

# BUSINESS COURIER

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## Huge bicycle trail network to be pitched to Cincinnati council

Business Courier of Cincinnati - by [Dan Monk](#) Senior Staff Reporter

Cincinnati would establish a 445-mile network of off-street bike trails and on-street cycling routes under a new transportation plan that will be presented next week to Cincinnati City Council.

The Cincinnati Bicycle Transportation Plan calls for a 13-fold expansion of what is now a 33-mile collection of poorly connected bike paths all over town. By 2025, the plan would establish more than 330 miles of newly designated street lanes where markings indicate rights of way for cyclists. And it would add about 83 miles of off-street bike facilities, including bike trails and shared-use paths for cyclists and pedestrians. The goal is to establish a “continuous and usable network of improvements” that can help cyclists use city streets for recreation and commuting. The plan can be downloaded at [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/bikeplan](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/bikeplan).

The cost of the entire network is estimated at about \$55 million, said Melissa McVay, a planner with the city’s Department of Transportation and Engineering.

The department is not seeking a funding commitment from council. Instead, it will ask for approval of the long-term plan, making it easier to incorporate bike projects into the city’s annual road projects and seek state and federal grants for bike improvements.

### ‘A visual and cultural change’

“We’re trying to make streets as safe and accessible as possible for pedestrians and cyclists. It will definitely be a visual and cultural change for Cincinnati,” said McVay, who led the 10-month planning effort.

City Council’s Livable Communities Committee scheduled a June 22 public hearing on the bike plan. The 6 p.m. hearing will be held at City Hall. Attorney and cycling enthusiast Jeffrey Schloemer praised the new plan as “forward thinking,” the latest in a series of steps making Cincinnati a more bike-friendly town.

“Potentially, it means we become a community that is greener and more attractive to younger people,” said Schloemer, a partner at the Taft law firm downtown.

Cycling enthusiast Gary Wright said the plan will help Cincinnati catch up with progressive West Coast cities where the percentage of commuters who travel by bicycle measures in the upper single digits. In Cincinnati, the figure is 0.1 percent.

“It really does set the right course,” said Wright, a demographics consultant who is president of cycling club Queen City Bike. “Over time, we’d like to see more facilities specifically for bicycle transportation. But that’s going to take a long time and depend a great deal on the city’s finances.”

The plan calls for the city’s new bicycle network to be built in three phases, with 103 miles to be finished by 2015 at a cost of \$2.8 million. If council approves the plan this week, the first bike projects could be under construction next year, McVay said.

Among the new ideas included in the plan are “sharrows,” or lane markings that indicate cyclists and motorists are expected to share a lane, and “climbing lanes,” in which motorists are warned that cyclists will be moving slowly uphill. The plan calls for 5.9 miles of on-street cycletracks, which are dedicated bike lanes separated from traffic by a curb or concrete divider.

The Cincinnati Planning Commission recently adopted a zoning change that requires all new parking garages to incorporate parking facilities for bikes.

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