

Futurama for Bicycles: Planning a Cycle Highways Network in WA

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Today's Presentation

- ✓ WSDOT approach to multimodal
- ✓ Cycle Highways Action Plan
- ✓ Regional Connections Proviso
- ✓ Next Steps for 2026

Photo credit: Toole Design



WSDOT Approach

Our vision

Washington travelers have a safe, sustainable and integrated multimodal transportation system.

Our mission

We provide safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation options to improve communities and economic vitality for people and businesses.

Strategic Plan Values & Goals



About WSDOT's Active Transportation Division

In the future, Washington has a transportation system that works as well for people walking, rolling, or bicycling as it does for people using motor vehicles.

What ATD does to get us all there:

- Guide investments in projects and programs for local agencies and Tribal nations, grounded in equity and environmental justice.
- Guide policy in Washington state and beyond.
- Steward the State Active Transportation Plan required under RCW 47.06.100.
- Lead WSDOT's Complete Streets implementation processes.
- Support Target Zero implementation.



WSDOT Active Transportation Infrastructure Programs

- **Sandy Williams Connecting Communities**
 - Making walking, bicycling, and rolling more comfortable and welcoming in overburdened communities along state and legacy highways
- **Pedestrian/Bicyclist Program**
 - Improve the transportation system to enhance safety and mobility for people who choose to walk or bike
- **Safe Routes To School Program**
 - Improve safety and mobility for children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school

Google: WSDOT Active
transportation funding programs



Lynnwood Scriber Creek Trail Project

Photo credit: Google imagery (2018, 2025)

Cycle Highways Proviso

Develop the preliminary phase of an action plan for the establishment of cycle highways in locations that connect population centers and support mode shift (2024 ESHB 2134, Section 224 (4)).

Photo credit: Travis Curry

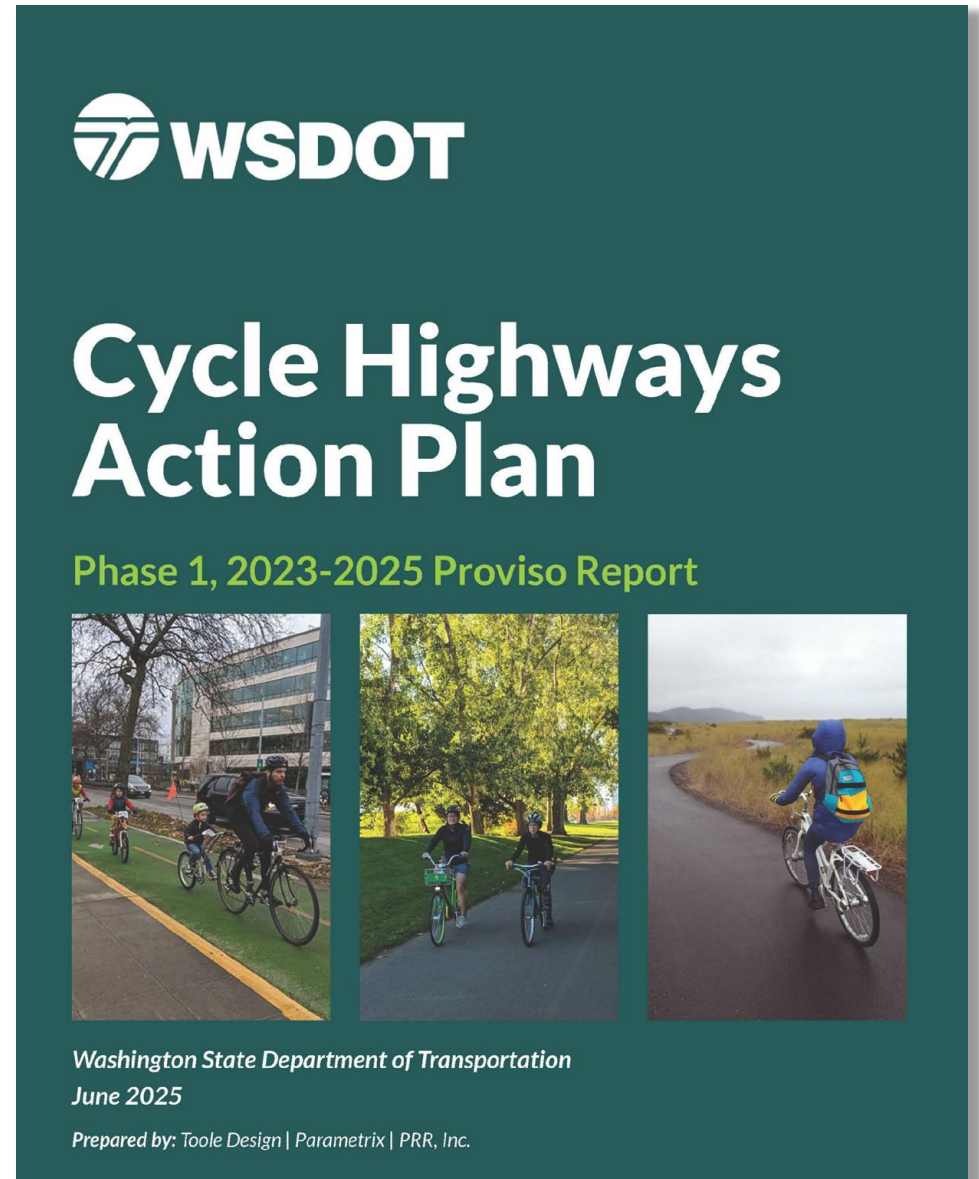


Report to the Legislature

- [Cycle Highways Action Plan, June 2025](#)
 - Working definition
 - Where we are today
 - Model practices
 - Recommended actions
 - 50 pages, plus appendixes
- How to find it:

Google:
Cycle Highways
Action Plan
June 2025

OR



Working Definition

“Washington cycle highways are a **multi-jurisdictional network of facilities** that optimize bicycle, micromobility, and other forms of active travel **through and between population centers** to support existing active travel demand and encourage mode shift from personal motor vehicles to active transportation.

Cycle highways are **well-maintained facilities** that include shared-use paths, paved trails (for trails meeting shared-use path design criteria), bike lanes, and bicycle boulevards that emphasize **safety, reduce modal conflicts, and prioritize efficient travel** by bicycle, micromobility, and other forms of active transportation. Cycle highways are well marked and provide **essential wayfinding** and other user information.”

Outreach to Partners and Community Members

Inform partners
and gather
feedback on vision,
goals, and branding.

Initiate
conversations
about local data,
plans, and projects.

Identify
opportunities for
coordination and
collaboration.

*“This is one of my favorite ideas from
state government in a long time!”*



Learning from Leaders

Case Studies

- Circuit Trails Network (Philadelphia)
- Utah Trail Network
- San Francisco Bay Trails
- Minnesota State Bikeway Network
- La Route verte (Quebec region)

Circuit Trails Network



Photo credits: Circuit Trails Network

San Francisco Bay Trails



Utah Trail Network



Photo credits: SF Bay Trails, Utah Trail Network

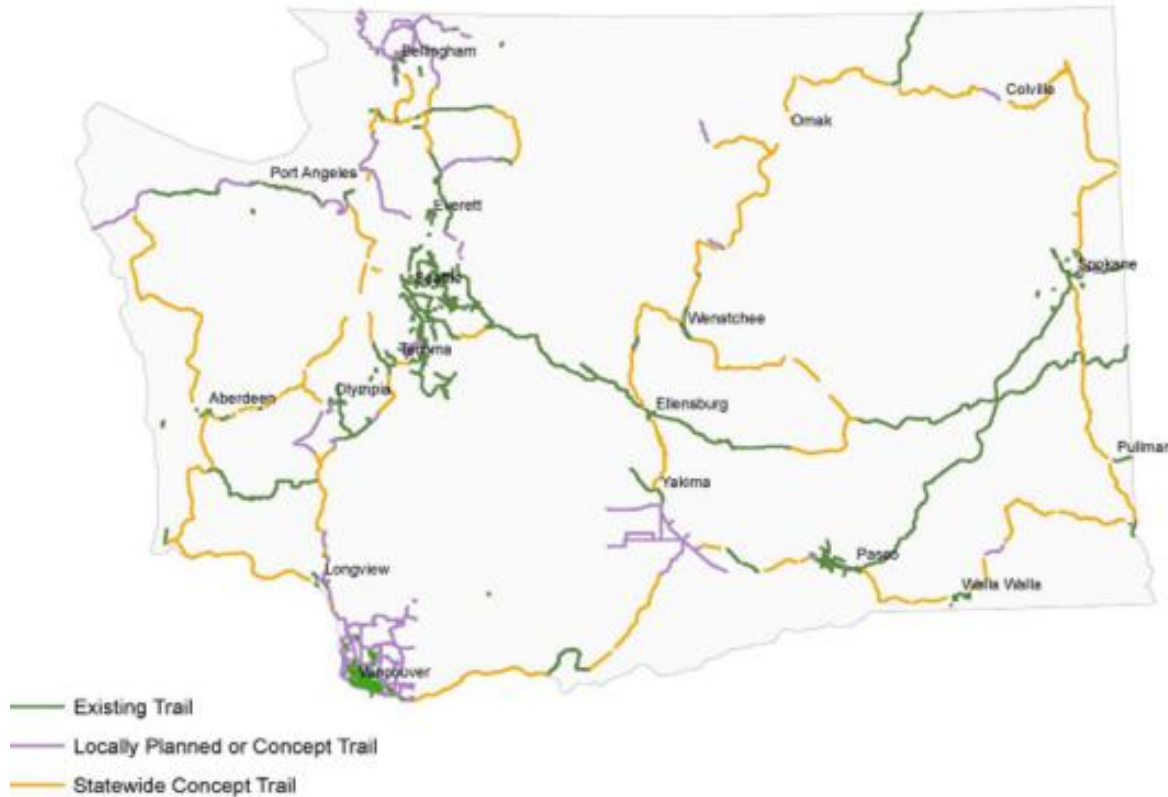
Focus on the User Experience



Photo credits: Toole Design

Creating and Enhancing Connections

Existing, Locally Planned and Statewide Concept Trails Serving a Transportation Function



- Accelerate WA's legacy of trail building
- Build on WSDOT ATP gap analysis and local/regional planning
- Connect population centers
- Foster economic development
- Enhance system resilience / redundancy
- Identify project phasing to guide implementation
- Leverage existing funding and project opportunities

Source: Washington State Active Transportation Plan 2020 and Beyond

Consistent Maintenance



Photo credits: Toole Design, WSDOT

Pilot Projects (if funded in a future biennium)

- Deliver pilot projects aimed at quick wins and proof of concept.
- Projects may include quick-build or demonstration projects, shovel-ready projects, and projects for closing system gaps.



Photo credits: Toole Design

Highest Priority Outcomes from Phase 2

Establish and
staff the
program

Activities: Continuing engagement with coalition

Finalizing program goals and vision

Complete the
Action Plan

Collecting and updating data

Develop pilot
projects

Identifying potential legal/administrative barriers to building/maintaining the network (RCWs, WACs, funding program criteria)

Communicating vision and engage partners in long range planning

Cycle Highways Program Model (if funded)

Collective impact model

Core statewide staff to provide support and leadership on:

- Convening and coalition building
- Statewide gap identification and planning support
- Design excellence
- Wayfinding, branding, and public awareness
- Maintenance best practices and agreements
- Funding and construction resources
- Equity focus and partnership to mitigate displacement risks and bring benefits to overburdened communities
- Coordination of local/regional plans with WSDOT Complete Streets projects
- Collaborating in efforts to win grants

Regional Connections Proviso (2026)

Develop a regional connections action plan for the statewide development of active transportation infrastructure that connects population centers, supports mode shift, and improves safety performance (2026 ESSB 6005, Section 223 (12))



Photo credit: Toole Design

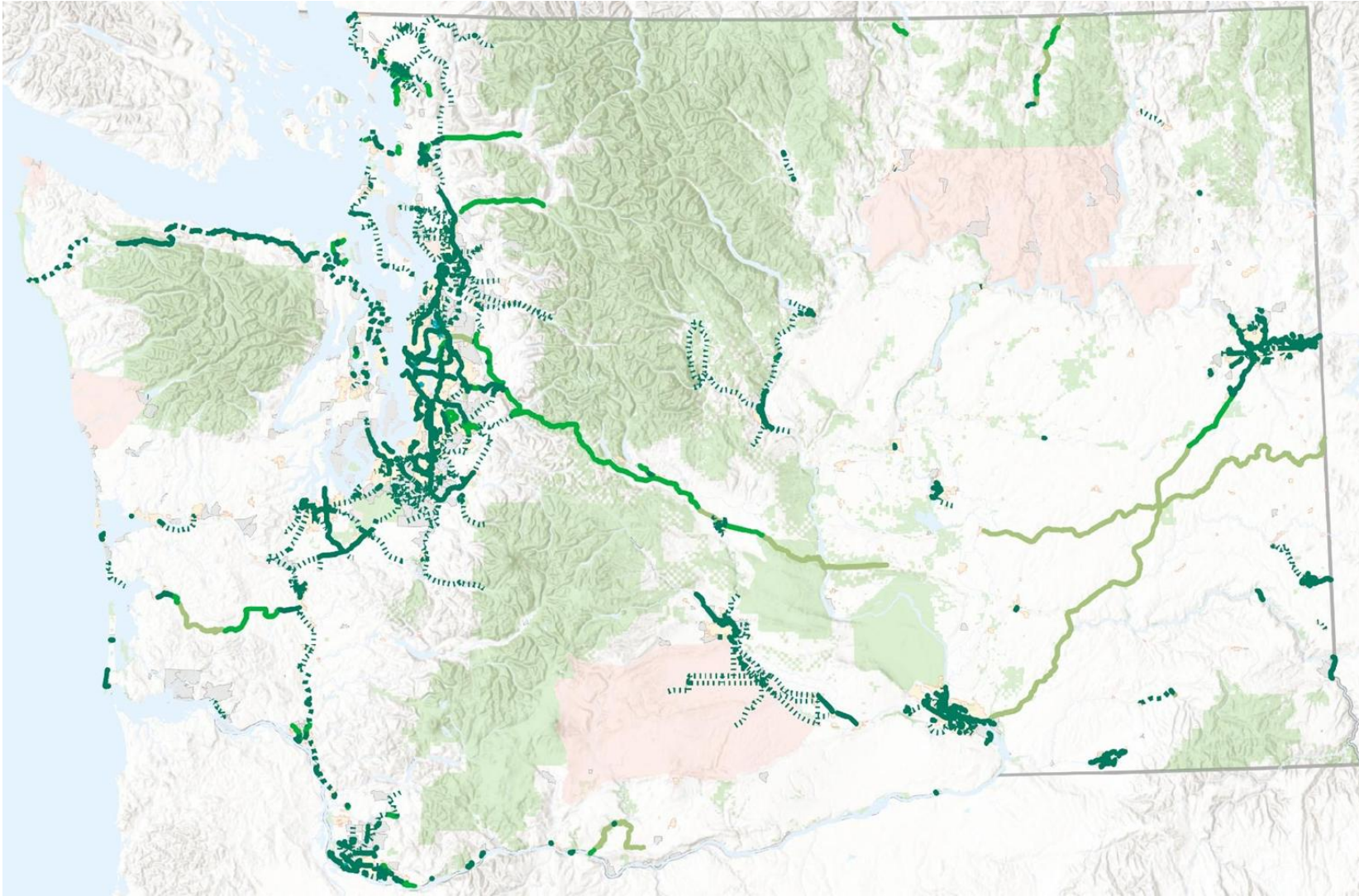
Next Steps

- ✓ Complete the Regional Connections Action Plan by December 2026.
 - Examine state statutes, rules, design guidance, and funding program criteria to determine if there are legal or administrative barriers to building and maintaining a regional connections network;
 - Collect and update data to support a conceptual network map identifying existing, planned, and potential connections;
 - Develop a cost estimating methodology for use in route planning and project prioritizing and development; and
 - Develop strategies and technical guidance for regional connections maintenance and operations

Photo credit: Toole Design



Data Collection & Analysis



- Statewide collection effort prioritizing shared-use paths
 - Existing, planned, proposed
 - MPO/RTPO, county, some city plans
- Work with local partners to collect and steward data
- Use data to inform network planning opportunities
- Contact [Grace Young](#) to provide data and/or receive updates
 - Trail/Transportation Plan adoption
 - New facilities opened
 - Major project planning activities

Thank you!

Photo credit: Judith R. Perez Keniston, AICP

A wide-angle photograph of a modern waterfront park. In the foreground, a paved path with a decorative border of blue and yellow tiles runs along a landscaped area with green grass and purple flowers. Two people are riding bicycles on the path. In the background, there are modern buildings, a construction crane, and a large bridge spanning a body of water under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

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