

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

CHAPTER 3

Existing Conditions

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The City's bikeway network supports a wide range of riding experiences and trip purposes. The network continues to change as new projects are constructed and updated Community Plans identify new opportunities for safer, more connected bicycle travel.

Over the past decade, the City has made significant investments in bikeway infrastructure, including expanding the network and introducing new or upgraded bikeways. This chapter explores the different bikeway types and examines the current bikeway network. Understanding this helps identify opportunities to strengthen the bikeway network and informs the recommendations presented in **Chapter 5**. For more detailed findings on the City's needs and opportunities, see **Appendix E**.

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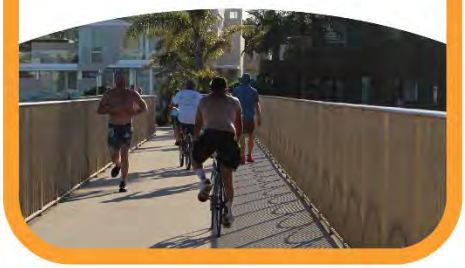
Bikeway Types

The Bicycle Master Plan's bikeway network has six types of bikeways, or classifications, as described below and shown in **Figure 3-1**.

Figure 3-1. Bikeway Types

BIKE PATH

Class I: Off-street paths completely separated from motor vehicle traffic. These provide safer connections, within roadway right-of-way or an exclusive right-of-way.



BIKE LANE

Class II: On-street striped lanes for one-way bike travel, adjacent to vehicle lanes. Often enhanced with markings or signage, they are suitable for lower-speed roadways.



BIKE ROUTE

Class III: Shared roadways with motor vehicles, marked with sharrows and signage. Best for low-speed, low-traffic streets, connecting to parks, schools, or other bikeways.



BIKE BOULEVARD

Class III Enhanced: Shared streets with additional traffic-calming features like road humps or diverters. Designed for safe and low-stress cycling on residential or low-speed roads.



SEPARATED BIKEWAY

Class IV: Bike lanes separated from traffic by vertical elements like curbs or flex posts, providing a safer, more comfortable option for riders of all ages and abilities. The City has one-way and two-way Class IV bikeways.



SHARED BUS-BIKE LANE

An option where separate bus and high-comfort bike lanes are not feasible. Best suited to low speeds and moderate bus headways, with bus passing discouraged and bicycle passing limited to stops.



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Bike Path (Class I)

A Class I bike path functions as a completely paved, off-street bikeway for people riding bikes, walking, running, and using mobility devices. The defining characteristic of this bikeway type is its complete physical separation from car traffic, which distinguishes it from on-street bikeways and enhances comfort for users of all ages and abilities. Typical alignments include:

- Integrating paths within parks and open space areas to support both recreational leisure and scenic non-motorized routing.
- Placing paths adjacent to major roadways, freeways, or active rail corridors to create parallel high-capacity paths for walkers and bikers.
- Placing alongside rivers and waterways to establish continuous regional linkages while preserving environmental setbacks.

Incorporating bike paths into the broader network can help establish a cohesive, safe, and stress-free framework for biking for both commuting and recreation.

Bike Lane (Class II)

A Class II bike lane is an on-street bikeway explicitly designated for people to ride bikes through a combination of striping, pavement markings, and signage. These lanes are located directly within the street, adjacent to the curb or parked cars and generally in the same direction as car traffic, providing a predictable alignment for both people riding bikes and drivers. Since these lanes rely primarily on pavement markings rather than physical barriers, cars can cross them to park, turn, or access driveways. Class II bike lanes serve as a cost-effective and efficient way to retrofit existing streets, bridging gaps in the bikeway network and connecting residential areas to destinations, transit, and Class I multi-use paths, especially when there is not enough space in the existing street for a more fully separated bikeway. Balancing the implementation of Class II bike lanes with appropriate traffic calming and speed management strategies is important to help limit potential conflicts in areas with cars traveling at higher speeds or making a higher number of turns.

Bike Route (Class III)

A Class III bike route functions as a shared-lane bikeway where people riding bikes and drivers share the same lane. Unlike Class II bike lanes, these routes do not feature physical separation or exclusive striping for people riding bikes; instead, they rely on comprehensive network signage and pavement markings, such as shared lane markings or "sharrows" (where allowed), to guide people riding bikes and alert drivers to shared lane use. Because Class III bike routes involve mixed traffic flows, their strategic placement is important to ensure a comfortable user experience. They are best suited for implementation on neighborhood streets with fewer cars and lower speeds, minimizing potential conflicts between people riding bikes and drivers. Class III bike routes frequently serve as vital neighborhood connectors, linking residential neighborhoods to higher-capacity bikeways (such as Class I bike paths or Class II bike lanes) or destinations.

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Bicycle Boulevard (Class III Enhanced)

Class III enhanced bike routes, alternatively known as Bicycle Boulevards, are low-speed, low-volume neighborhood streets that prioritize people riding bikes while maintaining local access for cars. Unlike traditional Class III bike routes, which primarily rely on pavement markings and signage, bicycle boulevards include traffic calming and intersection improvements to create a more comfortable riding environment.

The effectiveness of a Bicycle Boulevard depends less on the presence of individual design features than on creating a street environment with low car speeds and volumes where people bicycling and driving can comfortably share the roadway.

Depending on the roadway, improvements may include:

- Curb extensions
- Traffic Diverters
- Speed cushions
- Sharrow (shared lane) or bicycle boulevard pavement markings
- Wayfinding signage
- Traffic circles or roundabouts
- Raised crosswalks
- Bicycle signal detection

Additionally, based on site conditions and during implementation, asymmetric bikeways should be considered where suitable. For example, a bike lane could be installed on the uphill portion of a street, while being a bike route downhill.

Separated Bikeway (Class IV)

A Class IV separated bikeway is an on-street bikeway that combines the alignment of a traditional street lane with a distinct physical barrier separating people riding bikes from adjacent car traffic. By introducing physical division within the street, these bikeways significantly reduce stress and reduce the risk of collisions between cars and bikes. Class IV separated bikeways utilize a variety of vertical or horizontal design treatments to establish clear separation from car traffic:

- **Horizontal Separation:** Features such as raised bike lanes above the street level that discourage cars from entering the bike lane.
- **Vertical Separation:** Protection can be achieved through various physical elements, including flexible delineator posts, concrete curbs, integrated planter boxes, or a protected parking configuration where parked cars act as a physical buffer between the bike lane and moving car traffic.

Class IV separated bikeways are ideally suited for streets with higher car traffic and higher speeds where traditional Class II bike lanes may not provide adequate comfort for people riding bikes. Incorporating these types of bikeways into the urban core and key arterial corridors is important when building a highly protective bikeway network that provides greater opportunities for people to ride bikes for commuting.

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Shared Bus-Bike Lanes

Shared bus-bike lanes are curbside travel lanes designated for use by both transit buses and bikes. They are typically used on busy urban corridors where street width is constrained, and transit service is frequent, making both a dedicated bus lane and a separate bicycle lane difficult to accommodate. In situations with very limited street space available, cars may be allowed to enter the shared bus-bike lane to turn right or access businesses or residences. This may cause transit to slow down and increase friction between cars, pedestrians and bicyclists.

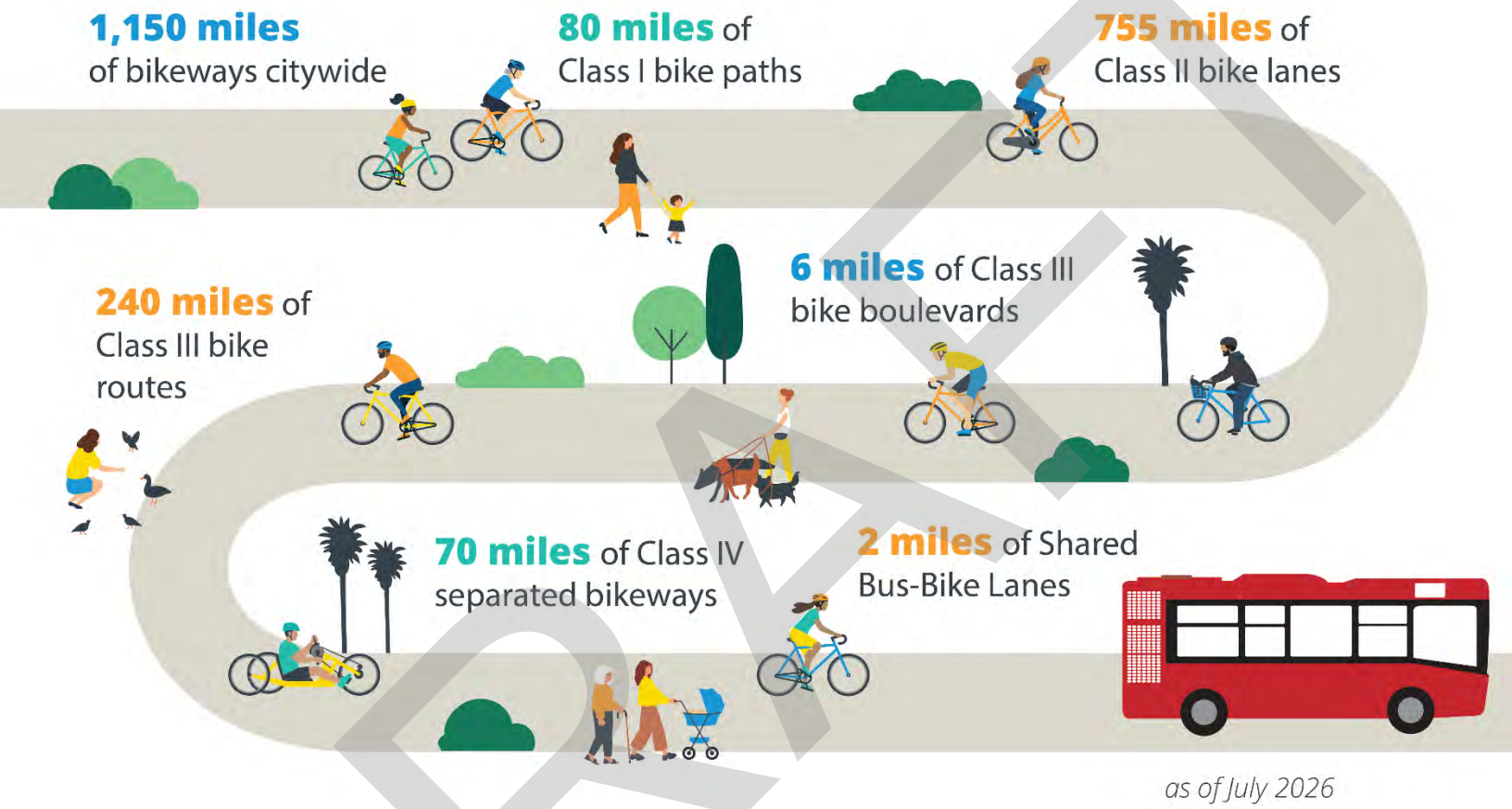
When thoughtfully designed, shared bus-bike lanes can improve transit reliability while providing a more comfortable space for people biking. They are designed to allow people riding bikes and buses to operate together, including at bus stops where buses pick up or drop off passengers. However, at intersections, shared bus-bike lanes often have to accommodate right-turning cars as well. These conflicts can delay transit and decrease safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. Therefore, shared bus-bike lanes should be applied selectively and designed with context-specific safety treatments to reduce conflicts with turning cars and protect vulnerable road users.

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Existing Bikeway Network

The mileage by bikeway type for the existing network is displayed in **Figure 3-2**. On the following page, **Figure 3-3** illustrates a snapshot of the existing bikeway network in San Diego, which includes more than **1,150 miles of existing bikeways** throughout the city.

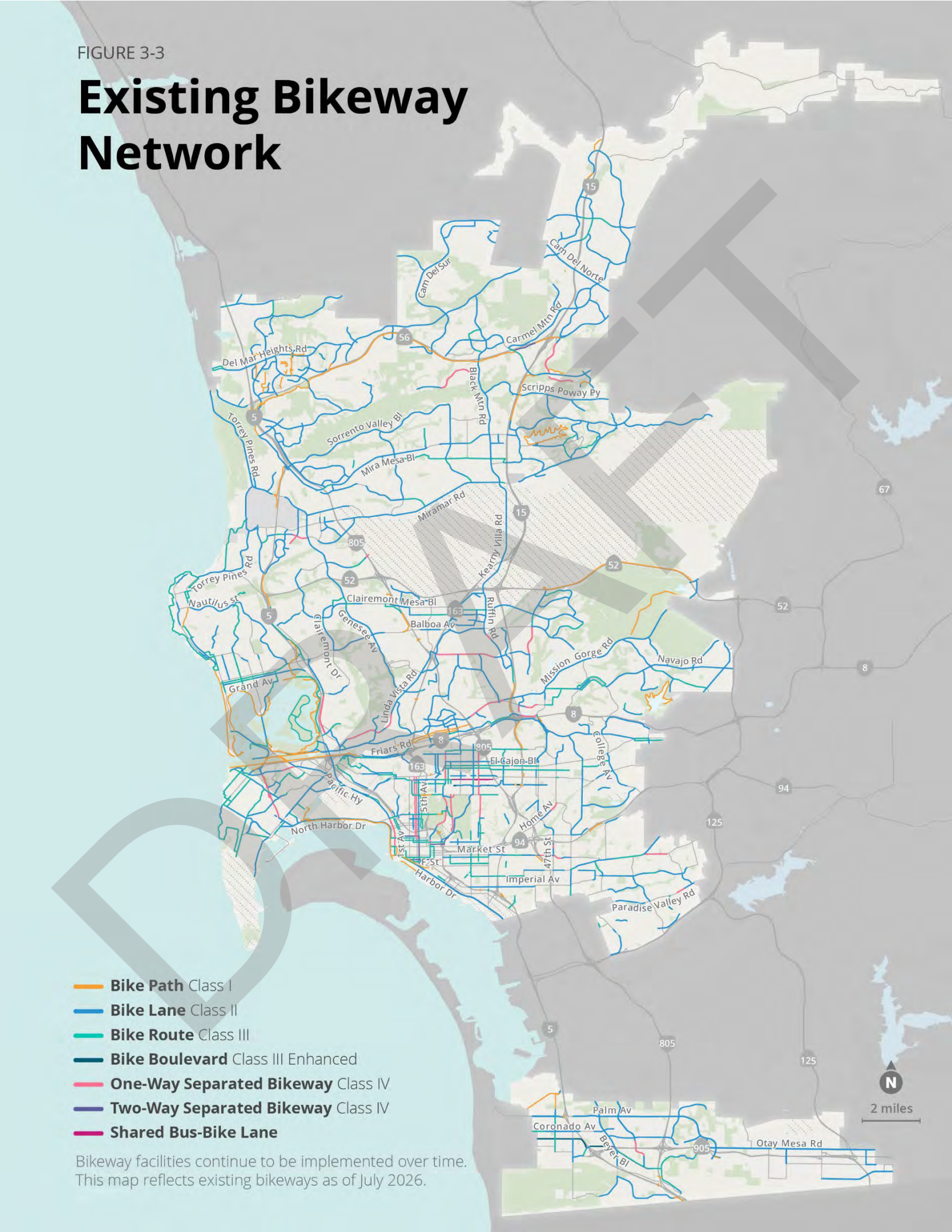
Figure 3-2. Existing Bikeway Mileage



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FIGURE 3-3

Existing Bikeway Network



Bikeway facilities continue to be implemented over time. This map reflects existing bikeways as of July 2026.

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