

### INTRODUCTION

The Council has completed its 2050 Transportation Policy Plan (2050 TPP), an updated version of the 2040 plan, with new demographic and transportation forecasts that are required by federal law every 10 years. The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) and Regional Bicycle Barriers continue to be integral systems within the TPP Bicycle Investment Plan.

To provide prioritization in regional funding through a vision for a connected and continuous regional bicycle system consistent with regional policy, the Met Council established the RBTN in 2015 and Regional Bicycle Barriers in 2018. Periodic updates to the RBTN and regional bicycle barriers, informed by local planning, help guide and prioritize regional investments in bicycle infrastructure. For 2050 Comprehensive Plans, local communities will be expected to plan and map their local bicycle networks that build out and complement these regional systems.

### REGIONAL BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Regional Bicycle Transportation Network is an important component of the overall regional transportation system. It consists of prioritized alignments and corridors (where specific alignments are yet to be designated) that were developed for and adopted into the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan (2040 TPP)*. The RBTN has been updated multiple times since its inception with local partners identifying potential new or adjusted alignments and corridors.

The goals of the RBTN are:

- Establish an integrated seamless network of on-street bikeways and off-road trails
- Provide the vision for a “backbone arterial network to service daily bicycle trips by connecting regional destinations and local bicycle networks
- Encourage planning and implementation of future bikeways by cities, counties, park agencies and the state consistent with the network vision.

### REGIONAL BICYCLE BARRIERS

Regional Bicycle Barriers are the region’s major physical barriers to bicycling and were identified through a [2017 study](#) to serve as a tool for planning routes that cross the barriers and for prioritizing barrier crossing improvement locations for regional investment. Since 2020 they have been applied as one criterion for selecting bicycle projects to receive federal transportation funds distributed through the biannual Regional Solicitation.

Regional Bicycle Barriers are defined to include freeways and expressways, railroad corridors, and secondary rivers and streams (including their tributaries) that flow into the Mississippi, Saint Croix or Minnesota River. These three primary rivers have been separately classified as Major River Bicycle Barriers in the 2050 Transportation Policy Plan.

Further details about preferred spacing guidelines for Regional Bicycle Barrier crossings and types of projects to construct or improve barrier crossings that are prioritized for regional investment can be found in the [2050 TPP Bicycle Investment Plan](#). To assist local agencies in planning barrier crossing projects there is also an [online interactive map](#) of the regional barriers with prioritized barrier crossing improvement locations. Specific work tasks agencies can carry out to effectively plan and develop their bicycle networks to improve connections across regional bike barriers include:

- Mapping their community’s existing and planned regional bicycle barrier crossings that include bicycle facilities
- Identifying barrier crossing gaps based on the preferred maximum spacing guidelines (Table 4 in the TPP Bicycle Investment Plan)
- Developing barrier crossing improvement projects that create new barrier crossings or upgrade bicycle facilities on existing crossings
- Improving local bicycle network routes to existing barrier crossings through infrastructure and/or wayfinding projects, and
- Notifying Met Council staff of newly planned bicycle barrier crossing projects.

## BICYCLE ELEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Bicycle network plans and policies are essential to any community's transportation plan and should be included in that element of their plan. Bicycle facilities should be thought of and included within all community's transportation system plans as a means of daily transportation for residents. Local networks should include all existing and planned bicycle facilities, including on-street facilities in addition to off-road trails. These should be carefully mapped to distinguish built facilities from planned route improvements and should be described in detail in the local comprehensive plan's transportation element. If your community has identified RBTN corridors, you should consider recommending final alignments to better define the regional bicycle system within your community.

\*Note that trail networks, including those designed for exclusive off-road recreation activities such as mountain biking, can also be described in an agency's parks and trails plan element of the comprehensive plan.

## RESOURCES

The following resources represent a set of practical guidelines and design concepts for state and local transportation agencies engaged in the planning, design and implementation of bicycle infrastructure. These resources include a range of urban, suburban, small town and rural planning perspectives that may be useful in identifying specific design treatments for individual communities.

- [2050 Transportation Policy Plan RBTN Data](#), Met Council
- [Regional Bicycle Barriers Data](#), Met Council
- [Minnesota's Best Practices for Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety](#), MnDOT
- [Bikeway Facility Design Manual](#), MnDOT
- [Metro District Bicycle Plan](#), MnDOT
- [NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#), Third Edition, National Association of City Transportation Officials
- [Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
- [Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide](#), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- [Essentials of Bike Parking](#), Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
- [Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks](#), FHWA
- [Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning](#), FHWA