

MOTOWN A CYCLE CITY

Detroit to put 30 miles of bicycle lanes on streets

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Detroit will take its first major strides this year in adding bike lanes to its streets.

The largest share of 30 miles of marked on-street bike lanes that the city plans to add this year will be 17 miles in southwest Detroit connecting the Corktown and Mexicantown neighborhoods. That area also will get nearly 12 miles of roads designated as bike routes, with signs directing cyclists to destinations and alerting drivers to bicycle traffic but no painted bike lanes.

Other bike lanes will be added on streets near Wayne State University in Midtown, the New Center area and the city's east side as Detroit spends more than \$3.6 million — mostly federal funds with matching grants provided by private non-profit groups — for signs and repainting on the first batch of what ultimately could be hundreds of miles of lanes set aside for cyclists.

The bike lanes are part of a larger greenways effort in southeast Michigan, supported by groups including the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and the Kresge Foundation, to create a system of non-motorized community links that tie together neighborhoods, parks and other amenities through pedestrian and bike paths.

"You're starting to connect these neighborhoods that have their own strengths in ways they haven't been in a number of years," said Scott Clein of Gifels-Webster Engineers, a firm that helped put together a master plan for non-motorized transportation that Detroit adopted in 2008.

Advocates say the city has emphasized moving vehicle traffic at the expense of walking or biking — key indicators of a community's livability.

"Kids should be able to walk or bike to school," said Todd Scott, Detroit greenways coordinator for the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance. "You should be able to walk or bike to the local coffee shop. It's a quality of life issue."

Detroit has bike lanes on Belle Isle and on segments of scattered streets, but nothing of the scale now planned.

Detroit ranked among the bottom among the largest American cities in number of bike lanes, signed routes or multi-use paths per square mile in a 2010 League of American Bicyclists report. About 4% of commuters either walk or bike to work in Detroit, below the 5.6% average among big U.S. cities.

City traffic engineer Prasad Nannapaneni said the bike lanes generally will be created using space from existing traffic lanes, with striping repainted to make room for 5-foot-wide bike lanes adjacent to curbs or parking lanes. Nannapaneni said most of this year's bike lane work will start in September.

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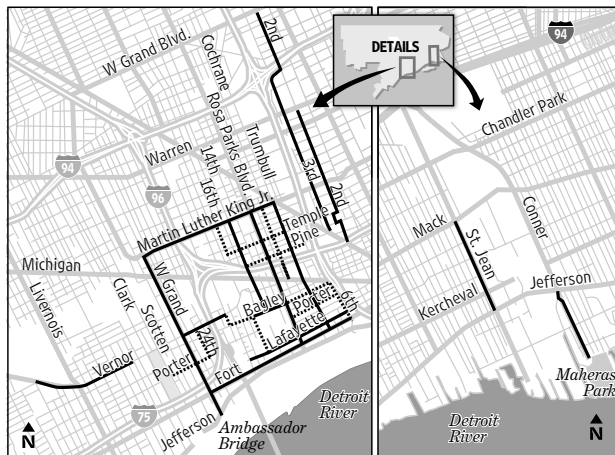
"I think it's going to encourage more people to ... take biking as a serious form of transportation," said Jon Koller, 25, who rides his bike from Corktown to WSU.

Biking in Detroit

The city plans to create about 30 miles of bike lanes, with 17 miles of on-street lanes and nearly 12 miles of routes signed for cyclists, starting in September in southwest Detroit, near Wayne State University and on the east side. The aim is a network of hundreds of miles of biking and walking paths connecting neighborhoods and attractions across the city.

Bike lanes on the street

Bike routes designated with signs only



Source: City of Detroit

DAVID PIERCE/Detroit Free Press