike Network planning and engagement process will begin in 2023 in the Brighton Park, Gage Park, and McKinley Park neighborhoods.

Far South Side Network Development – CDOT is partnering with the Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways on a Lake Calumet Bikeway Network Plan to identify opportunities to enhance bikeway connections centered around Lake Calumet.

Downtown Protected Bike Lane Network – We will start an expansion of the Downtown protected bike lane network in 2023. This expansion will benefit residents from across the city, commuters from across the region, and visitors from across the world.

Citywide Priority Corridors – Protected bike lanes are planned for key corridors throughout Chicago, including Belmont, Clark, Damen, Division, Halsted, Kedzie, and Milwaukee. Many of these projects are being coordinated through other CDOT projects, such as arterial resurfacing, street reconstruction, or streetscapes projects, for a more efficient buildout of the bike network.

Off-Street Trail System – Chicago’s trail network is an important piece of our bike network. In partnership with the Department of Planning and Development and the Chicago Park District, CDOT released a citywide vision for trails in Chicago in 2022. The vision highlights a trail network connecting to transit, housing, and parks throughout the city. These new trails and corresponding connections will greatly increase access to low-stress bikeways in our city.

Citywide Bike Count Program – We are developing a citywide bike count program through the use of permanent video-based counting equipment located at intersections all over the city. Over time, this program will provide us with the most comprehensive picture of biking trends we’ve ever had, and will help us understand how biking varies by time of day, time of year, and location throughout Chicago.



Installation of precast concrete curb on the Kinzie Street Protected Bike Lane

Design

Updating Design Standards – CDOT is always developing new Complete Streets Design Standards to help us expand protected bike lanes and neighborhood greenways to more streets, reduce conflict points at bus stops and intersections, and produce more consistent bikeway designs across all CDOT projects.

Upgrading Protected Bike Lanes with Concrete Curbs – We have begun upgrading all existing protected bike lanes with concrete curbs. Moving forward, concrete curbs will be the default barrier utilized when new protected bike lanes are installed.

Converting Existing Bikeways to Protected Bike Lanes – We’ve begun upgrading buffered bike lanes to protected bike lanes. We finalized designs for protected bike lanes on Kedzie Avenue, Augusta Boulevard, and Milwaukee Avenue in 2022 will continue upgrading more routes in 2023.

Bus Boarding Islands – CDOT worked closely with CTA to develop a variety of bus boarding island designs which enhance bus operations and eliminate bus-bike conflicts at bus stops. In 2022, eight new bus boarding islands along Milwaukee Avenue were installed. Seven were installed through arterial resurfacing on a section of Milwaukee Avenue which was upgraded from a buffered bike lane to a protected bike lane. Bus boarding islands will become a regular feature of protected bike lanes along bus routes, with dozens of locations already planned and under design.

State Jurisdiction Protected Bike Lanes – CDOT has begun coordination and design for protected bike lanes on five corridors under state jurisdiction– Washington, Canal, Jackson, South Chicago, and Stony Island.

Implementation

Dedicated Local Funding for Complete Streets – The Chicago Works Capital Improvement Program is our first ever dedicated local funding source to help make our streets safer for people walking, biking, and taking transit. Reliable local funding is critical to making biking a safe and affordable transportation option for all Chicagoans.

Coordination Across Programs – CDOT is utilizing every means available to expand and upgrade our bike network as efficiently as possible. We are coordinating closely across capital programs such as arterial resurfacing, street reconstruction, and streetscapes to ensure we are building a connected network as quickly as possible.

Coordination with IDOT – CDOT recently established a landmark Memorandum of Understanding with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to streamline the implementation of safety measures on streets under state jurisdiction. Additionally, we have begun initial design on five protected bike lane corridors under IDOT jurisdiction.



CDOT is expanding the number of vehicles used to clear protected bike lanes.

Maintenance & Operations

Smart Streets Pilot Program – CDOT introduced the recently passed the Smart Streets ordinance which creates the Smart Streets Pilot Program. The ordinance authorizes an automated enforcement pilot program for the ticketing of vehicle owners for parking in bike lanes, bus lanes, crosswalks, and other “no parking” areas. The two-year pilot will take place in an area bounded by Lake Michigan, Ashland Avenue, North Avenue, and Roosevelt Road.

Maintenance of Traffic Standards – We are updating the Rules and Regulations for Construction in the Public Way to strengthen existing maintenance of traffic (MOT) requirements for bikeways. We developed and implemented a new standard toolkit of signs and channelizing devices that are required whenever work may impact a bike facility. This toolkit was recently presented to hundreds of private contractors, utility agencies, and in-house construction staff to clarify MOT requirements for work within the public way.

Protected Bike Lane Maintenance – CDOT maintains protected bike lanes, including regular sweeping, salting, and plowing. To keep up with the rapid expansion of protected bike lanes throughout Chicago, we have tripled the number of maintenance vehicles in our fleet able to operate in protected bike lanes.

Bike Lane Restriping – CDOT is committed to maintaining our existing bikeways. Bike lanes are restriped through a variety of programs, including maintenance programs, arterial resurfacing, and utility restoration.



Douglas Open Boulevard event in the North Lawndale neighborhood

Access to Bikes

Divvy Bike Share Expansion – CDOT is expanding the Divvy bike share system to the entire City. By the end of 2023, all neighborhoods will have access to the system.

Divvy For Everyone (D4E) – To ensure all Chicagoans have access to the Divvy bike share system, D4E provides a \$5 Membership to qualifying residents. The program also incorporates a cash payment system for those individuals who do not have debit, credit card, or prepaid card required for a standard Divvy membership.

Bike Chicago – In 2022, CDOT launched an initiative to distribute 5,000 free bikes and safety equipment to age and income eligible Chicagoans by 2026. More than 19,000 residents applied to Bike Chicago in its first year, demonstrating a clear demand for bikes and interest in cycling in every Chicago neighborhood. The program received applications from all of Chicago’s 77 community areas, with a majority of applications from areas where residents face higher mobility hardship. CDOT expects to have distributed 1,500 bikes by the end of 2023.



CDOT hosted 24 Learn-to-Ride classes in the Little Village neighborhood.

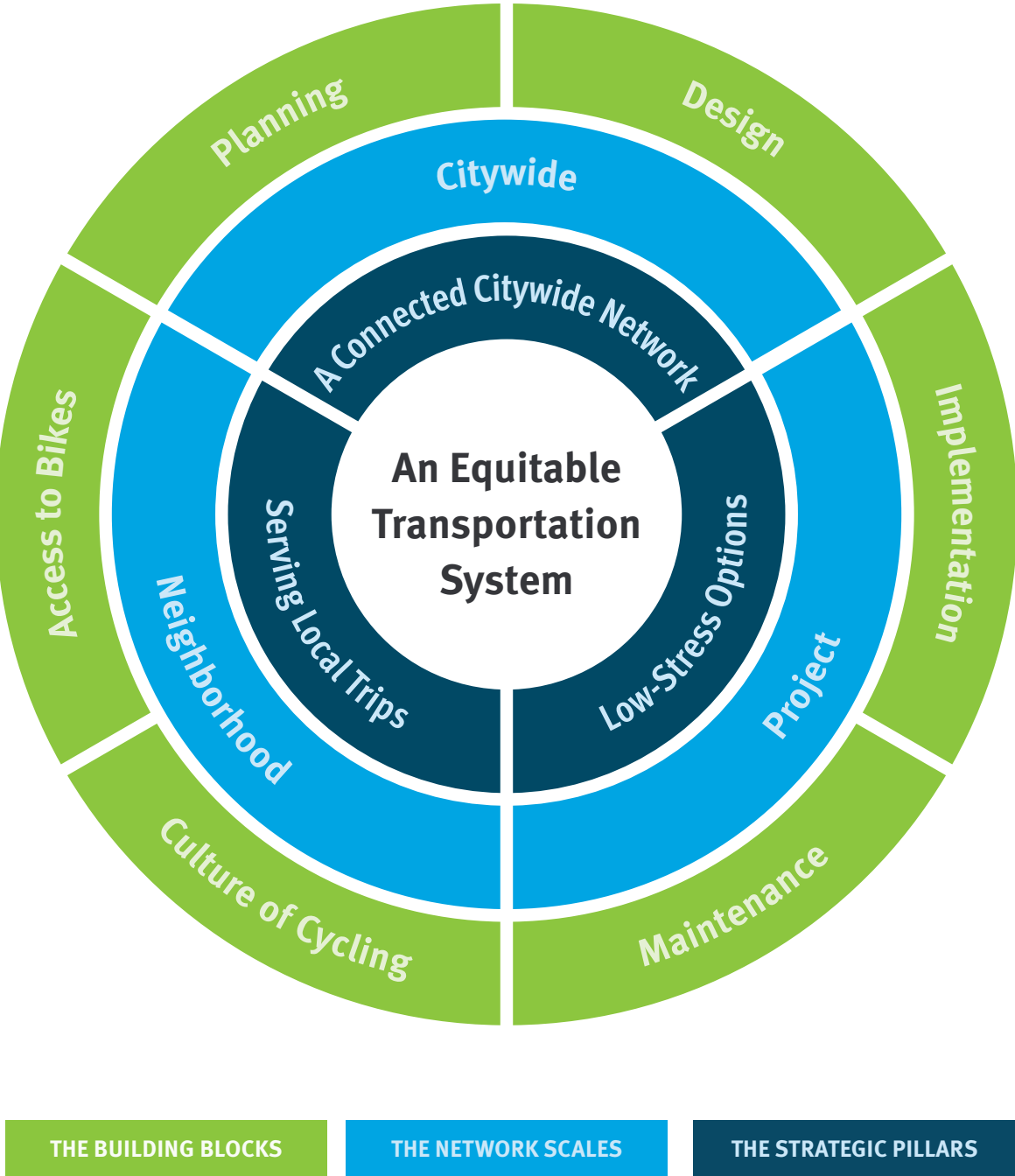
Culture of Cycling

SAFE Ambassadors – The SAFE Ambassadors (Streets Are For Everyone) are CDOT’s education and outreach team. Each year they travel all over the city engaging with people of all ages and backgrounds about pedestrian and bike safety. The Ambassadors offer presentations, literature, and biking activities at parks, schools, and community events.

Learn-to-Ride – CDOT provides free classes for both adults and children to learn to ride a bike. These events are taught by our SAFE Ambassadors throughout the city. In 2022, classes were offered in both English and Spanish to better meet the needs of city residents and serve more people.

Open Boulevards – CDOT partnered with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and the Chicago Park District to create the Open Boulevards program. These day-long street activations transform Chicago’s historic boulevards into community spaces by opening the street for walking, biking, scootering, socializing, and enjoying food, programming, and activities from local community partners.

The Chicago Cycling Strategy



Our Vision for the Next 150 Miles of Bikeways

CDOT plans to implement 150 miles of new bikeways in the next few years. Funding has been identified and these projects are in different stages of outreach, coordination, design, and construction. These projects include important citywide connections and local neighborhood routes. **The majority of these projects will be low-stress—either protected bike lanes or neighborhood greenways.**

Access to Low-Stress Bikeways

Our vision for the next 150 miles of bikeways provides more than half a million more Chicagoans with access to low-stress bikeways. Currently, half of Chicagoans live within ½ mile of a protected bike lane, neighborhood greenway, or off-street trail. **Implementation of these projects will result in 70% of Chicagoans living within ½ mile of a low-stress bikeway.**

Project Selection

Projects are selected through an assessment of network needs and opportunities at both the citywide and neighborhood scales. Our Vision for the Next 150 Miles of Bikeways represents network upgrades, gap-fillers, and expansion into new neighborhoods.

85%

of planned projects are low-stress bikeways.

- Citywide connections are generally identified based on:
- Extensions of existing corridors, especially routes which cross network barriers or connect to existing or planned Neighborhood Bike Networks
 - Protected Bike Lane upgrade opportunities identified through Protected Bike Lane Feasibility Analysis
 - Overlap with planned streetscapes, street reconstruction, and arterial resurfacing projects

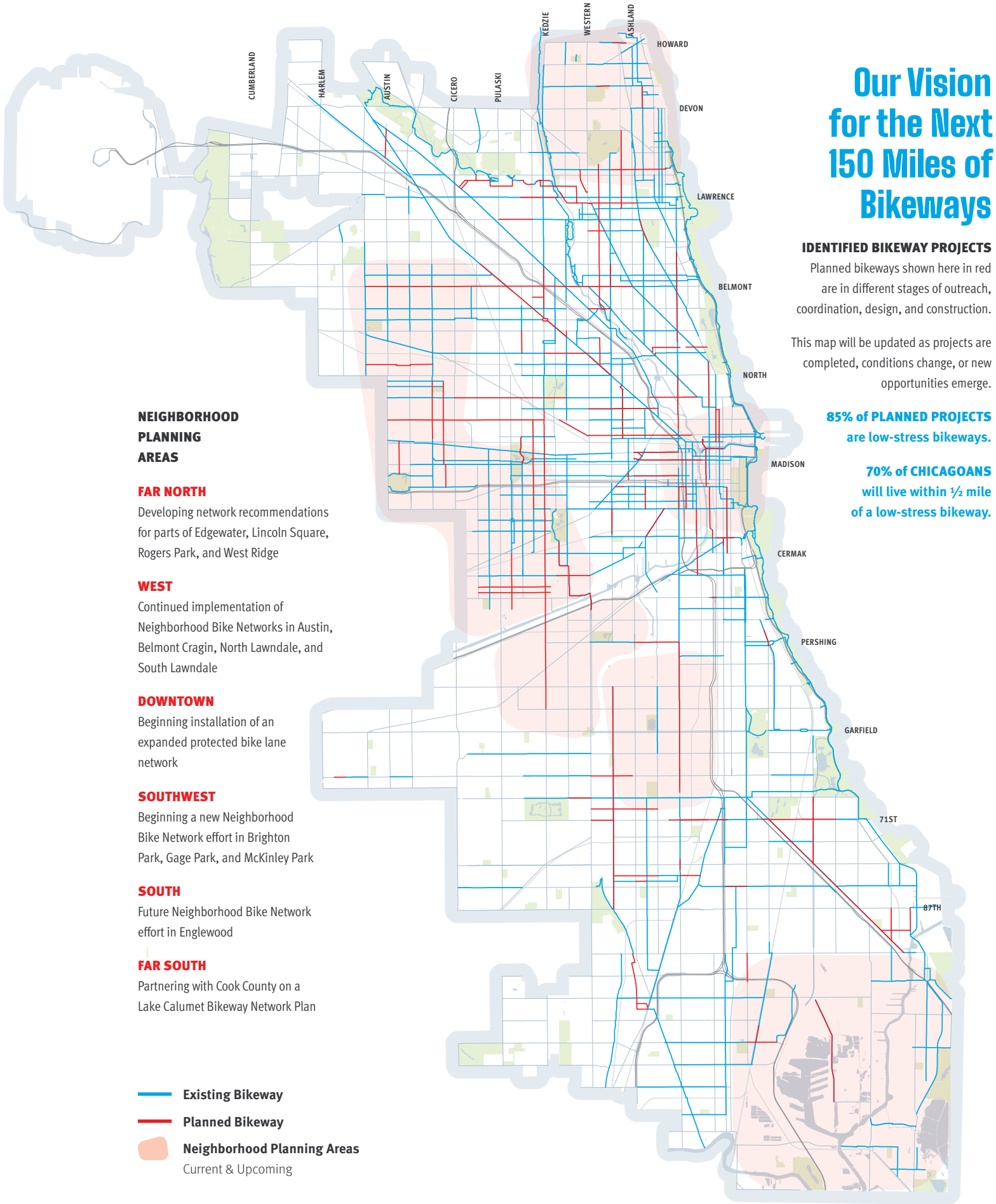
- Local connections are generally identified based on:
- Recommendations from past and ongoing Neighborhood Bike Network efforts
 - Opportunities to fill network gaps and connect to existing low-stress routes
 - Community priorities identified through aldermanic coordination and/or participatory budgeting

Future Planning

This map will continually evolve as projects are completed, conditions change, or new opportunities emerge. Additional Neighborhood Bike Networks will continue to expand as new community partnerships are established.

70%

of Chicagoans will live within ½ mile of a low-stress bikeway.





How Far We've Come

Our bike network growth
over the years



The new Rockwell Neighborhood Greenway in Logan Square provides families with a comfortable way to cross Fullerton Avenue.

Growth of the Network

Chicago’s network will soon include over 500 miles of on-street bikeways and off-street trails – Bicycle infrastructure has more than doubled since 2010, and the pace at which our network is growing is increasing. More importantly, the rate at which low-stress bikeways are growing is outpacing overall network growth.

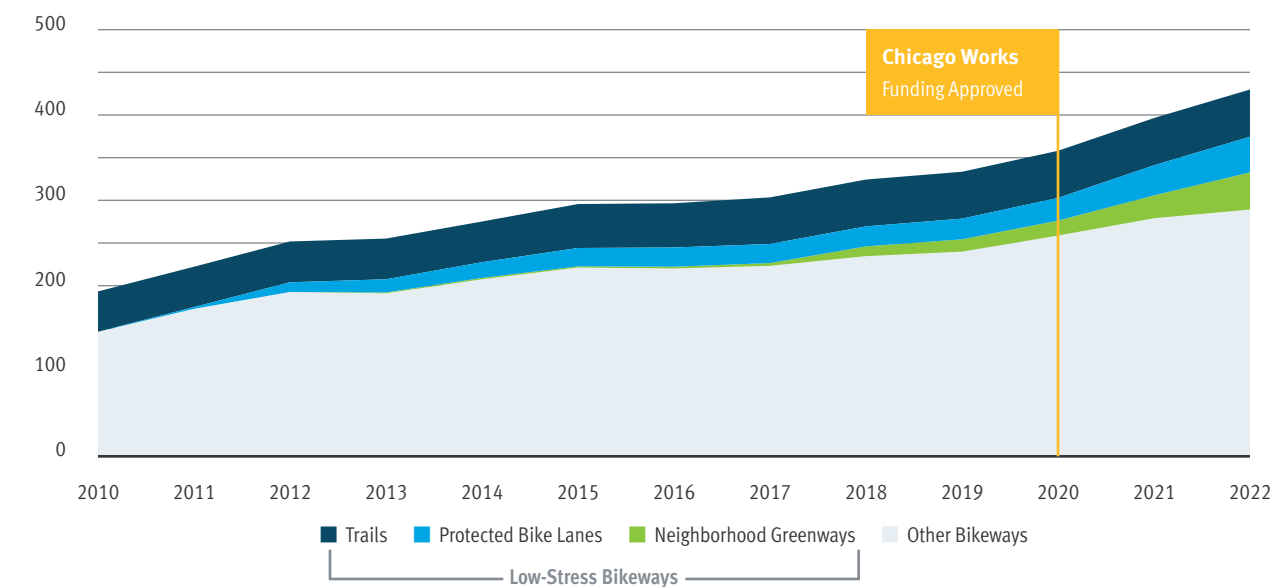
We’ve doubled the rate at which the bike network is growing – Since 2020 we’ve grown the bike network by an average of 30 miles per year—double the annual rate at which the bike network was expanding prior to 2020.

Our network grew by 100 miles from 2019 to 2023 (four years). Comparatively, the previous 100 miles of growth took seven years (2011 to 2018).

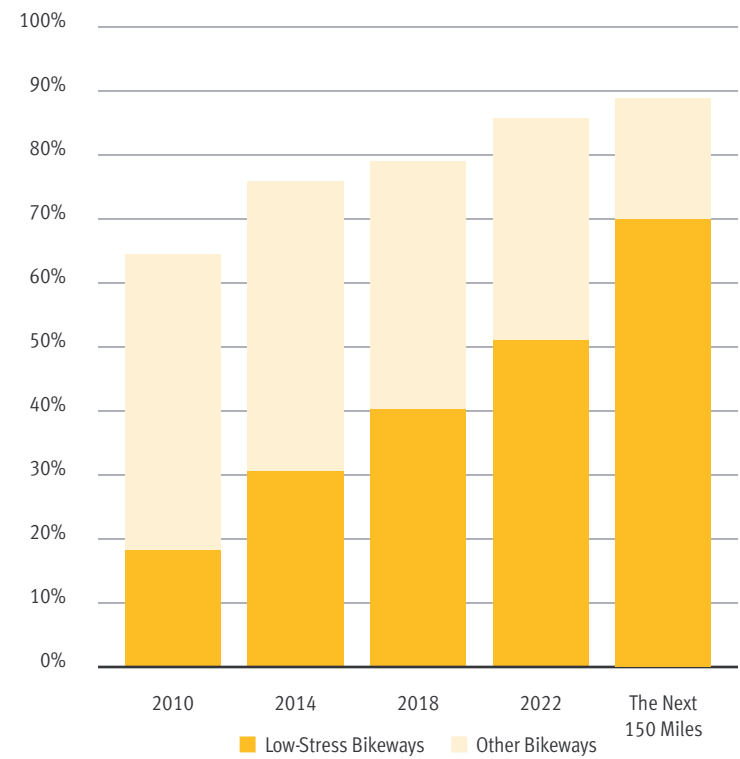
Low-stress bikeways are growing faster than other bike facilities – Over the past four years, the bike network has grown by 32%, while protected bike lanes have grown by 70% and neighborhood greenways have grown by 282%. Access to low-stress bikeways has nearly tripled since 2010, and now over half of Chicagoans live near a low-stress bikeway.

One-third of the bike network is now low-stress – The share of the bike network that is low-stress has been growing each year over the last decade. Now one-third of our bike network is made up of protected bike lanes, neighborhood greenways, and off-street trails.

YEAR BY YEAR BIKE NETWORK BUILDOUT (miles, 2010 to 2022)



POPULATION WITHIN ½ MILE OF A BIKEWAY (%)



BIKEWAY GROWTH (miles, 2018 to 2022)

	2018	2022	Increase
Protected Bike Lane	23.5	37.6	+ 60%
Neighborhood Greenways	11.4	39.2	+ 242%
Trails	54.9	55.3	+ 1%
Other Bikeways	233.6	292.4	+ 24%
Total	323.4	423.4	+ 31%

74% of bikeway network growth has been on the South & West sides (2019-2021)

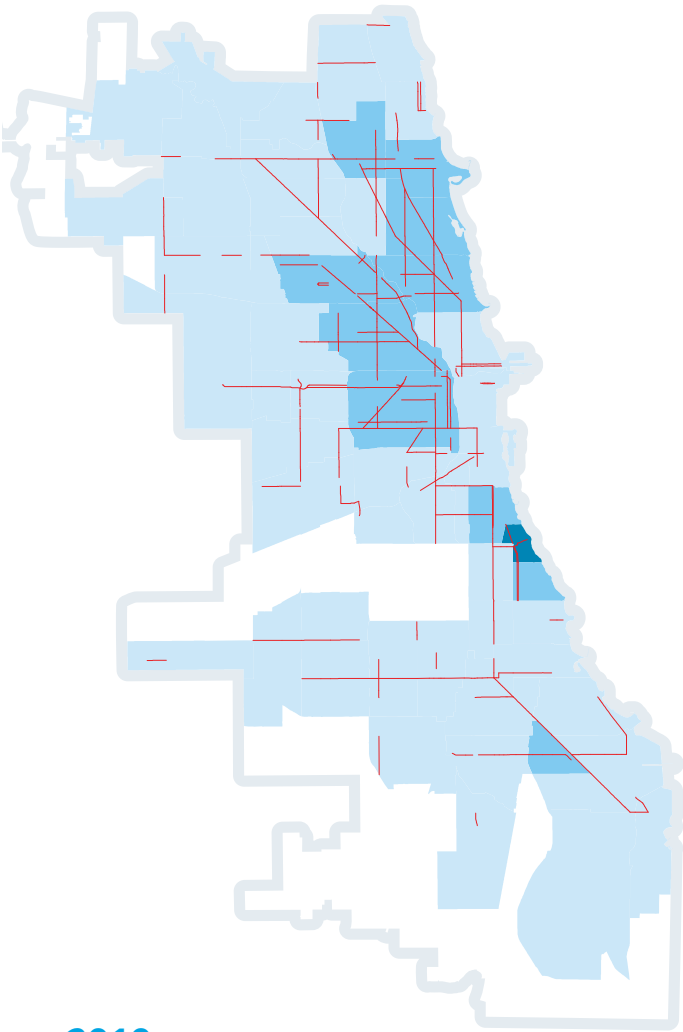
GROWTH OF CHICAGO'S ON-STREET BIKE NETWORK OVER TIME

On-Street Bikeways

Bikeway Density per Community Area

As calculated by the miles of on-street bikeways per miles of total streets in each community area

— On-Street Bikeway 0% Under 9% 9 to 15% 15 to 20% Over 20%



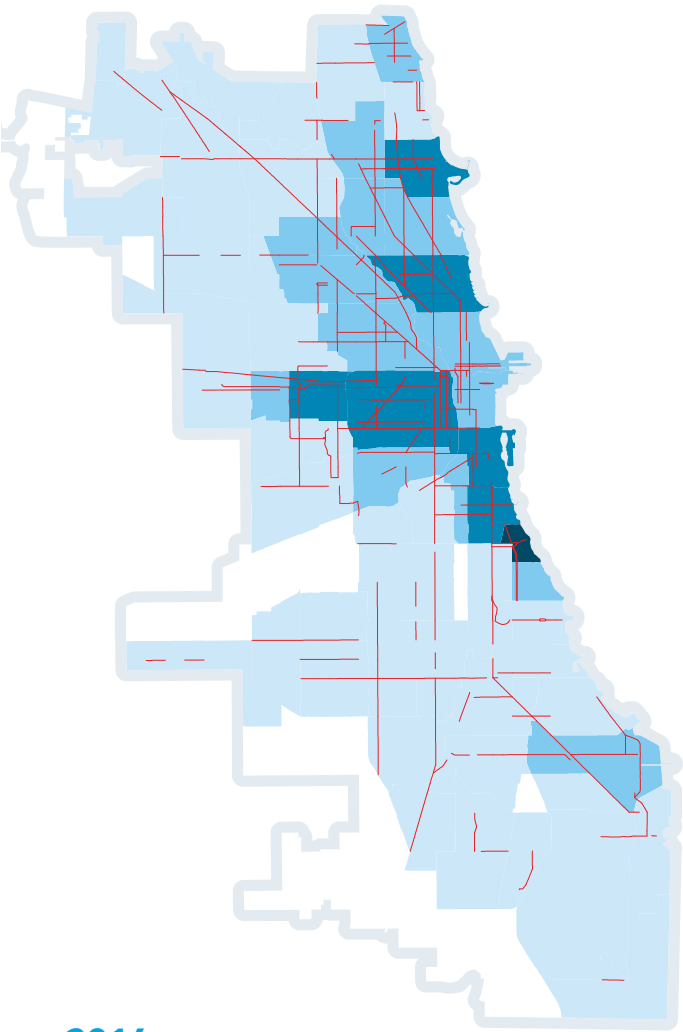
2010

Total Network

193.2 miles
65% population within 1/2 mile

Low-Stress Network

47.2 miles
18% population within 1/2 mile



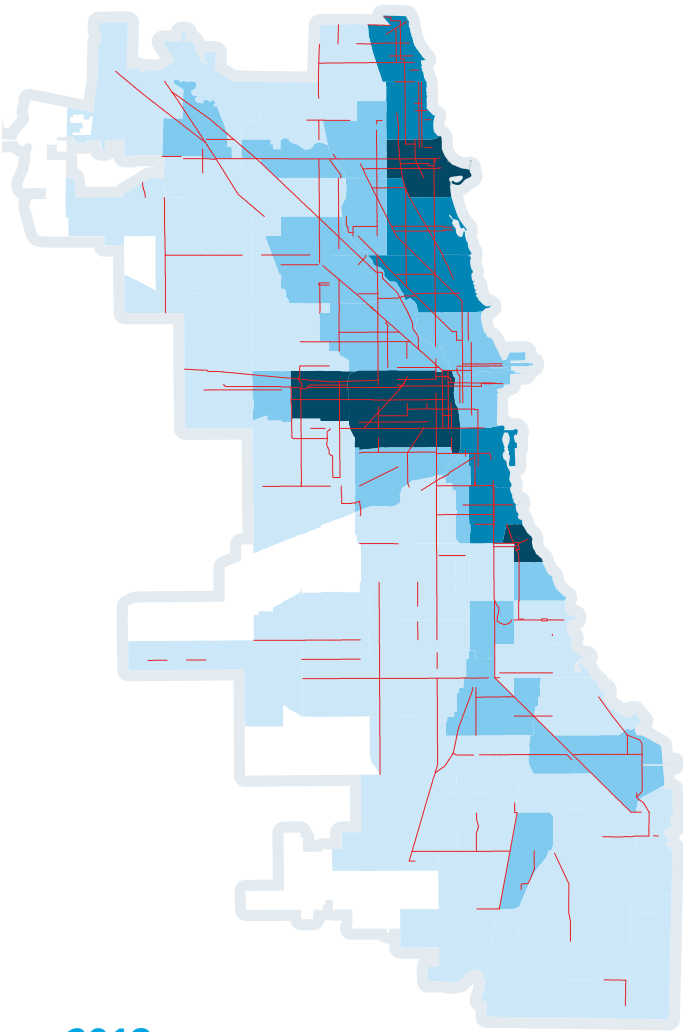
2014

Total Network

275.3 miles
76% population within 1/2 mile

Low-Stress Network

67.8 miles
31% population within 1/2 mile



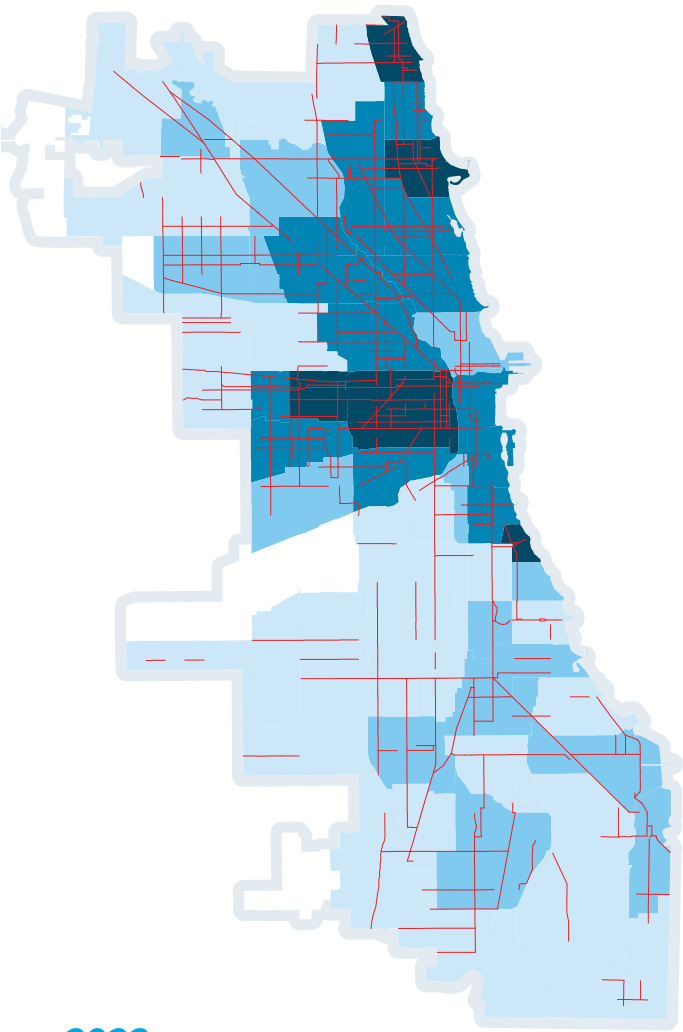
2018

Total Network

323.4 miles
80% population within 1/2 mile

Low-Stress Network

89.8 miles
41% population within 1/2 mile



2022

Total Network

423.4 miles
86% population within 1/2 mile

Low-Stress Network

132.1 miles
51% population within 1/2 mile



How We Move Forward

Putting the strategy into action

- **A Connected Network**
Serving all neighborhoods and all Chicagoans
- **Focused on Local Trips**
Connecting people to meaningful destinations
- **Providing Low-Stress Options**
Making everyday cycling safe and convenient



Milwaukee Avenue Protected Bike Lane in the River West neighborhood

A Connected Network Serving all neighborhoods and all Chicagoans

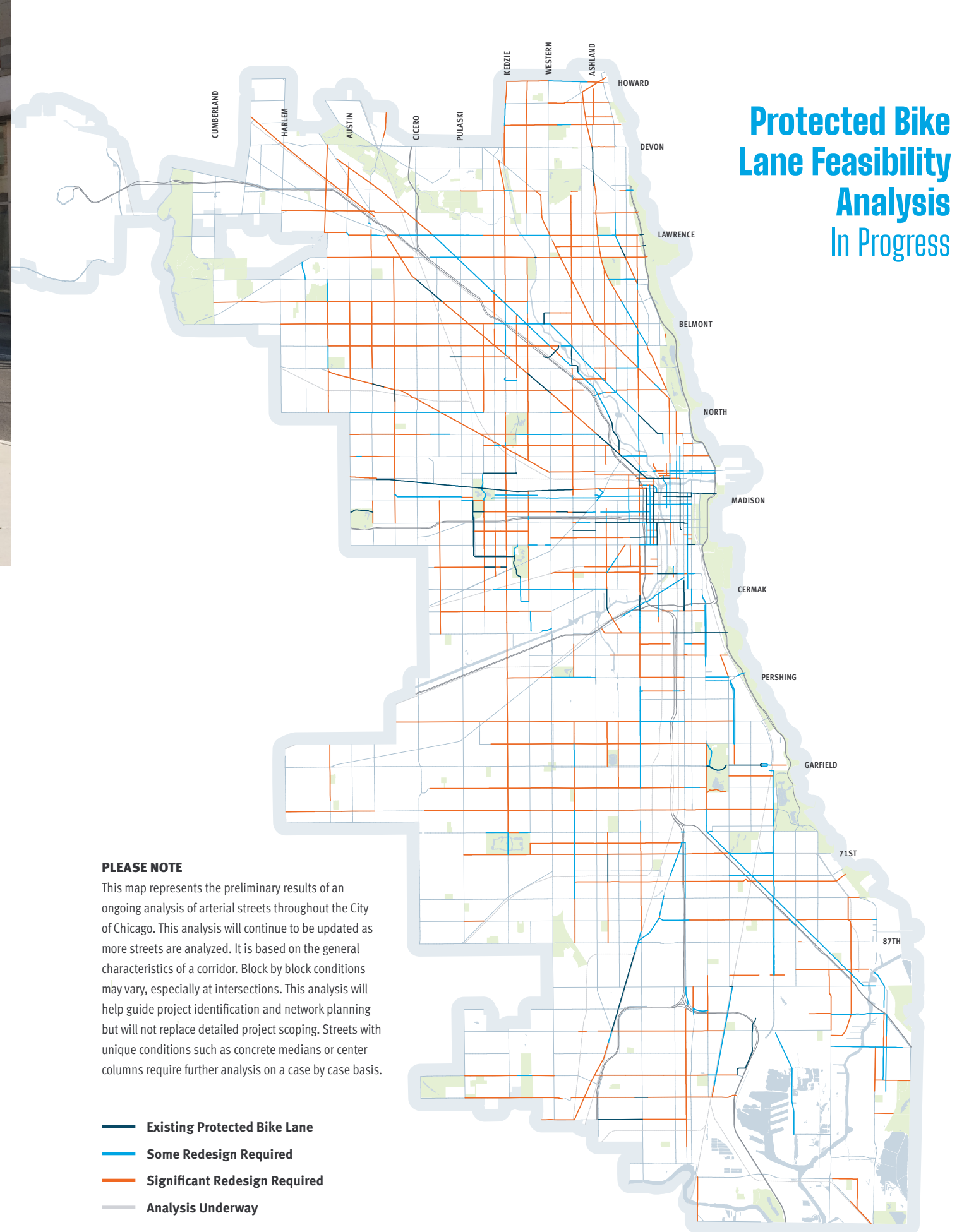
Chicago is building a network of crosstown connections to stitch every neighborhood together.

Extending Corridors & Filling Gaps

A route is only as good as its weakest link. Too many of our bikeways do not connect to one another, and short gaps break up otherwise long connected corridors. We are working towards building the most connected bike network in the United States that will have a network of bikeways extending to all corners of the city. To connect Chicagoans to one another, we will continue extending existing bikeways into more neighborhoods and filling gaps in our current network.

Protected Bike Lane Feasibility Analysis

We are in the process of analyzing every arterial street within Chicago to understand what is required to implement protected bike lanes on any given corridor. Protected bike lanes may be able to be installed on a street without large scale changes, but other streets may require the removal of parking lanes or travel lanes. By documenting the characteristics of each arterial street, we can apply our updated design standards to quickly identify the most feasible protected bike lanes for near-term implementation and plan ahead for more challenging projects. Once

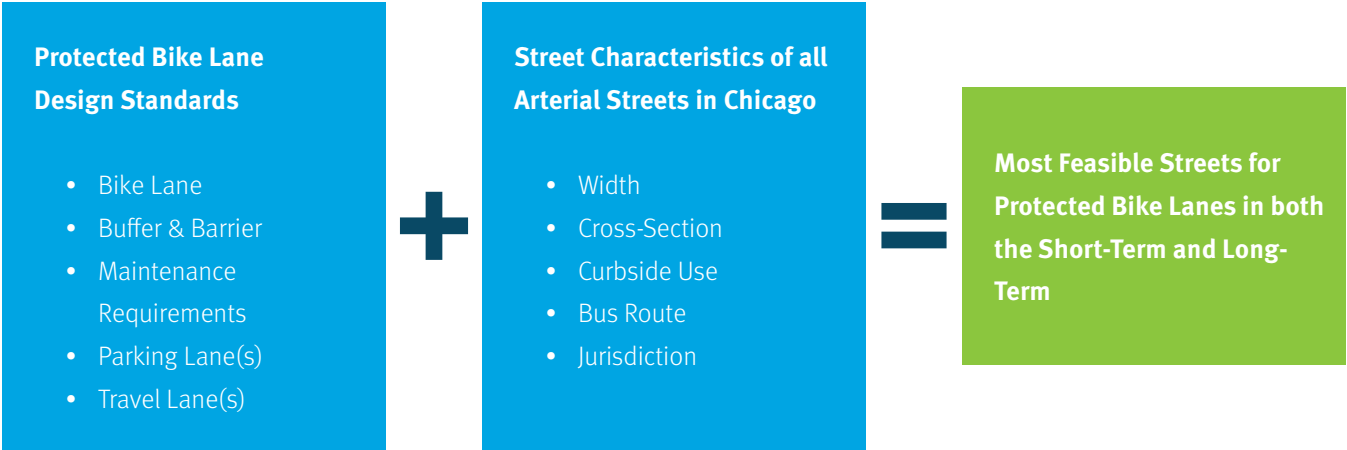


PLEASE NOTE

This map represents the preliminary results of an ongoing analysis of arterial streets throughout the City of Chicago. This analysis will continue to be updated as more streets are analyzed. It is based on the general characteristics of a corridor. Block by block conditions may vary, especially at intersections. This analysis will help guide project identification and network planning but will not replace detailed project scoping. Streets with unique conditions such as concrete medians or center columns require further analysis on a case by case basis.

- Existing Protected Bike Lane
- Some Redesign Required
- Significant Redesign Required
- Analysis Underway

PROTECTED BIKE LANE FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS



completed, this analysis will be updated on an annual basis as new projects are implemented and street configurations change.

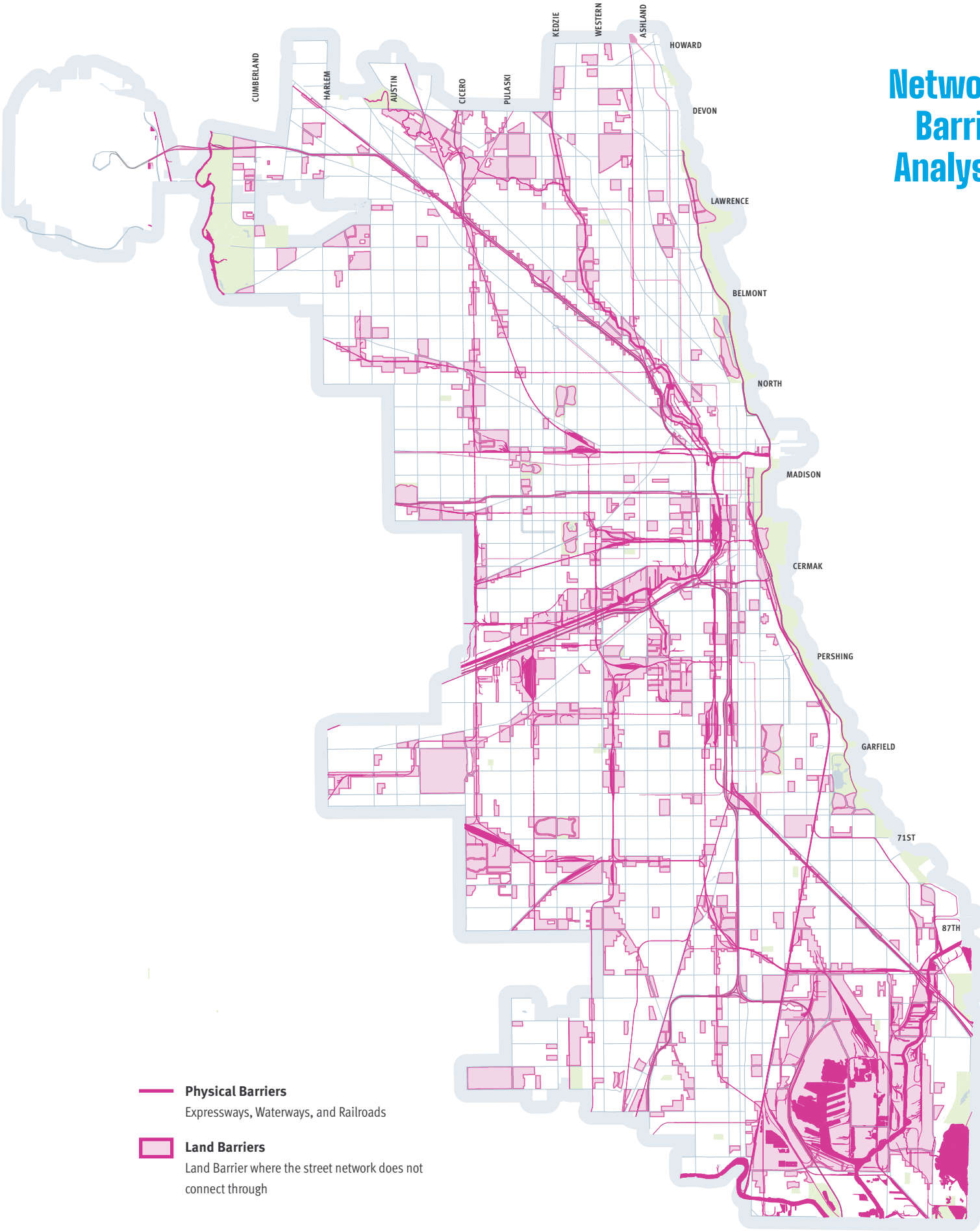
Network Barrier Analysis

Chicago’s straightforward street grid can be ideal for traveling by bike, but barriers throughout the city interrupt the grid. **While mere annoyances for those traveling by automobile, these barriers at best create long detours and at worst cut off entire neighborhoods from one another for people walking and riding bikes.** Common barriers such as expressways, railroads and multimodal yards, and other large land uses (like industrial uses and cemeteries), create large contiguous areas of land which local streets do not connect through. In many cases, one single barrier can cause challenges for the network connectivity of a much larger area.

We’ve mapped out these barriers and visualized where our street grid is largely intact and where the street grid breaks down. **This analysis clearly identifies the streets which cross these large barriers and provide an opportunity to link otherwise disconnected neighborhoods together.**

The Physical Barrier Analysis will help us identify and prioritize connections between neighborhoods and across barriers. Barriers in our street network act as funnels, focusing large volumes of vehicles on one particular street. These high-volume streets can be uncomfortable for everyday biking without physical separation. **This analysis will point to priority streets for protected bike lanes and help make the case for trade-offs when it comes to the allocation of limited street space.**

Network Barrier Analysis





The Lyndale Neighborhood Greenway helps families in the Bucktown and Logan Square neighborhoods access Holstein Park.

Focused on Local Trips

Connecting people to meaningful destinations

We are expanding infrastructure to support local trips by building Neighborhood Bike Networks

Providing comfortable bike infrastructure within neighborhoods is the best way to make biking a great option for more people—particularly those new to cycling. Nearly one-quarter of all car trips in Chicago are under one mile, and half of all car trips are under three miles. A vast number of car trips are made for distances which could be comfortably made by bike. We consistently hear that the main reasons people want to bike is for fun and to get to local destinations within their neighborhood—such as to schools, parks, and shopping—not necessarily for long commutes to work.

Growing our bike network is not a one size fits all approach. Every neighborhood has different needs, contexts, perspectives, and perceptions of biking. A successful approach in one community may not work in another, so different approaches are required for different neighborhoods. Collaboration with community stakeholders is essential to achieve our vision of an equitable transportation system. The level and pace of that collaboration will vary based upon the context of an individual community and project scope.

TRIPS BY CAR IN CHICAGO

22% Under 1 mile

39% Under 2 miles

51% Under 3 miles

Inrix: Micromobility Potential in the US, UK and Germany (Inrix 2019)

Stages of Bike Network Development

Chicago’s bikeway network is not evenly distributed throughout the city. Each neighborhood is in a different stage of network development. While some neighborhoods are well served by bikeways, other communities have limited options.

There is a natural progression of bike network development, which we’ve experienced firsthand in Chicago. This progression can be described through distinct Stages of Bike Network Development (see page 39). To achieve our vision and rapidly expand our network, we need to be deeply engaged with communities as we move from one stage of network development to the next. From our own experience, skipping steps in this process can cause progress to retreat.

Our goal is to work with each neighborhood to advance this progression at the right pace. **We’ve learned that moving through the Stages of Bike Network Development is only successful when we partner with communities, responding to needs and feedback along the way.**

Building Trust

We recognize that infrastructure investments have not always been distributed equally across our neighborhoods. We must also acknowledge that when changes were made, some communities most impacted by those decisions were not always included in the planning and design process. This has created a history of distrust in many of the same neighborhoods which lack cycling infrastructure. As we work to expand the network into new neighborhoods, it is critical to build trust between CDOT and community partners prior to the installation of new bikeways. It won’t be enough to simply host a community meeting. **We must meet people where they are, listen to their concerns, and tailor a process that responds to their unique needs.** Only then will we be able to build successful, lasting change throughout Chicago.

Neighborhood Bike Networks

A neighborhood won’t experience the vast benefits of biking until people have convenient access to all the places important to them. We’ve developed a process for building connected Neighborhood Bike Networks to serve local bike trips in neighborhoods not currently well served by our bike network, partnering with those communities to build trust and include neighbors in the decision-making process.

The Neighborhood Bike Network process is a community-driven approach to expanding our bikeway network. It is focused first and foremost on cultivating relationships and building trust between CDOT and the community. By partnering with the neighborhood we can link biking and traffic safety to other community goals and reinforce the importance of a connected network of bikeways. The effort aims to find quick wins while building momentum for larger changes in the future.

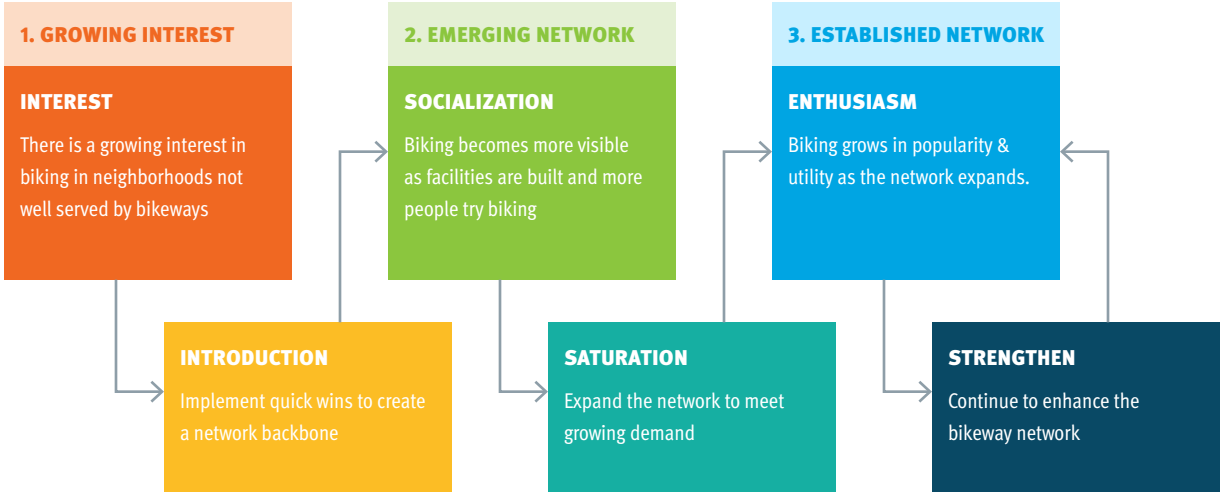
Neighborhood Taskforce

Each Neighborhood Bike Network begins with a partnership of community-based organizations, local advocates, and trusted neighborhood voices to form a Neighborhood Taskforce. This Taskforce helps guide the process, recommending specific engagement strategies for the neighborhood and providing feedback on our initial recommendations. Working directly with and earning the support of community members and leaders is critical to the Neighborhood Network process.

Community Engagement

The Neighborhood Taskforce helps to develop a multifaceted engagement approach for the neighborhood. Community engagement is centered around meeting people where they are and focused on a shared agenda.

STAGES OF BIKE NETWORK DEVELOPMENT



CASE STUDY – PUTTING THE STRATEGY TO ACTION

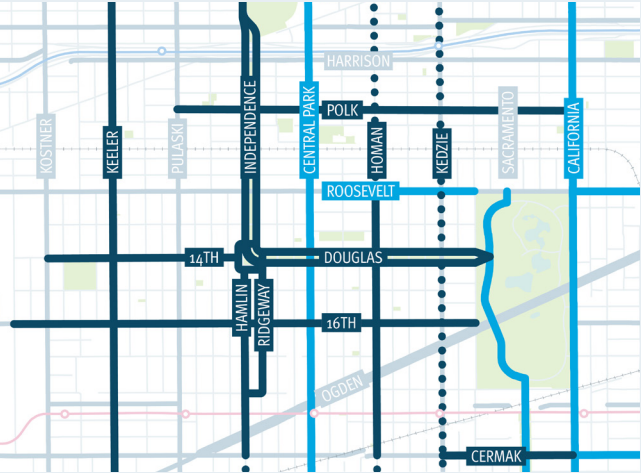
NEIGHBORHOOD BIKE NETWORKS

Neighborhood Bike Networks are key to the rapid expansion of Chicago’s bike network. Working with the **Belmont Cragin** and **North Lawndale** communities, we were able to triple the amount of bikeways in each neighborhood in just two years.



Belmont Cragin

Over 4x the bikeways in Belmont Cragin
17 miles of new bikeways (2021 & 2022)



North Lawndale

Nearly tripling the bikeways in North Lawndale
11 miles of new bikeways(2021 & 2022)

Stages of Bike Network Development	Social Characteristics	Network Strategy
Growing Interest Neighborhood has little to no bikeways, but there is an growing culture of cycling.	Interest There is a growing interest in biking in neighborhoods not well served by bikeways	Introduction Identify quick wins and develop network connections to adjacent neighborhoods
Emerging Network Neighborhood has some bikeways connected to the citywide network, but further infill is needed to support local trips.	Socialization Biking becomes more visible as facilities are built and more people try biking	Saturation Develop connected Neighborhood Bike Networks and to support more local trips
Established Network Neighborhood is fully connected to the citywide bikeway network and has a connected neighborhood network supporting local trips.	Enthusiasm Biking grows in popularity & utility as the network becomes more connected and comfortable	Strengthen Upgrade to protected bike lanes where feasible and fill in the gaps with neighborhood greenways

Successful past engagement strategies have included:

- Existing community events
- Neighborhood bike rides
- Open Boulevards events
- Learn-to-ride and bike education events
- Canvassing on the street and popular destinations like schools, parks, and commercial corridors
- Online and printed surveys
- Bikelight giveaways along popular biking routes
- Intentional conversations with community organizations

Through comprehensive engagement, we aim to:

- Earn trust with neighbors
- Understand local perspectives and priorities for biking in the neighborhood
- Learn how people are getting around, would like to get around, and the barriers limiting transportation and access
- Increase the visibility of biking as a means of transportation, recreation, and community building
- Link biking and traffic safety to other community goals, such as public health, safety, economic development, and access to jobs and education

Network Recommendations

From community engagement activities and in coordination with the Neighborhood Taskforce, bike network recommendations are developed for the neighborhood. These recommendations include quick-build, network-focused projects which can be designed and built within one to two years, as well as higher-impact long-term projects. The goal is to use the short-term projects to build momentum and support for larger changes in the future.

Neighborhood Selection

CDOT began the Neighborhood Bike Network effort in 2021 on the west side, where a growing community interest in biking, a lack of bikeways, and expansion of the Divvy Bike Share system overlapped. Subsequent Neighborhood Bike Network efforts have focused on expanding the network southward from these first neighborhoods. We are building momentum from one neighborhood to the next, now expanding to Chicago’s southwest side where neighborhoods have a low density of bikeways.

Central to CDOT’s implementation of its Strategic Plan for Transportation—a larger framework for the Chicago Cycling Strategy—is the Mobility and Economic Hardship Index (MOBEC). The MOBEC analyzes where Chicago residents experience the highest levels of economic and mobility hardship. MOBEC scoring is primary criterion in data-driven decision making at CDOT, guiding where and when investments like bike infrastructure are made throughout the City. All Neighborhood Bike Network efforts have been focused in communities identified with high mobility and economic hardship.

Network Infill

Not all neighborhoods will require the same Neighborhood Bike Network process. Some neighborhoods are already well-served by our bike network. In these neighborhoods, we will identify opportunities to close network gaps, upgrade existing bikeways, and build upon past successes to ensure residents can access local destinations easily by bike. Engagement and project selection strategies will vary in each neighborhood and will be determined through discussions with local stakeholders which typically include neighborhood groups and organizations, chambers of commerce, advocates, aldermen, and other civic leaders.

CASE STUDY – PUTTING THE STRATEGY TO ACTION

COLUMNS & OPINION

The backlash against the Marshall Boulevard bike lanes is a cautionary tale for planners

Community input and outreach are crucial for avoiding resentment from noncyclists.



State of Independence: The protected lane will change to a buffered lane

Concerns from locals about protected lanes on the West Side boulevards

LESSONS LEARNED

A decade ago CDOT installed protected bike lanes on Independence, Douglas, and Marshall Boulevards on Chicago’s west side. These projects were part of an effort to quickly build protected bike lanes throughout Chicago. These efforts did not align with the neighborhood’s Stages of Bike Network Development. Skipping steps in the community’s progression of network development did not result in sustained success. Eventually the protected bike lanes were removed.

Since then, CDOT spent years building relationships with neighborhood leaders and earning trust with the community. Through countless phone calls and community events, a working relationship between CDOT and neighborhood leaders formed, and from that relationship spawned the North Lawndale Neighborhood Bike Network in 2021. Through that effort, Independence and Douglas

Boulevards were upgraded to include protected bike lanes. Now those Boulevards are being upgraded with concrete curb.

The lessons learned in North Lawndale have been formative to developing a process for successful bikeway expansion throughout Chicago. **Only after developing relationships and earning trust with a community can we create lasting change. Our Neighborhood Bike Network process is designed with these lessons in mind.**



The Lake Street Protected Bike Lane following the installation of concrete curb in 2022

Providing Low-Stress Options

Making everyday cycling safe and convenient

We are building more protected bike lanes and neighborhood greenways than ever before so all Chicagoans have access to low-stress bikeways.

Low-stress bikeways are essential to meeting the transportation needs of all Chicagoans – For years, bike infrastructure has only appealed to the most experienced and confident bicyclists. Bike lanes on busy streets with no separation from moving traffic are not appealing for many people. We know more people would choose to ride if more comfortable options existed. Low-stress bikeways are more attractive to children, families, seniors and others who want to ride a bike but don’t feel comfortable doing so today. The safer and more comfortable people feel on a bike, the more people will choose to bike, and they more Chicago will realize the benefits of a healthy cycling culture.

Protected bike lanes are proven to make our streets safer for everyone – We recognize not everyone will choose to ride a bike. However, no matter how people get around, making our streets safer and more comfortable for people biking has been shown to make our streets safer for everyone. **Implementing protected bike lanes on Milwaukee Avenue in Logan Square cut all traffic crashes by more than half, reduced injury producing crashes by over 70%, and eliminated all crashes involving pedestrians in the first full year after the project as installed.**

New Complete Streets Design Standards are helping build more low-stress bikeways throughout Chicago – CDOT is always developing new Complete Streets Design Standards with a heavy focus on protected bike lane designs. These design standards include standardized treatments which can be applied at conflict points like bus stops and intersections to increase separation between people biking and motor vehicles. These new standards will improve design efficiency across the department to help more projects and programs implement protected bike lanes throughout the city.

Building connected low-stress networks in communities throughout Chicago – Completing a citywide low-stress network that all Chicagoans can access will take time. We are building toward that through development of low-stress neighborhood networks throughout Chicago. These neighborhood low-stress networks are an important way to support everyday local trips by bike. Citywide routes then stitch these smaller neighborhood low-stress networks together.

WHAT ARE LOW-STRESS BIKEWAYS?

Low-stress bikeways are bike routes that are comfortable for people of all ages and abilities, not just for experienced bicyclists. **Neighborhood greenways** prioritize bikes on low-volume and low-speed side streets. **Protected bike lanes** provide physical separation between people biking and car traffic on high-volume and high-speed streets. **Off-street trails** are paths for the exclusive use of people walking, biking, and rolling and are often completely separate from the street network.



Protected Bike Lanes

Upgrading existing buffered bike lanes to protected bike lanes – Updated design standards are creating new opportunities to upgrade some existing buffered bike lanes to protected bike lanes without requiring the removal of a parking lane. This allows for faster implementation of protected bike lanes throughout the city. Project opportunities are being identified through the protected bike lane feasibility analysis.

Concrete curbs for all existing protected bike lanes – In 2022 CDOT announced all existing protected bike lanes will be upgraded with concrete curbs. All new protected bike lanes will also have concrete curb protection. We will implement this through a combination of traditional cast-in-place concrete, which requires cutting into the street, and new precast concrete curbs, which allows for faster installation in many cases and limit the need to cut into the existing pavement.

Bus boarding islands to create more separation between people biking and buses – Typically, a break in the bikeway barrier is required to allow a bus to pull to the curb at each bus stop, creating a conflict point where people biking and buses must cross one another. These breaks also provide an opportunity for vehicles to illegally park in the bike lane. Bus boarding islands eliminate these issues by maintaining the protected bike lane barrier and providing a waiting area for bus passengers between the bike lane and the travel lane.

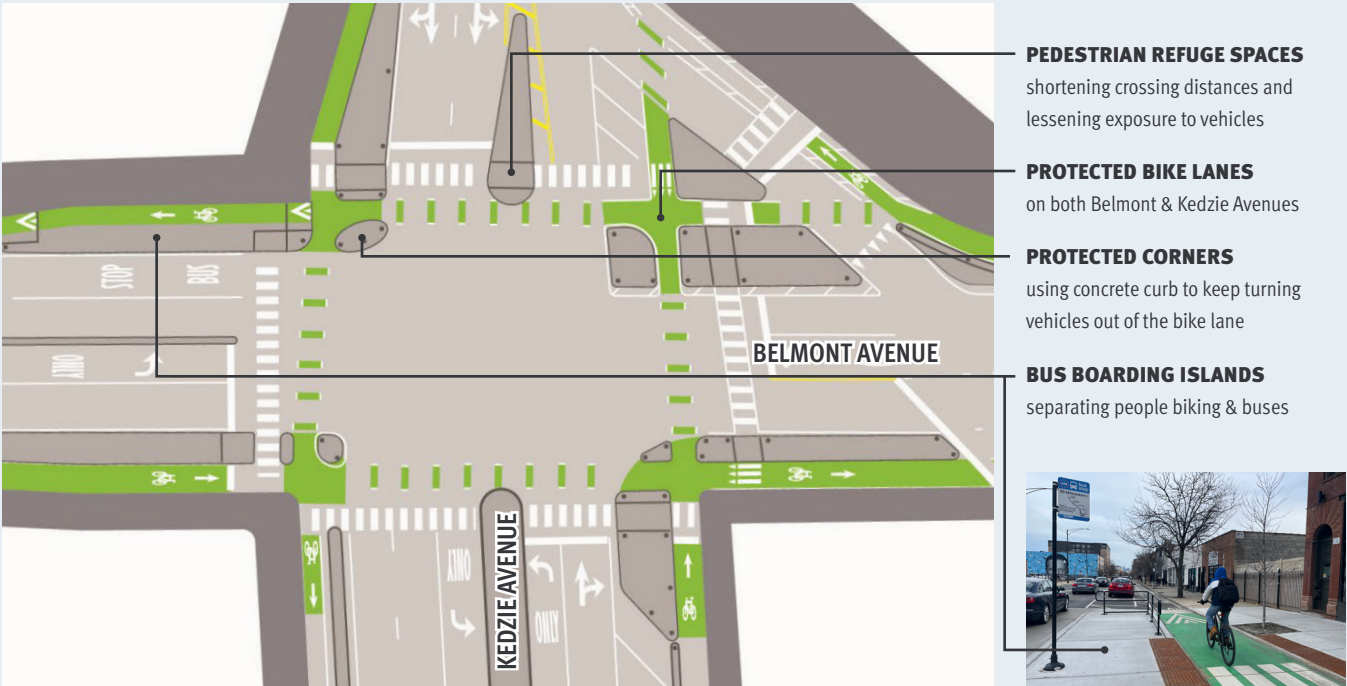
We are now incorporating bus boarding islands along protected bike lanes wherever feasible. Bus boarding islands will be a standard feature when protected bike lanes are installed through larger infrastructure projects, such as arterial resurfacing, street reconstruction, and streetscapes.

Providing people biking with more separation from cars at intersections – Intersections are where the most traffic crashes occur between people driving cars and people riding bikes. This is primarily due to conflicting movements between people biking straight through an intersection and people in cars turning right or left onto a cross street. We are reducing these conflicts by bringing curbs and barriers closer to intersections, creating more space between travel lanes and bike lanes at intersections to slow turns across protected bike lanes and improve the visibility of people biking, and in some cases installing dedicated signal phases separate from turning vehicles. These intersection designs are being formalized through our new Complete Streets Design Guidelines.



Protected bike lane on Milwaukee Avenue

CASE STUDY – PUTTING THE STRATEGY TO ACTION



The new Belmont Avenue Protected Bike Lane will include a protected intersection at Kedzie Avenue.

BELMONT AVENUE – A CRITICAL CITYWIDE CONNECTION ACROSS NETWORK BARRIERS

In 2023, CDOT will transform Belmont Avenue between Kimball Avenue and Clybourn Avenue with a bold design that prioritizes and balances the needs of people walking, biking, and riding the bus throughout the day.

This segment of Belmont Avenue provides connections to the CTA Belmont Station, the 312 RiverRun trail, and multiple intersecting bike routes. The new protected bike lane will also connect with protected bike lanes on Campbell Avenue and lead into the Roscoe and School Street routes connecting all the way to the Lakefront Trail.

As a route, Belmont crosses significant network barriers like the Kennedy Expressway and the North Branch of the Chicago River that separate communities and make this project critical.

This project includes enhancements to improve the safety and comfort of the street’s most vulnerable users:

- **Pedestrian bumpouts** and **reduced crossing distances** for people walking across Belmont
- **Concrete refuge islands** to make it easier for people walking to cross Belmont
- **Protected bike lanes** with concrete curb
- **Protected intersection** with concrete curb at Kedzie Avenue (a planned protected bike lane)
- **Direct bike connection to the North Branch Trail**
- **Bus boarding islands** to reduce conflicts at bus stops and improve bus operations
- **Bus priority zones** approaching key intersections
- **Street resurfacing** to create a smoother surface for all users



Berwyn Neighborhood Greenway installed in 2022 in the Lincoln Square neighborhood

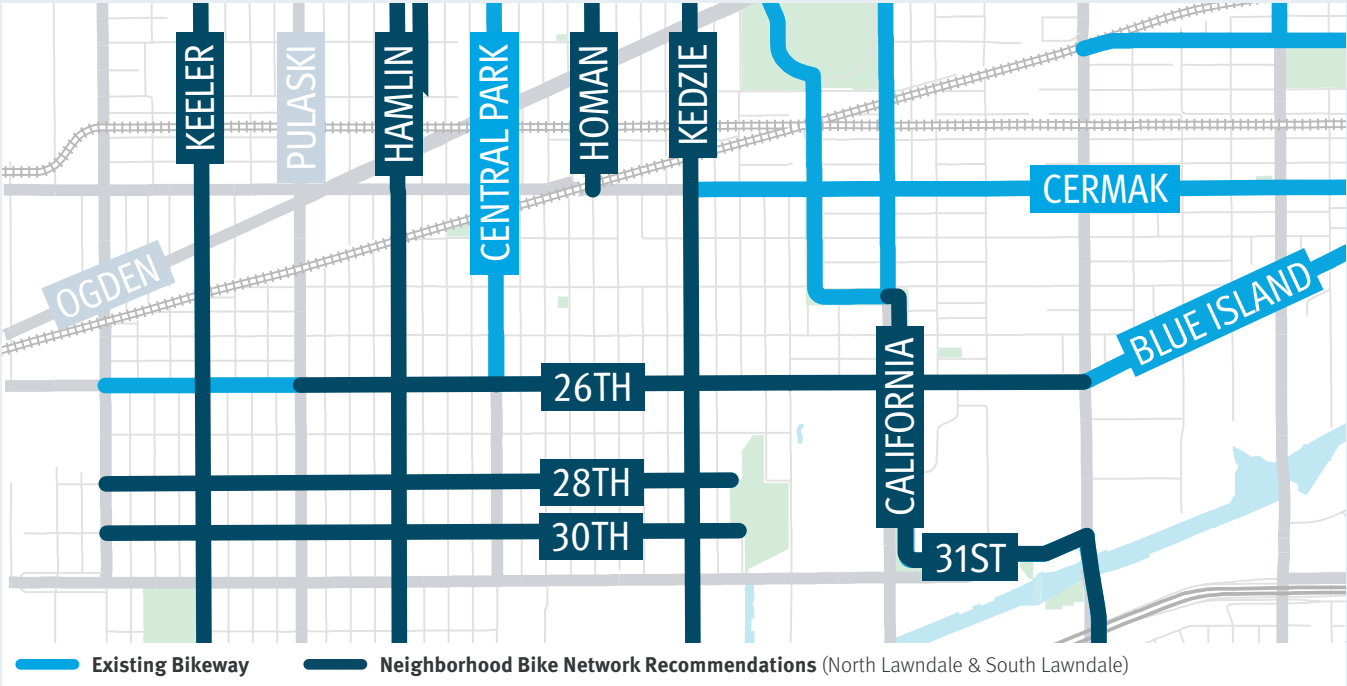
Neighborhood Greenways

Connecting Chicagoans to schools, parks, and other important local destinations – Schools and parks are important local destinations for families in every neighborhood. Neighborhood greenways are one way to provide family-friendly ways for people to comfortably access these local destinations by bike.

Connecting Chicagoans to our trail system through neighborhood greenways – Our trail system is an important part of our bike network. Trails are used by Chicagoans for both transportation and recreation. Neighborhood greenways that connect people to the trail network and lakefront can ensure easy and comfortable access to these great assets.

Providing neighborhood greenways that parallel busier commercial and arterial streets – A successful cycling network includes options for biking on both neighborhood streets and busier commercial streets to accommodate the widest variety of trip types and level of biking experience. Wide multi-lane streets with high numbers of vehicles can be uncomfortable for all but the most confident bike riders. While these streets serve as important transportation corridors for vehicles, they can be barriers for some people on bikes. Neighborhood greenways can provide a more comfortable option to bike lanes on an adjacent street or can serve as an alternative when short-term solutions are more challenging on arterial streets. We are planning a number of new neighborhood greenways to provide Chicagoans with an alternative to riding on some of our busiest streets.

CASE STUDY – PUTTING THE STRATEGY TO ACTION



Short-term recommendations from the South Lawndale Neighborhood Bike Network

LITTLE VILLAGE – A GRID OF NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS CONNECTING LOCAL DESTINATIONS

In 2022, CDOT and community partners began the South Lawndale Neighborhood Bike Network process, including the Little Village and Marshall Square neighborhoods. Working with local advocates, a wide cross-section of community-based-organizations, the chamber of commerce, and other trusted voices from the neighborhood, the effort included extensive community engagement. During the summer of 2022, CDOT interacted with hundreds of neighborhood residents at dozens of events throughout the community.

Throughout our engagement, neighbors told us they wanted better ways to get to schools, parks, and local businesses. People indicated they would bike more if provided with more ways to ride a bike comfortably around the neighborhood.

The short-term recommendations from the South Lawndale Neighborhood Bike Network include a grid of neighborhood greenways, in addition to other bike lanes on arterial streets, to provide the family-friendly connections people said they wanted. These routes connect residents to neighborhood schools, Piotrowski and La Villita Parks, across busy streets like 31st Street and Cicero Avenue, and into the North Lawndale neighborhood.

Installation of these routes, including nearly six miles of neighborhood greenways, will be completed by the end of 2023. Additional projects are being identified for installation in the future.

Resources



Chicago Department of Transportation

Learn more about what CDOT is doing to grow cycling in Chicago and find out about upcoming projects by visiting [Chicago.gov/bikes](https://chicago.gov/bikes).

Request Bike Racks

CDOT installs hundreds of new bike racks throughout the city each year, many at locations requested by the public. To request a bike rack on city sidewalks, use the interactive map at bikeparking-chicago.hub.arcgis.com.

CDOT Permit Support

For assistance with construction and permit related issues, such as construction blocking a bike lane, email CDOTPermitSupport@cityofchicago.org.



Divvy Bike Share

Divvy is Chicago’s bike share system, which provides a fun and flexible way to get around. For up to date station locations and information about pricing, visit [DivvyBikes.com](https://divvybikes.com), download the Divvy app, or call 855-55-DIVVY.



SAFE Ambassadors

The SAFE Ambassadors (Streets are for Everyone) promote safe walking and cycling for people of all ages and backgrounds. They offer presentations, conduct biking activities, teach people how to ride a bike, and more at schools, parks, and community events throughout Chicago. To request the SAFE Ambassadors at your event visit chicagocompletestreets.org/requestambassador.



CHI311

You can use 311 to submit service requests, such as reporting vehicles parking in a bike lane and requesting a protected bike lane be cleared of debris or snow. To submit a service request, visit 311.chicago.gov, download the CHI311 app, or call 311 or 312-744-5000.



Augusta Boulevard Protected Bike Lane community meeting

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to our community partners throughout the city. We could not carry out this strategy without your dedication and collaboration. Your advocacy and hard work in the fields of transportation, economic development, housing, public health, and sustainability are essential to making Chicago a great city for all. The partnerships that we have formed along the way and those that we will earn form the foundation for long-term success.

Vig Krishnamurthy

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Brad Huff, AICP

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