

INDY GREENWAYS FOR ALL!

A STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

PUBLIC DRAFT - AUGUST 17, 2026

AN INTRODUCTION TO GREENWAYS FOR ALL

LEARN ABOUT THE PLAN
IN 8 MINUTES OR LESS!



WHAT IS "GREENWAYS FOR ALL"?

We're glad you're here to learn about the future of Indy Greenways.

Indy Greenways for All: A Strategic Implementation Plan for the City of Indianapolis lays out a clear vision for expanding and improving Indianapolis' greenways network so more people can access high quality trails. Built on data analysis and community input, the plan proposes a future where over 80% of Indianapolis and Marion County residents live within a mile of a greenway.

The plan is organized into six parts that outline how the City will map the network, design safe and consistent trails, build the highest priority segments, improve places along each route, maintain the system over time, and establish sustainable funding. The plan uses core values such as improving transportation, supporting equity, protecting the environment, and promoting growth to guide decisions and highlight priorities like closing gaps in the network, connecting neighborhoods, and opening new opportunities for development along greenways.

Altogether, the Greenways for All Plan provides a coordinated strategy to grow a connected, equitable, and beloved greenways network faster and more effectively than ever before.

Note: The Greenways for All Plan encompasses all of Marion County, including the City of Indianapolis, nine townships, incorporated communities, and the four excluded municipalities of Beech Grove, Lawrence, Southport, and Speedway. Data and analysis used in this plan covers the geography and population of all of Marion County.

WHAT IS A GREENWAY?

You're going to see the term "greenway" all over this plan. After all, *it is a Greenways Plan*. The term greenway is not universally used, however, and depending on jurisdiction or location, it may be easily confused with other terms like trail, path, park, or bikeway.

For the City of Indianapolis and Marion County, a greenway is a linear park-like corridor that includes a multi-use path for walking and biking.

A greenway is...

1. **A SAFE ROUTE:** Physical infrastructure that is separate from roadways and a safe place to walk and bike for all ages and abilities.
2. **A TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR:** The spine of the city-wide active transportation network, connecting to local bike lanes, routes, and sidewalks.
3. **A COMMUNITY CONNECTOR:** A walking and biking link between people's homes, businesses, schools, and other destinations.
4. **A GREEN SPINE:** Environmental corridors and recreation spaces link Indianapolis' natural areas, urban forests, rivers, creeks, and parklands.
5. **A REGIONAL LINK:** Greenways link to regional trails that extend into other communities as well as the Indianapolis Cultural Trail.

PAST & PRESENT OF INDY GREENWAYS

This plan is a continuation of the Indy Greenways legacy that was established 120 years ago.

Since renowned landscape architect George Kessler created the first vision for an interconnected Park and Boulevard System in 1909, Indianapolis has been recognized as a leader in parks and greenways. This legacy grew through decades of investment in the city's greenways network, including the Monon Trail which opened in 1996 and became a nationally recognized model for urban rail-trail development.

Today, the Indy Greenways Network remains a world-class multi-use trail system that connects people to neighborhoods, commercial districts, schools, parks, cultural features, and historic sites throughout the city. Through legacy and sheer mileage, Indianapolis is regarded as a city with one of the premier greenways systems in the country.

1909 GREENWAYS PLAN
The Kessler Plan is the foundation for Indy Greenways that all future plans have been built on.

1938 GREENWAYS PLAN
An expansion on the initial vision, introducing new greenways along Little Buck Creek and Eagle Creek.

1994 GREENWAYS PLAN
The first introduction of greenways along rail corridors including the B&O Trail and Monon Trail.

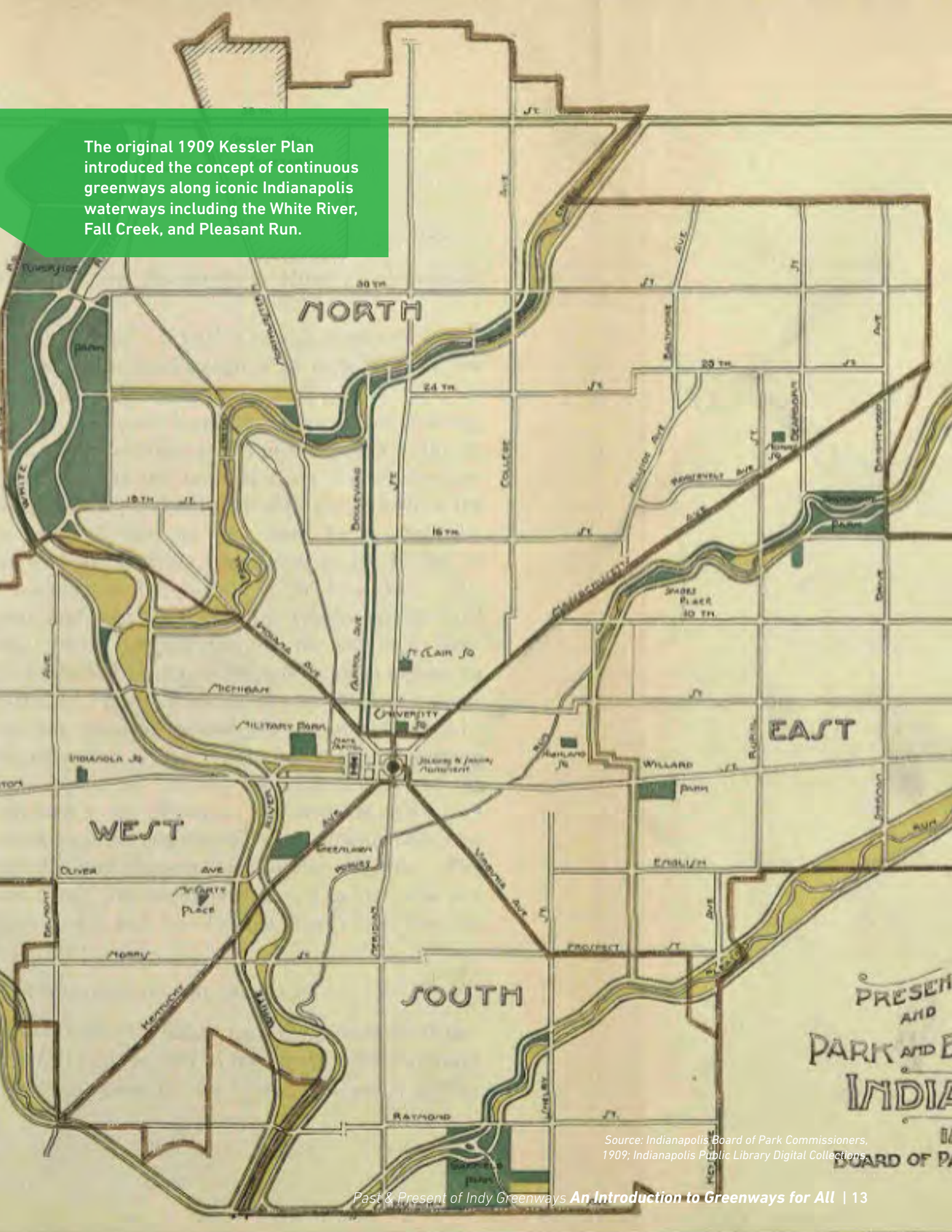
2002 GREENWAYS PLAN
Continued proposed expansion of rail-trails with the network to the east along the Pennsy Trail.

2014 FULL CIRCLE MASTER PLAN
A major expansion of proposed greenways county-wide, including more urban greenways along roadway corridors.

2026 GREENWAYS FOR ALL PLAN
The next step in the continued advancement of Indy Greenways.

Figure 1. Kessler Plan.

The original 1909 Kessler Plan introduced the concept of continuous greenways along iconic Indianapolis waterways including the White River, Fall Creek, and Pleasant Run.



Source: Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners, 1909; Indianapolis Public Library Digital Collections

Since the 2014 Full Circle Master Plan, the Indy Greenways Network has nearly doubled.

The past decade has been a golden era of greenways development in Indianapolis and Marion County, significantly expanding the mileage and geographic reach of greenways.

In 2014, the existing Indy Greenways Network centered around Downtown Indianapolis and the four major greenways at the time: the White River Greenway, Monon Trail, Pleasant Run Greenway, and Fall Creek Greenway.

From 2014 to 2022, the network expanded east with the Pennsy Trail to Hancock County and west with B&O Trail to Speedway.

From 2023 into 2028, growth has been highlighted by the development of the Nickel Plate Trail to the Hamilton County Line. In addition, the B&O Trail was extended further west to Hendricks County while the first phases of the Interurban Trail introduced a southern greenway connection.

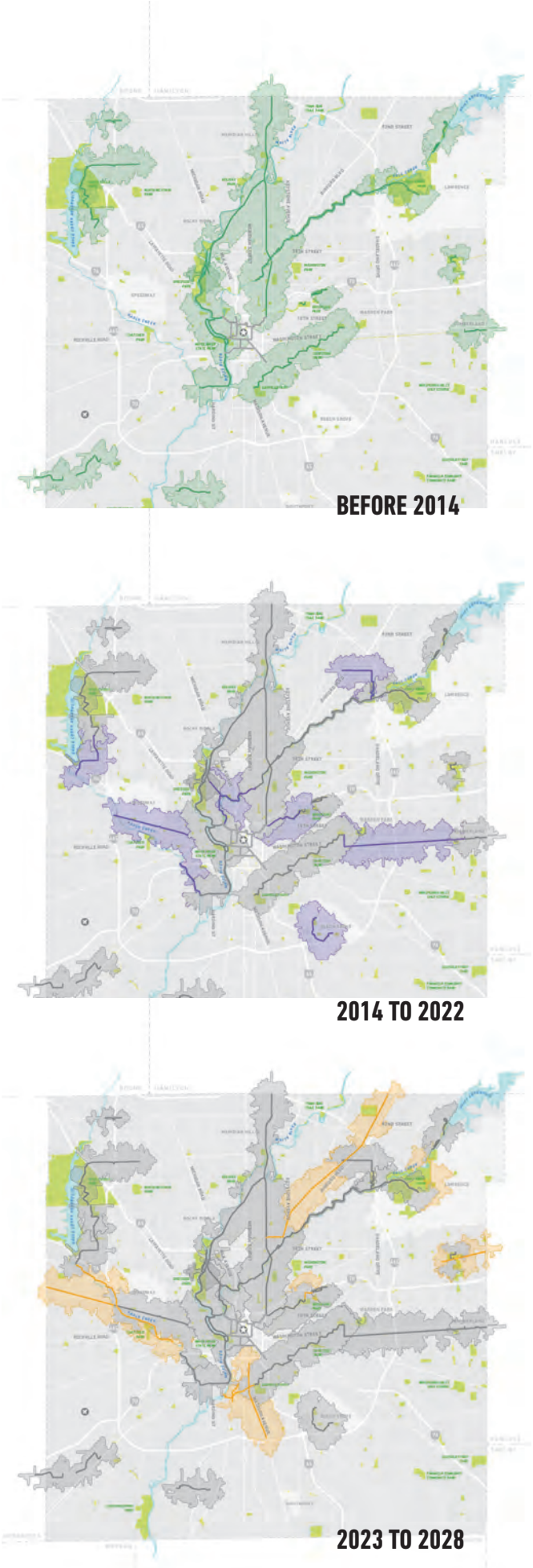


Figure 2. Greenways Development from before 2014 to 2028.

INDY GREENWAYS TODAY

As of 2026, there are over 120 miles of greenways that are existing or currently in progress. Many of the existing greenways radiate out from downtown and the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, with some of the longest greenways providing uninterrupted links to the county lines.

120 MILES of existing or in-progress greenways today.

120

370,000 PEOPLE can walk or bike to a greenway within one mile today.

This includes:
50,000 seniors &
80,000 youth

310,000 JOBS are within one mile of a greenway today.

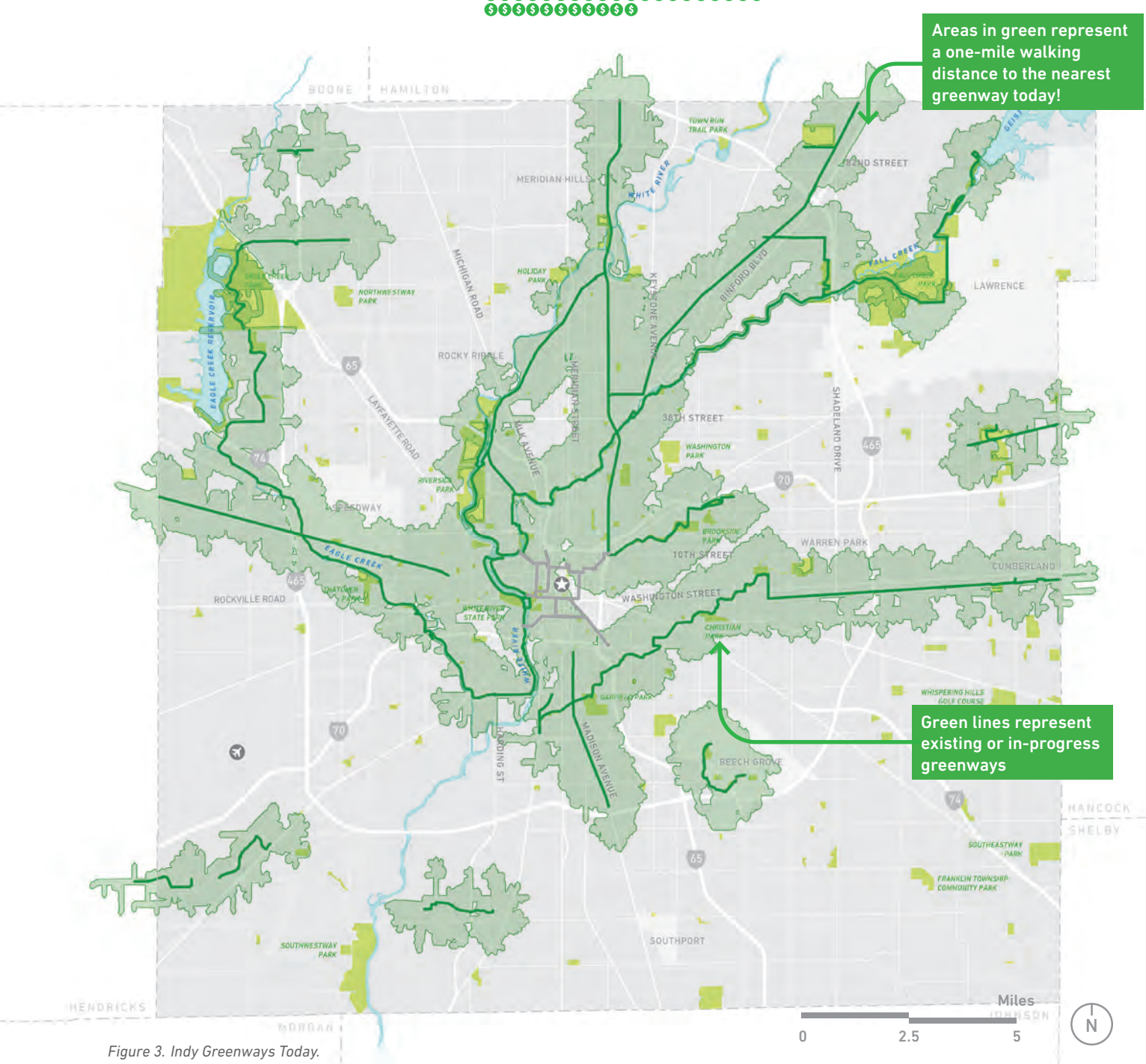


Figure 3. Indy Greenways Today.

VALUES & ENGAGEMENT

Thousands of residents, community leaders, and experts helped to shape the Greenways for All Plan.

Spanning 18 months from Fall of 2024 to Spring of 2026, the City of Indianapolis and Greenways for All team met with communities and stakeholders to workshop ideas and understand the values that would guide the recommendations and priorities of the plan.

Through the Greenways for All engagement process, five core values were developed, shaped, and prioritized by the community and stakeholders. These values informed every aspect of the Greenways for All Plan, from data analysis to the location of newly proposed greenways to priorities for implementation.

The Five Core Values of the Greenways for All Plan:



GREENWAYS THAT CONNECT PEOPLE & TRAILS



GREENWAYS THAT CONNECT UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES



GREENWAYS THAT IMPROVE HEALTH & THE ENVIRONMENT



GREENWAYS THAT PROMOTE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



GREENWAYS THAT SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FUNDING & IMPLEMENTATION







Community & Stakeholder Engagement at a Glance:

100+ PEOPLE
engaged at in-person events

8 POP-UPS
as part of traveling "Road Show" event

2 COMMUNITY MEETINGS
at Frederick Douglass Park and Garfield Park

4,000 PEOPLE ENGAGED ONLINE
through surveys, storymaps, and comment forms

7 STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLES
with experts across different community topics







Photo: MKSK








Photo: MKSK





Across the many community voices that helped shape the plan, shared themes and values emerged.

Greenways Are Unifiers
The community has a shared love for greenways. Even with different priorities, residents recognize the many roles greenways play.

The Heart of Communities
Greenways are critical places that build community. Greenways offer places for everyone across all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Every Community Wants a Greenway
People living in communities without greenways want them. People clearly understand when they lack greenway access and have expressed a desire for the opportunities that greenways bring.

More Than Miles
Building miles of trails isn't enough. Greenways must connect to places people want to go. Amenities, activation, and new development make greenways vibrant and welcoming destinations that bring people together.

The Time is Right to Be Bold!
There is unmistakable momentum across the city and county. There is excitement and urgency, as residents don't want to wait generations.









Photo: MKSK

Along with local voices, the recommendations were shaped by lessons learned and best practices from comparable cities.

Throughout the planning process, the Greenways for All team met with comparable greenway cities to discuss topics such as funding, partnerships, implementation, maintenance, and community buy-in strategies. The guidance of these peer communities is woven throughout the plan.



THE BIG VISION

All residents should be able to walk to a greenway from their home.

As the city has grown and continued to urbanize, trails and greenways have taken on increased value for residents. Today, greenways are essential infrastructure to provide access to nature and recreation, to support alternative modes of transportation besides driving, and to attract residents and businesses to locate within the city.

In addition to expanding access, the Greenways for All vision sets a roadmap for the following:

1. **POSITION INDIANAPOLIS AS A WORLD-CLASS CITY** to remain competitive in attracting jobs and residents.
2. **CENTER ACCESS AND EQUITY** for all Indy Greenways.
3. Be a leader in providing healthy and **SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS.**
4. Leverage greenways to **SUPPORT HIGH-QUALITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

Photo: IEI

INDY GREENWAYS TOMORROW

The proposed Greenways for All vision is shown below: a fully constructed county-wide greenways network that provides access for more than **80% of all Marion County residents within a mile of their homes.** The proposed greenway network increases from 120 miles today to 380 miles, **a 217% increase.**

380 MILES throughout the proposed greenways network.

120 — 380

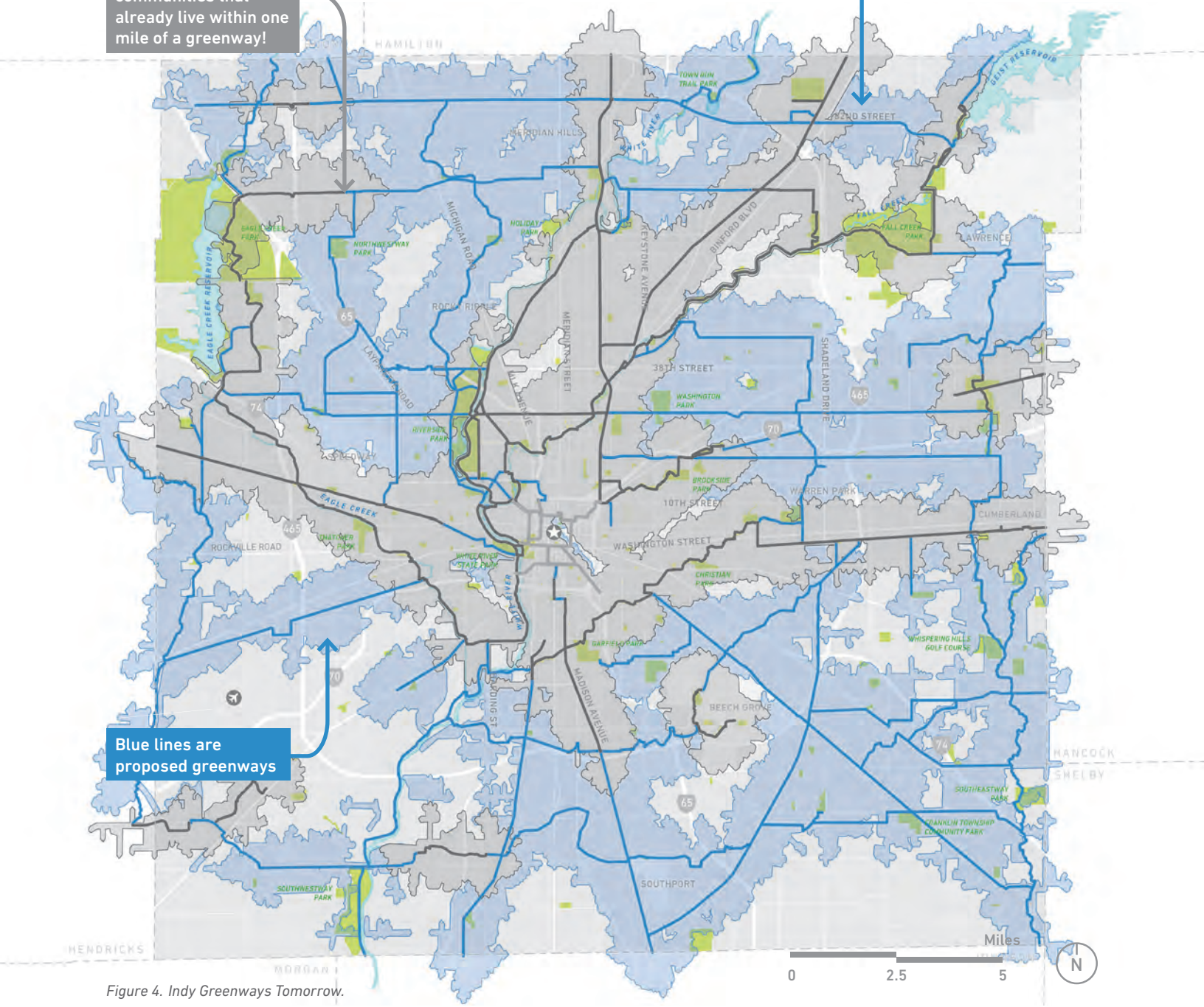
790,000 PEOPLE will be within one mile of a proposed greenway.

This includes:
115,000 seniors &
180,000 youth

520,000 JOBS will be within a mile of a greenway.

Areas and icons in blue are communities that would gain access to greenways!

Areas in gray are communities that already live within one mile of a greenway!



Blue lines are proposed greenways

Figure 4. Indy Greenways Tomorrow.

THE CASE FOR GREENWAYS

WHY NOW?

The past decade of greenways development has been unlike anything Indianapolis has ever seen, yet the city faces an urgency for continued greenways investment.

Transportation access is an equity issue. 10% of Marion County households do not have access to a car, and 45% do not have convenient transit access.

People are choosing other places to live. Marion County has a 7% growth rate since 2010, compared to 21% for the eight surrounding counties.

Residents lack essential amenities. 48% of Marion County residents cannot walk to a park or greenway within a mile of their home.

WHY GREENWAYS?

Greenways are part of the solution for a more equitable, economically competitive, and livable Indianapolis. Their value goes far beyond the number of miles to actively address many of the urgent issues and priorities for the community.

Greenways connect people in everyday life. Greenways link residents to world-class outdoor experiences, expand mobility options, bridge community gaps and remove barriers to opportunity, and increase access to jobs.

Greenways improve equity, health, safety, and the environment. Greenways expand recreational facilities to communities without parks, provide safe routes for the county's most vulnerable residents, and improve air and water quality.

Greenways promote growth and development. Greenways boost local economies, increase property values, drive new and catalytic development, and attract new residents and employers to the region.

Explore the benefits of Greenways for All vision on the following pages!

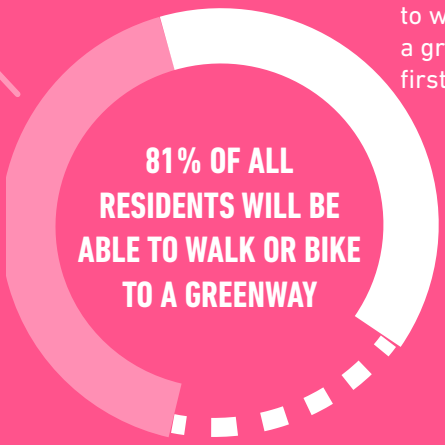
GREENWAYS CONNECT PEOPLE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

1 CONNECT PEOPLE AND GREENWAYS

Above all else, it's about providing residents with access to a world-class greenways network.

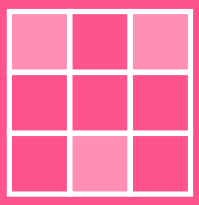
39%
of Marion County residents have access to a greenway within a mile of their home.

42%
more residents will gain access. This means **410,000 people** will be able to walk or bike to a greenway for the first time!



2 BRIDGE GAPS & EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

Greenways connect underserved neighborhoods to parks, schools, jobs, and transit, reducing barriers to opportunity.



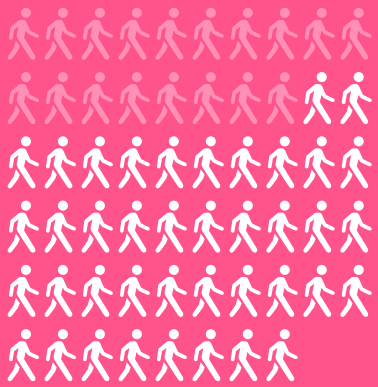
Marion County

All 9 townships will be served by the expanded network, including underserved areas in the northwest, northeast, and south.

380+ contiguous miles will be linked by closing gaps between existing greenways. **For every 1 mile of greenway added, the contiguous network grows by 1.5 miles.**

3 EXPAND MOBILITY OPTIONS

Greenways provide free, accessible transportation and recreation options for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.



Each person represents 250,000 trips taken per year using a greenway.

10 million new walking and biking trips could be generated annually!

(Source: projection based on 2023 trail system per-mile averages reported by Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metro Council)



Each dollar represents 10,000 jobs that are accessible from a greenway.

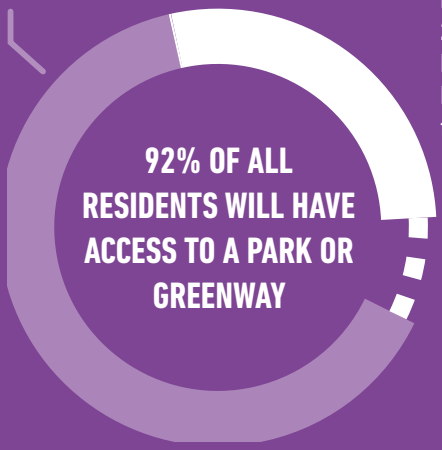
210,000 more jobs will be accessible for people walking and biking!

GREENWAYS IMPROVE EQUITY, HEALTH, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1 RECREATIONAL EQUITY

Greenways are recreational assets, and they expand the number of people who have access to parks.

64%
of Marion County residents have access to a park or greenway within a mile of their home.



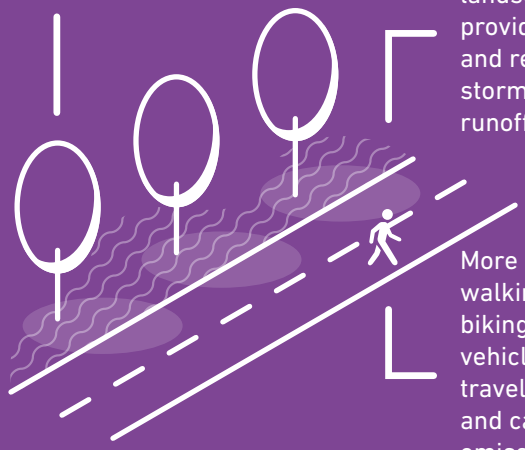
28%
more residents will gain access. This means **more than 250,000 people** will be able to walk or bike to a park facility for the first time!

2 ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY

Greenways increase tree canopy, conservation areas, and environmental benefits for all residents.

New trees along greenways support urban cooling and air quality.

Conservation areas and native landscapes provide habitats and reduce stormwater runoff.



More people walking and biking reduces vehicle miles traveled and carbon emissions.

+350 acres of new conservation areas

+10,000 new trees

Each tree represents 500 new trees.

Each drop equals 250,000 gallon of water.

6 MILLION GALLONS
of stormwater intercepted and offset each year.

90K TONS of carbon dioxide sequestered and
2.5 TONS of pollutants removed from the air each year.

Increased walking and biking trips could annually offset
3 MILLION **vehicles miles traveled.**

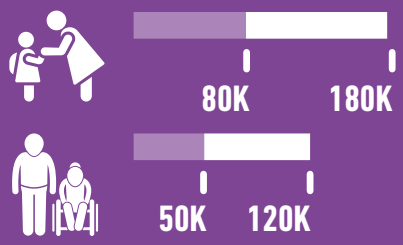
3 SAFETY FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

Greenways provide safe routes and crossings for the most vulnerable residents.

+1,200 improved crossings for cyclists and pedestrians will be implemented.



+190 more schools will be within 1 mile of a greenway.



+100,000 more school-age kids (under 18) and **+70,000** more seniors within one mile of a greenway.

GREENWAYS PROMOTE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

1 BOOST LOCAL ECONOMY

Greenways support local spending and empower small businesses and local jobs.

$2 MILLION

in economic benefits are generated per mile of greenway constructed (based on recent estimates from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission).

Based on this metric, **more than $500 million** in economic benefits could be generated.

$5 PER TRIP

Based on conservative estimates, each trip taken on a greenway generates on average $5 more dollars in local spending.

This alone would generate an additional spending of **$50 million into the local economy annually.**

2 DRIVE DEVELOPMENT

Greenways are a foundation for catalyzing private investment and attracting high-quality developments.



Photo: City of Dublin

Exceptional greenways can drive private Investment. The Bridge Street District in Dublin, Ohio, is anchored by a pedestrian bridge and trail network, and has seen **over $500 million** in private investment.



Photo: Hadley Fruits & Rundell Ernstberger Associates

Areas along the Monon Trail in Carmel, Indiana, have generated **more than $1 billion** in private investment, resulting in a new City Center and Midtown Neighborhood.

3 PROPERTY VALUE

Greenways boost the value and tax revenue generated by nearby properties.

Greenways have been shown to increase the value of properties within 1/4 mile by

3% - 5%

4 ATTRACT RESIDENTS & EMPLOYERS

Greenways are an essential amenity for attracting people and businesses to Indianapolis.

PEOPLE ♥ TRAILS

and people will choose where they live because of them. Access to greenways, parks, and nature is consistently listed as **a top 5 reason** for where Indiana residents reside in statewide quality of life surveys.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Want to learn more about the Greenways for All Plan? You're in the right place.

The Greenways for All Plan consists of six chapters, each of which tells a unique story and plays a critical role in shaping and implementing the vision.

1. **VISION IT!**
   The proposed Indy Greenways Network, the data-driven analysis, and the community values that shaped the big vision.

2. **DESIGN IT!**
   The standards, guidelines, and typologies that establish a world-class and consistent level of design for all future greenways.

3. **BUILD IT!**
   The top projects, community-informed prioritization process, and action items that will guide the next steps of implementation.

4. **ENHANCE IT!**
   The guidelines and recommendations for development near greenways to support active and desirable greenway communities.

5. **SUSTAIN IT!**
   The operations and maintenance structure, staffing, budget, and tasks to support a world-class Indy Greenways Network.

6. **MAKE IT HAPPEN!**
   The costs and benefits of implementing the Greenways for All Plan and a framework for sustained financing.

Photo: IEI

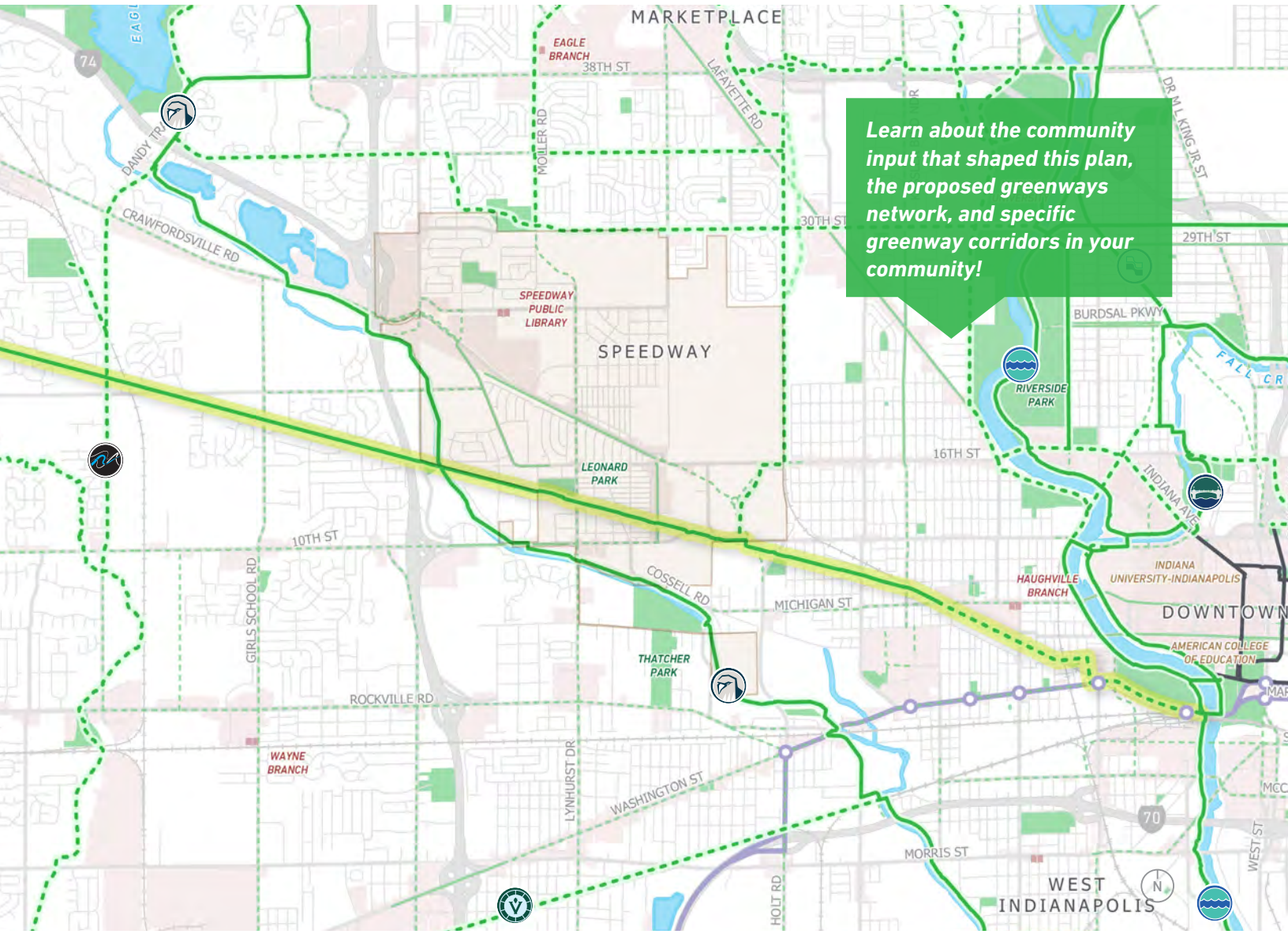
Chapter 1

Vision It!

This is the big vision for the Greenways for All Plan: a proposed Indy Greenways Network that expands access across Indianapolis and Marion County. The proposed network was shaped by robust data analysis and extensive community and stakeholder input.

This chapter summarizes the core values of the plan, community and stakeholder input, and a data-driven analysis of how well the existing greenways network has served community priorities.

The heart of this chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the proposed network, including seven new greenway corridors, and detailed report cards of all 30 existing and proposed greenways in the network.



Chapter 2

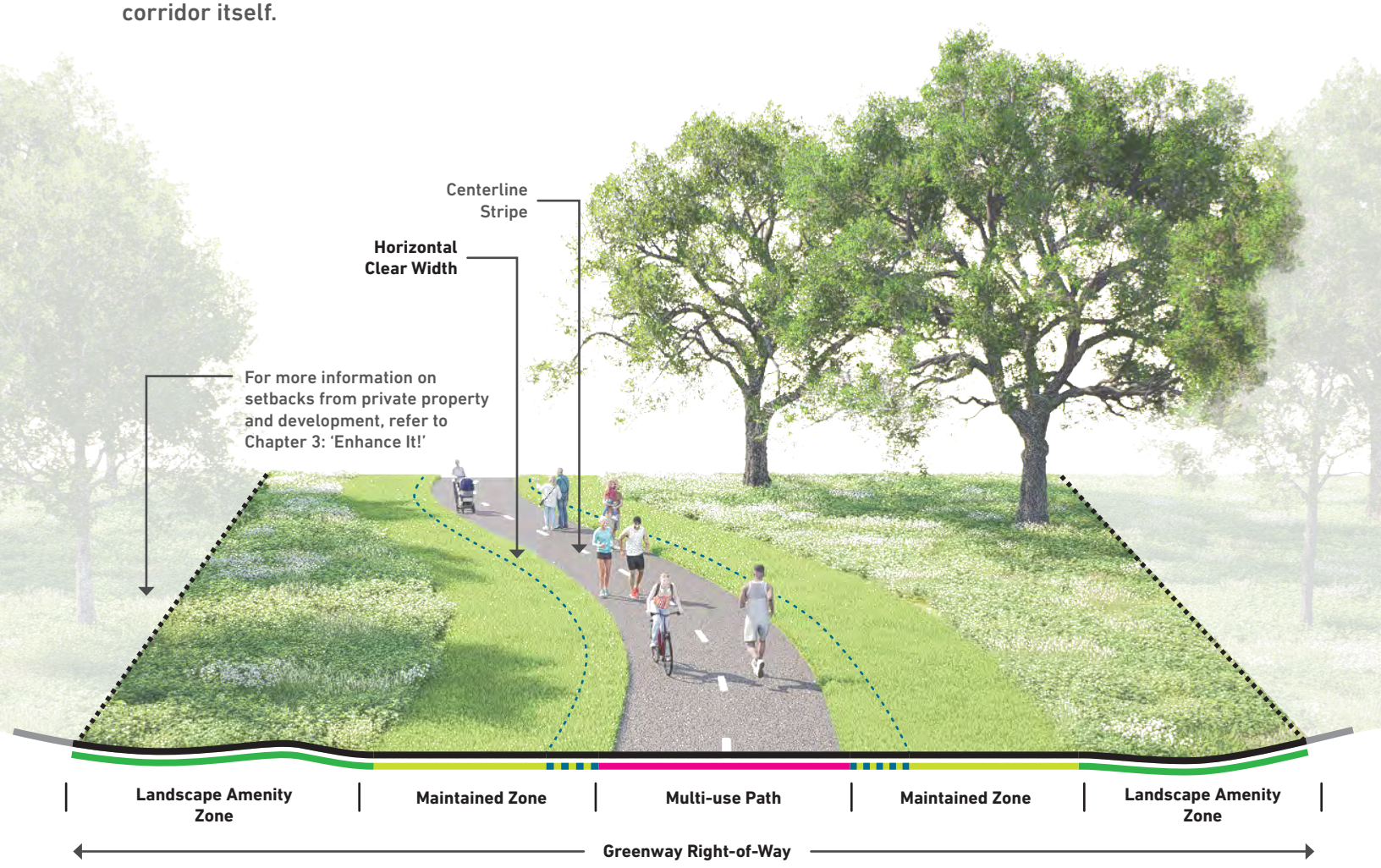
Design It!

Design standards create a framework for a unified and consistent Indy Greenways Network of hundreds of miles of multi-use paths that stretch across the City of Indianapolis, nine townships, and diverse contexts and terrains of Marion County. This consistency in design is a critical element for ensuring a recognizable, desirable, and world-class greenway system that holds itself to a high standard.

The design standards work in tandem with other chapters of the master plan and focus specifically on the design and implementation of the greenway corridor itself.

This chapter, together with the design specifications included in the appendix, will guide the development of the next generation of greenways envisioned in this plan.

Learn about the greenway design standards and typologies featured across the network!



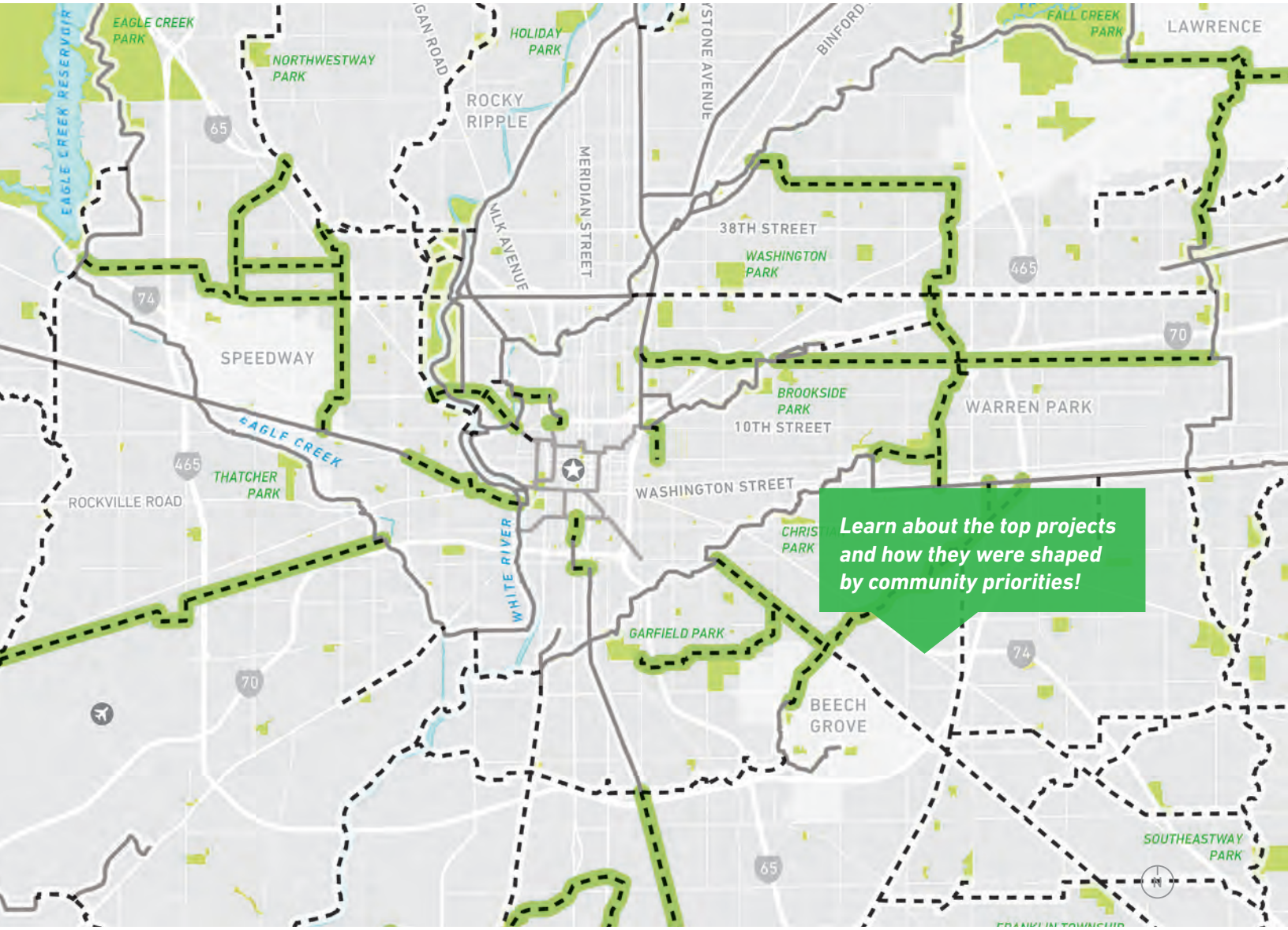
Chapter 3

Build It!

The people of Indianapolis want action and to see the Greenways for All vision implemented. While the vision is bold, the steps to get there need to be pragmatic and strategic.

This chapter serves as the strategic implementation component of the Indy Greenways for All Plan and provides actionable structure for Indianapolis and project partners to implement and enact the recommendations of this plan.

This chapter provides a summary of the top projects, an overview of the community-informed prioritization process, and the specific action items that will guide next steps.

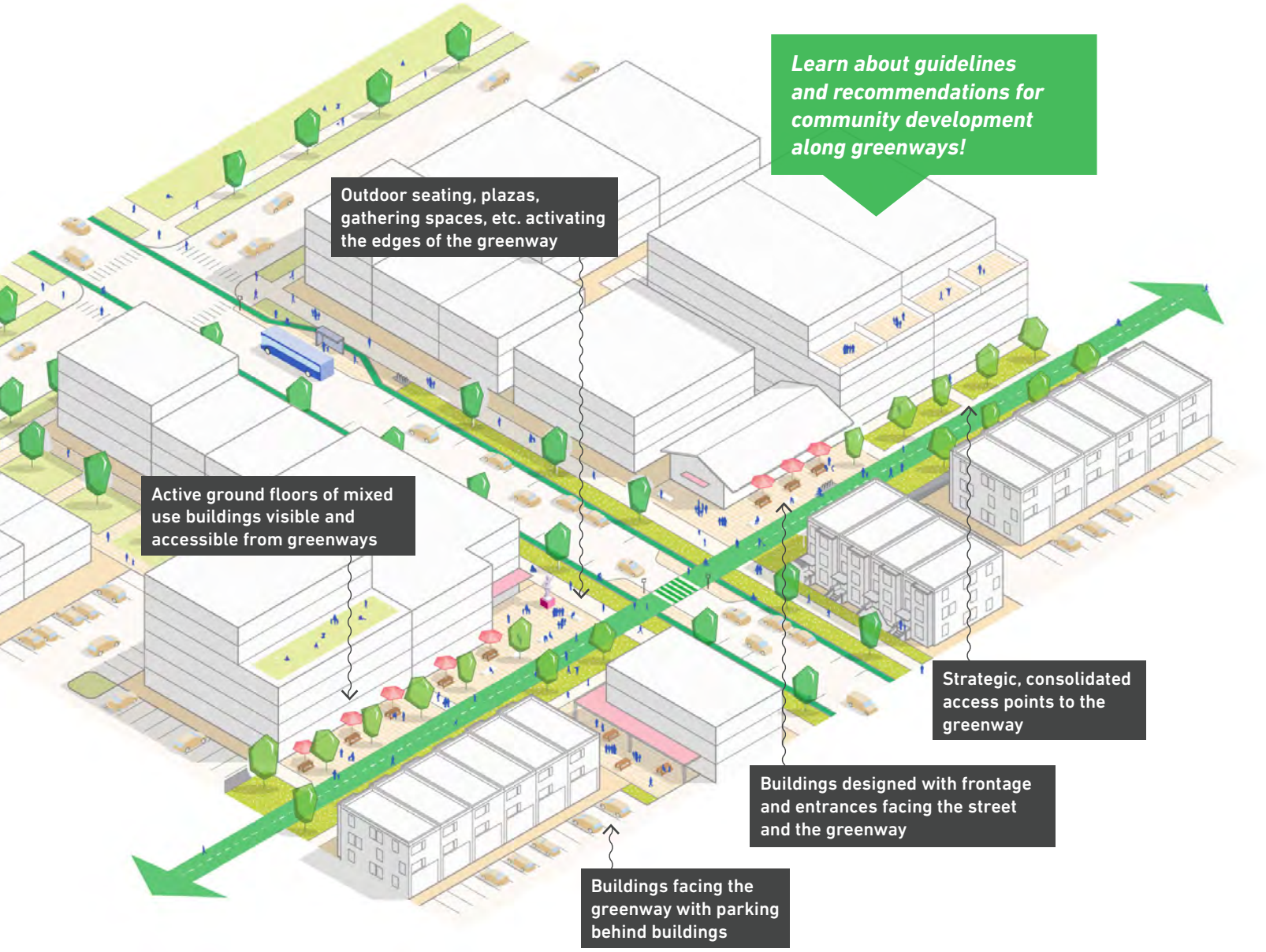


Chapter 4

Enhance It!

Great greenways are an integral part of the quality of life for adjacent communities. At the same time, adjacent communities contribute to the diversity, the culture, and the liveliness of the greenway, making the entire experience more fascinating, inviting, and joyful.

This chapter provides guidance for community development near greenways to support walkable, bikeable, and connected "Greenway Places." It provides a framework for integrating land use, access, and public realm design that goes beyond the greenway to ensure greenways serve as community assets that shape and support both public and private development.



Chapter 5

Sustain It!

Operations and Maintenance is fundamental to a great Indy Greenways Network. A well-cared-for network fosters an inviting environment where people feel safe, invited, and inspired. The fundamentals of taking care of the greenways network require dedicated full-time staff, daily attention, reliable funding sources, and a system of accountability and reporting.

This chapter serves as the Indy Greenways Network Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plan and details the operational structure, staffing and budgeting, and comprehensive maintenance tasks for all Indy Greenways.



Chapter 6

Make It Happen!

A world-class greenways network is a major investment. The cost of constructing new greenways and ongoing operations and maintenance costs requires an adaptable and broad-based financing strategy to guide a reliable path forward. At the same time, greenways provide a significant return on investment for communities, producing immediate and multi-generational economic, environmental, and quality of life benefits.

This chapter provides a framework for what it will take to fund the Greenways for All vision and strategies to accelerate the timeline. It includes an overview of the costs to implement the Greenways for All Plan, the long-term benefits of greenways that offset upfront capital investments, and a framework for sustainable financing to support Indy Greenways for decades to come.

Learn about the costs and benefits of the Greenways for All Plan and how we can make it happen faster!





> ***Continue on for Chapter 1: Vision It!***