

Executive Summary

Connecting Our Community

A Plan for Connecting the Idaho Falls Area Through Walking and Biking

INTRODUCTION

“Connecting our Community” is a comprehensive bicycle, pedestrian, and trails facility plan that focuses on the City of Idaho Falls, but also addresses facilities in the communities of Ammon, Iona, and Ucon within the Bonneville MPO service area. This plan is the culmination of a year-long public planning process which included three community meetings with over 300 attendees, a statistically valid survey with over 1,100 responses, and online website participation from roughly 100 individuals.

THE VISION

The vision is to create a comprehensive and interconnected pedestrian, trail, and on-street bicycle network that fosters a culture of active living and increases the Idaho Falls area’s marketability as a destination for active recreation – boasting a world class trail system. In order for this vision to be realized, funding, technical feasibility (sufficient space and technology), and political will must also all be realized.



Figure ES-1. The hub & spokes model illustrates how destinations and districts can be connected via the Greenbelt, trails, on-street bicycle facilities, and pedestrian improvements.



Figure ES-2. Summary Timeline of the Planning Process

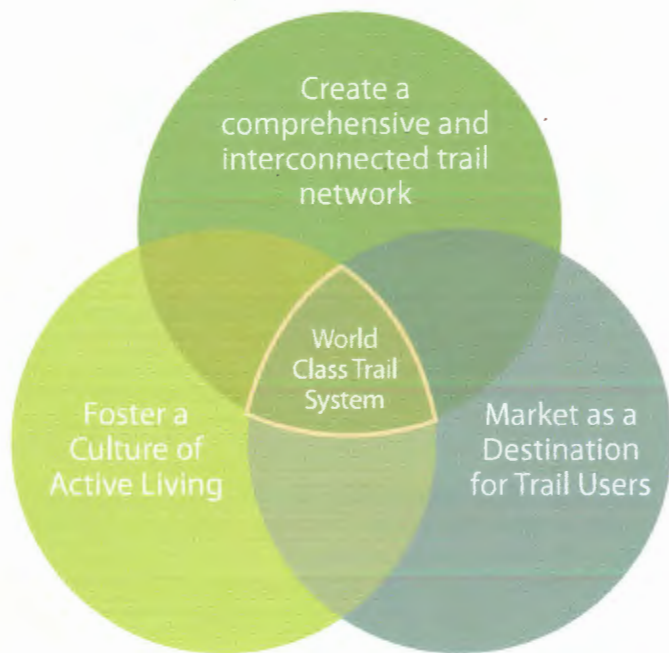


Figure ES-3, Idaho Falls' vision for a world class trail system



Figure ES-4, This diagram illustrates the many inputs and levels of analysis used to make recommendations for the "Connecting Our Community" Plan.

Residents in Idaho Falls, Ammon, Iona, and Ucon will all benefit from careful and strategic expansion of the non-motorized network. "Connecting Our Community" will serve as a blueprint to guide the planning and implementation of new bicycle and pathway facilities. Successful implementation of this plan will leave the Idaho Falls area healthier, happier, and better connected to neighboring communities and amenities.

METHODOLOGY

To prepare the recommendations contained within the plan, the following key inputs were used. Many of these inputs can be found in Chapter 3: Needs Analysis in the main document.

Public Input

Trail use trends, ideas, concerns, and preferences for future trails were identified through workshops and public meetings, the mail-in survey, and individual comments via the project website. Roughly 1,500 people from the general public contributed.

Steering Committee and Stakeholder Input

The recommended network has been vetted with Idaho Falls and BMPO staff. System ideas, concerns, and preferences were also collected during other meetings and stakeholder interviews.

Field Analysis of Existing Conditions

Fieldwork throughout the Idaho Falls area was conducted to analyze 'on-the-ground' site conditions for opportunities and constraints for recommended trails and on-street bicycling and walking improvements.

Existing Facilities and Current Recommendations

Locations of existing facilities were identified in the field by project consultants and by existing collected data by the BMPO; current recommendations were also analyzed from existing planning efforts.

Connectivity/Gap Analysis

Gaps in existing facilities were identified through a spatial mapping analysis; recommendations were then made to connect those gaps.

Key Destinations

Destinations which are likely to attract people, such as the Greenbelt, Tautphaus Park, and Downtown, were considered in network design and trail routing. Other examples include schools, parks, shopping centers, etc.

Conclusion

Together, these factors not only influenced specific recommendations connections, but also the overall design of the bicycle and pedestrian network itself.

WHAT WE HEARD

Feedback on the existing network and the preferences of residents was primarily collected in summer of 2013 with a public workshop attended by over 60 residents and a public survey submitted via utility bills

(in Idaho Falls) and city newsletters (in Ucon, Iona, and Ammon) to every resident in the region. 1,115 surveys were returned. For an in-depth analysis of community needs, please see the full plan document. The following infographics highlight some of the significant findings.

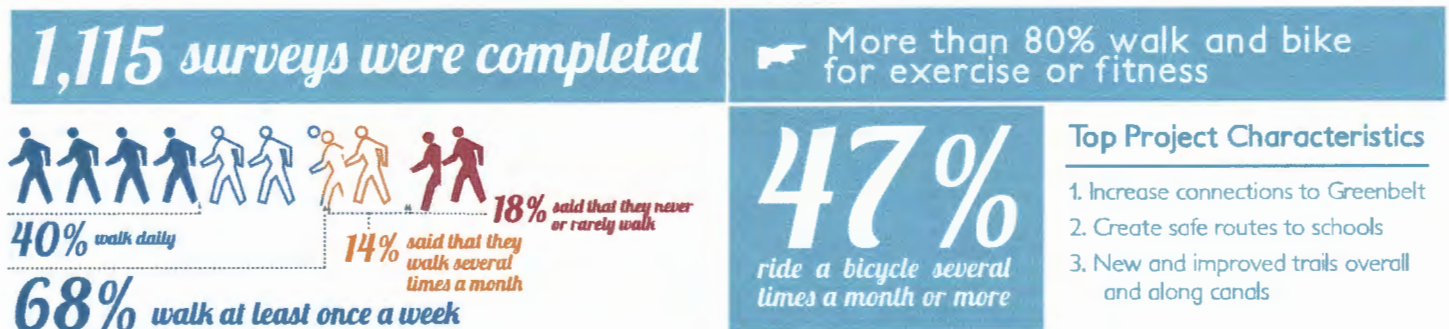


Figure ES-5, Survey results.

When it comes to paying for improvements for walking and biking...

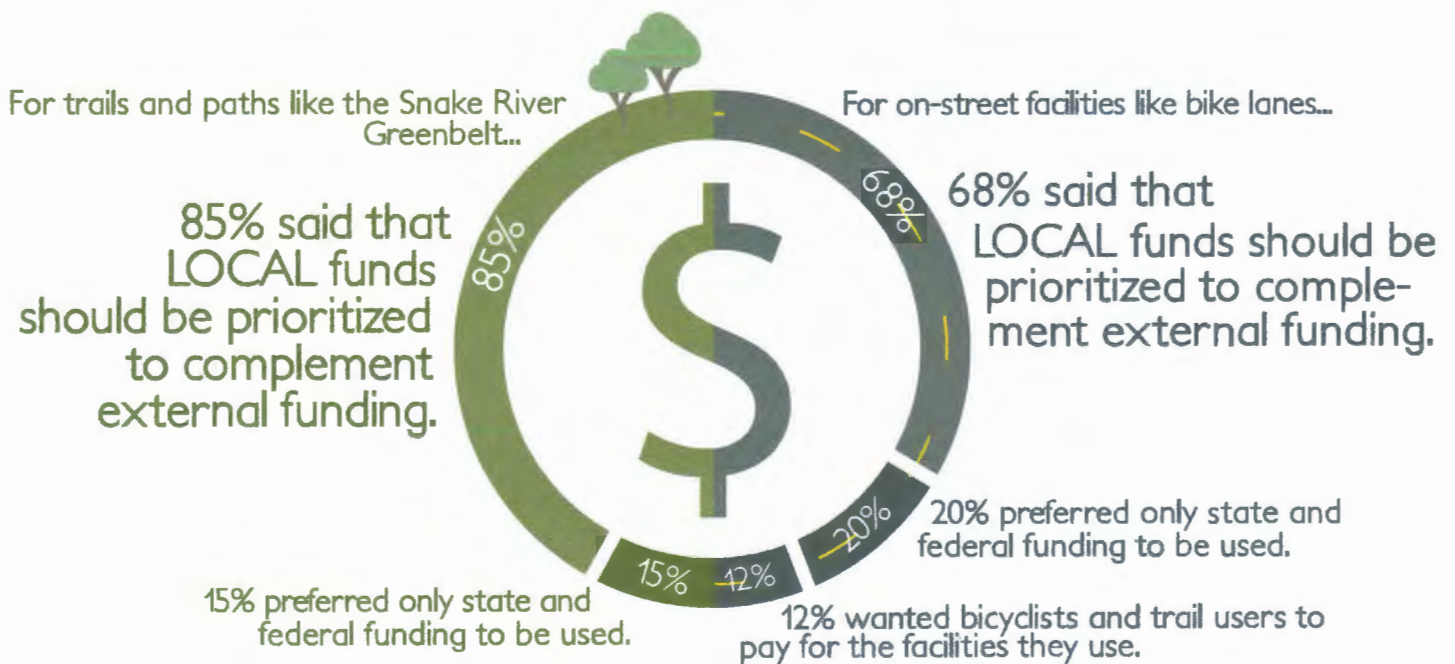


Figure ES-6, Survey results show strong support for the use of local funds in trails, paths, and on-street bicycle facility development.

CONCEPT PLAN

The Concept Plan identifies potential on-street bikeways, trails, and crossing improvement projects that will better connect Idaho Falls' many existing facilities and destinations. The recommendations are intended to encourage active living by residents and visitors alike and to accommodate a variety of ability levels and interests with particular emphasis on users that are not comfortable mixing with higher speed vehicular traffic.

The Concept Plan shows the overall recommended network of on-street bikeways, trails, and crossing improvements. Further investigations at the design, permitting, and construction documentation stages will be necessary to finalize specific trail alignments and facility types.

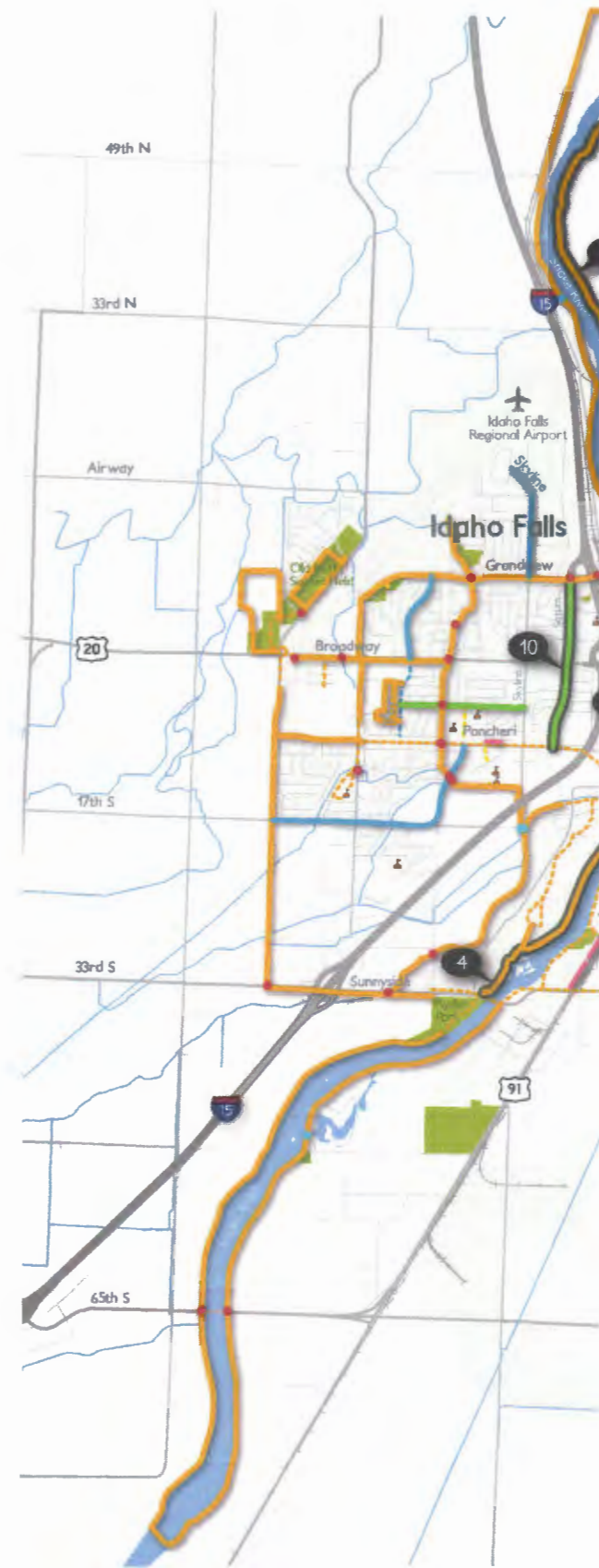
Bicyclists and pedestrians comprise diverse interests, ability levels, and preferences for facility types. As vulnerable roadway users, they are much more sensitive to poor facility design, construction, and maintenance and more exposed to the elements compared with motor vehicle drivers.

"Connecting Our Community" represents a focused analysis of applying various facility types to create a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly Idaho Falls area. The specific design of bicycle, pedestrian, and trail facilities should follow recommendations made in "Appendix A: Facility Design Guidelines for 'Connecting Our Community'". These guidelines are intended to be flexible and can be applied with professional judgment by designers and engineers.

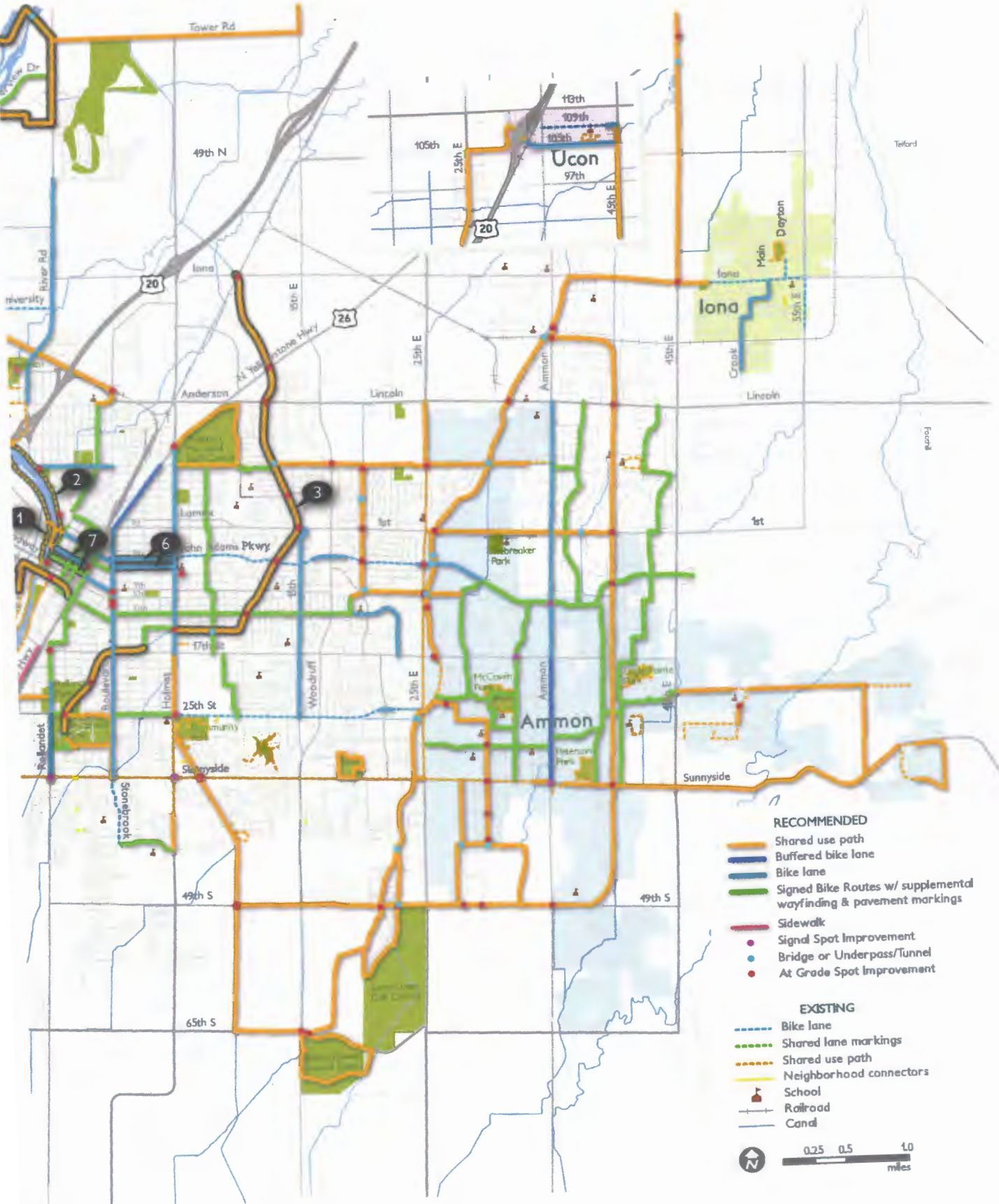
PRIORITY PROJECTS

The concept plan details the top 10 priority projects for implementation by the City of Idaho Falls (within city limits). The projects that apply to specific locations (excluding #9) are called out on the concept plan recommendations map at right. These projects were selected through a project ranking process that utilized several important criteria and substantial public input (roughly 100 individuals participated via the project website). The priority project ranking process is detailed in Appendix B: Project Information.

BICYCLING AND



WALKING RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE IDAHO FALLS AREA



City of Idaho Falls staff selected 10 projects from those that rated highly in the project-prioritization process to be developed in a way that will benefit grant applications or for implementation. See Appendix C: Priority Projects for more details.

The ten projects selected are:

1. River Parkway Greenbelt Widening and Redesign (Broadway St to US-20)
2. Snake River Greenbelt improvements from Broadway Street to US-20 (east side)
3. Idaho Canal Trail
4. Snake River Greenbelt from Snake River Landing to Sunnyside (west side)
5. Snake River Greenbelt (east side) from existing terminus at railroad bridge up to E River Road.

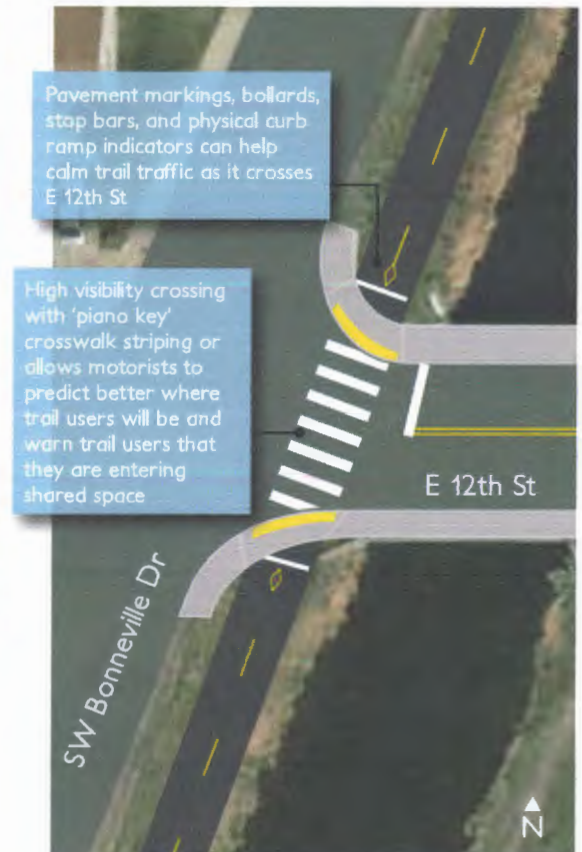
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The intersection design for the preferred option of Riverside Dr and Snake River Greenbelt (**Project #2**). Two travel lanes in each direction, a center turn lane, and median refuge (only at Elva St and the Temple), and a vegetated buffer instead of a center turn lane in all other locations.



The Idaho Canal Trail (**Project #3**) would be adjacent to the canal and utilize the existing, unpaved maintenance road. The above simulation depicts how the trail might look near E 14th St.



This aerial plan view shows what the Idaho Canal Trail (**Project #3**) might look like at the crossing of E 12th St. SW Bonneville Dr is the street that parallels the trail to the west.

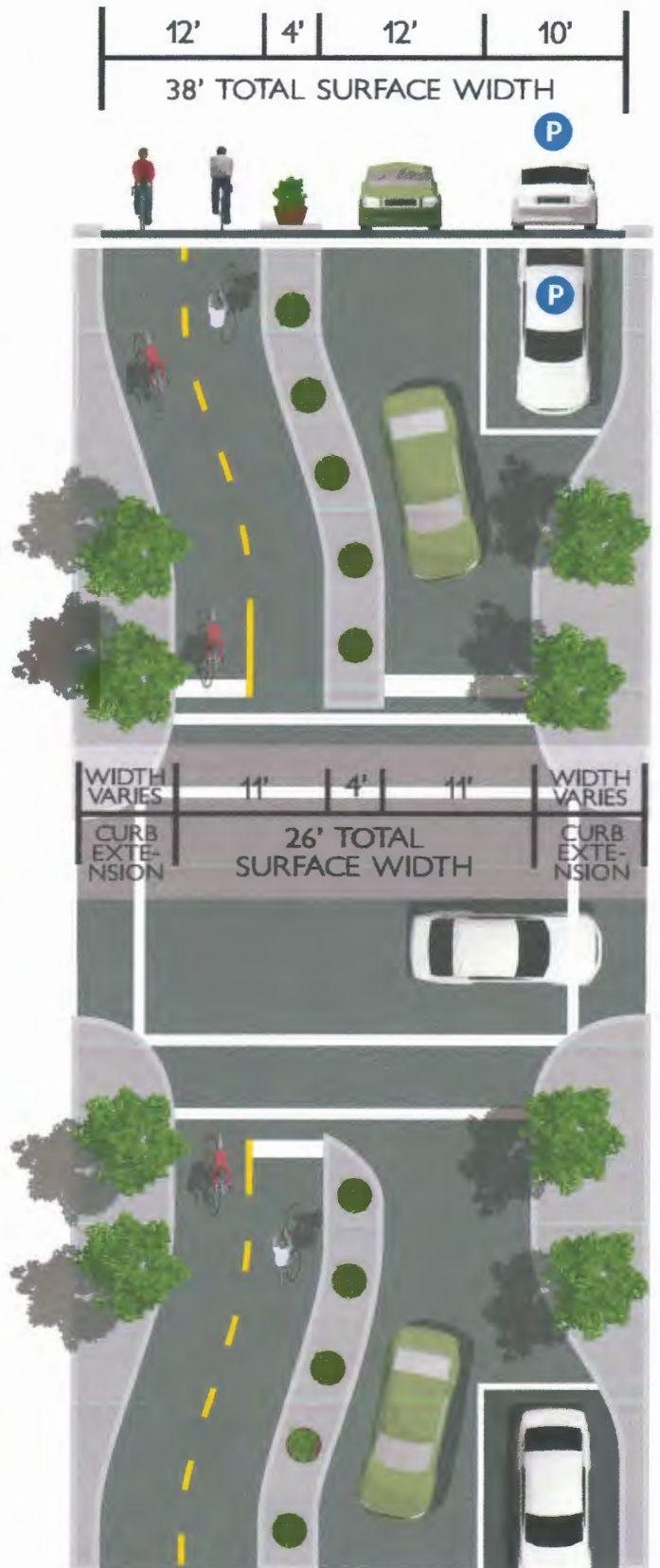
- 6. 5th & 6th Streets on-street bikeways
- 7. A & B Streets on-street bikeways
- 8. Loop Connector Trail (over railroad trestle into Downtown)
- 9. Wayfinding along bike routes
- 10. Saturn Avenue bikeway (Grandview to Pancheri)



Example of wayfinding shared lane markings from Jackson Hole, WY (Project #9).



Example of wayfinding signs from Jackson Hole, WY (Project #9).



This figure illustrates the possibility of an on-street, two-way protected bike lane on B Street in Downtown Idaho Falls (Project #7).

Special thanks to the more than **1,500** people from Idaho Falls, Ucon, Ammon, and Iona, Idaho for their help in imagining and assisting in the creation of this plan by submitting surveys, attending open houses and public meetings, visiting the project website, providing feedback on recommended projects, and participating in any other way.

