

# “Trails that take you places”

## *Planning a Regional Connections Network in WA*

PSRC Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

May 12, 2026

# Today's Presentation

- ✓ Cycle Highways Action Plan
- ✓ Regional Connections Proviso
- ✓ Next Steps for 2026 and beyond

*Photo credit: Toole Design*



# Cycle Highways Proviso (2025)

Develop the preliminary phase of an action plan for the establishment of cycle highways in locations that connect population centers and support mode shift (2024 ESHB 2134, Section 224 (4)).



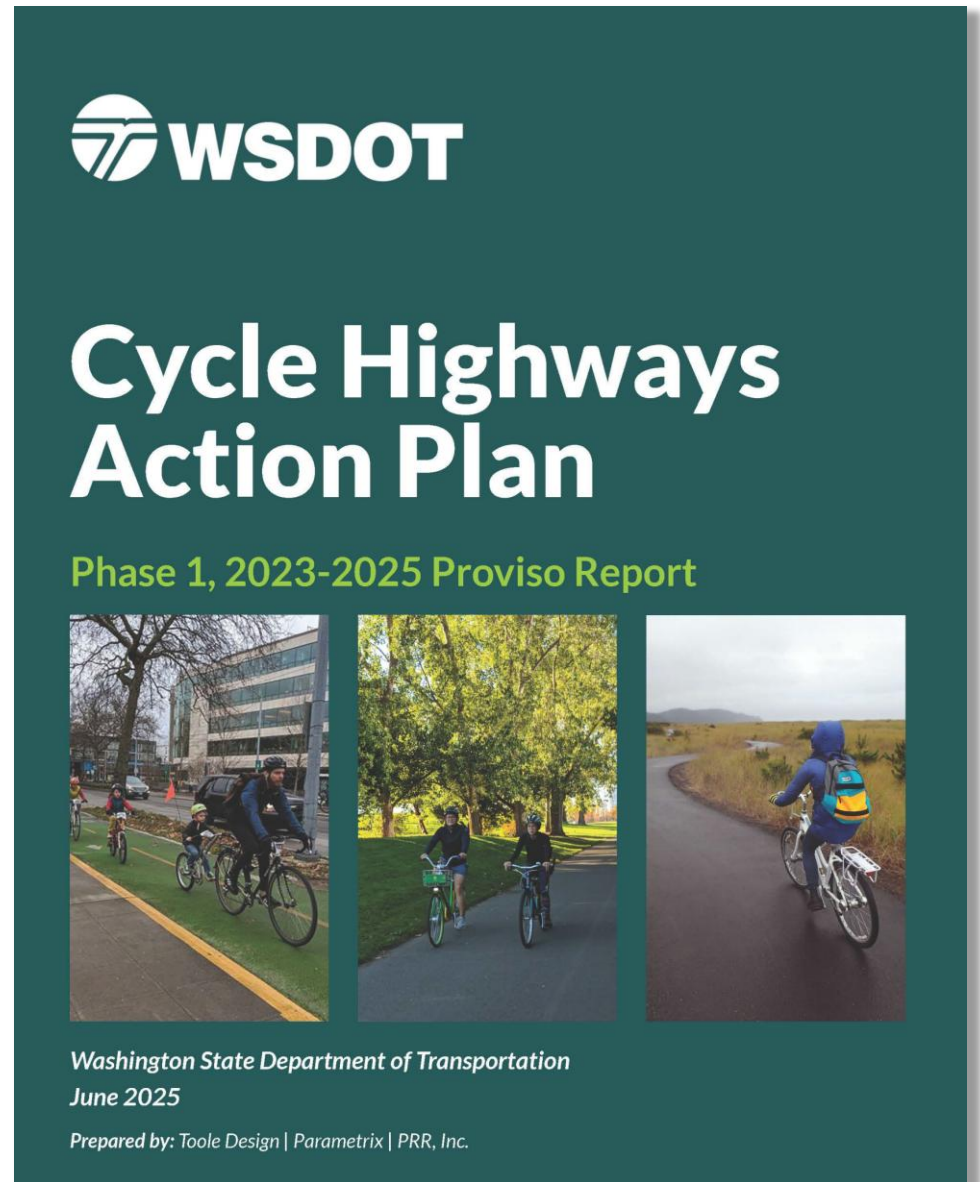
*Photo credit: Travis Curry*

# Report to the Legislature

- [Cycle Highways Action Plan, June 2025](#)
  - Working Definition
  - Where we are today
  - Model Practices
  - Recommended actions
  - 50 pages, plus appendixes
- How to find it:

Google:  
Cycle Highways  
Action Plan  
June 2025

OR



# Working Definition

“Washington cycle highways are a **multi-jurisdictional network of facilities** that optimize bicycle, micromobility, and other forms of active travel **through and between population centers** to support existing active travel demand and encourage mode shift from personal motor vehicles to active transportation.

Cycle highways are **well-maintained facilities** that include shared-use paths, paved trails (for trails meeting shared-use path design criteria), bike lanes, and bicycle boulevards that emphasize **safety, reduce modal conflicts, and prioritize efficient travel** by bicycle, micromobility, and other forms of active transportation. Cycle highways are well marked and provide **essential wayfinding** and other user information.”

# Outreach to Partners and Community Members

Inform partners and gather feedback on vision, goals, and branding.

Initiate conversations about local data, plans, and projects.

Identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration.

*“This is one of my favorite ideas from state government in a long time!”*



# Learning from Leaders

# Circuit Trails Network

## Case Studies

- Circuit Trails Network (Philadelphia)
- Utah Trail Network
- San Francisco Bay Trails
- Minnesota State Bikeway Network
- La Route verte (Quebec region)

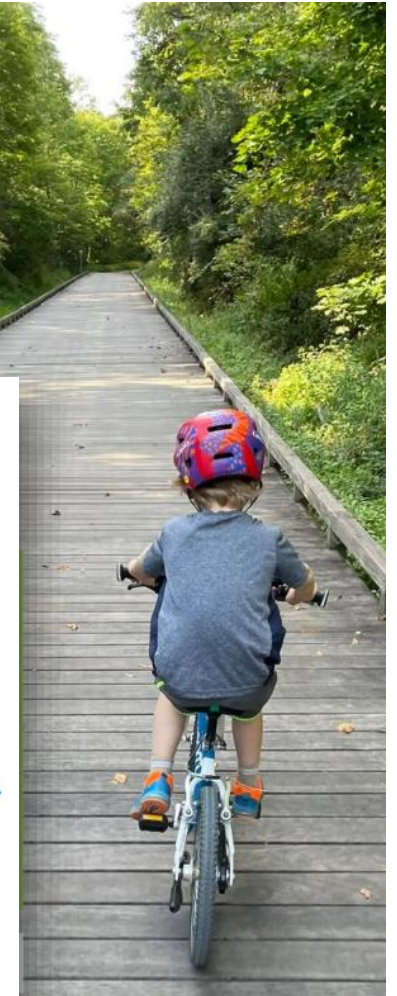
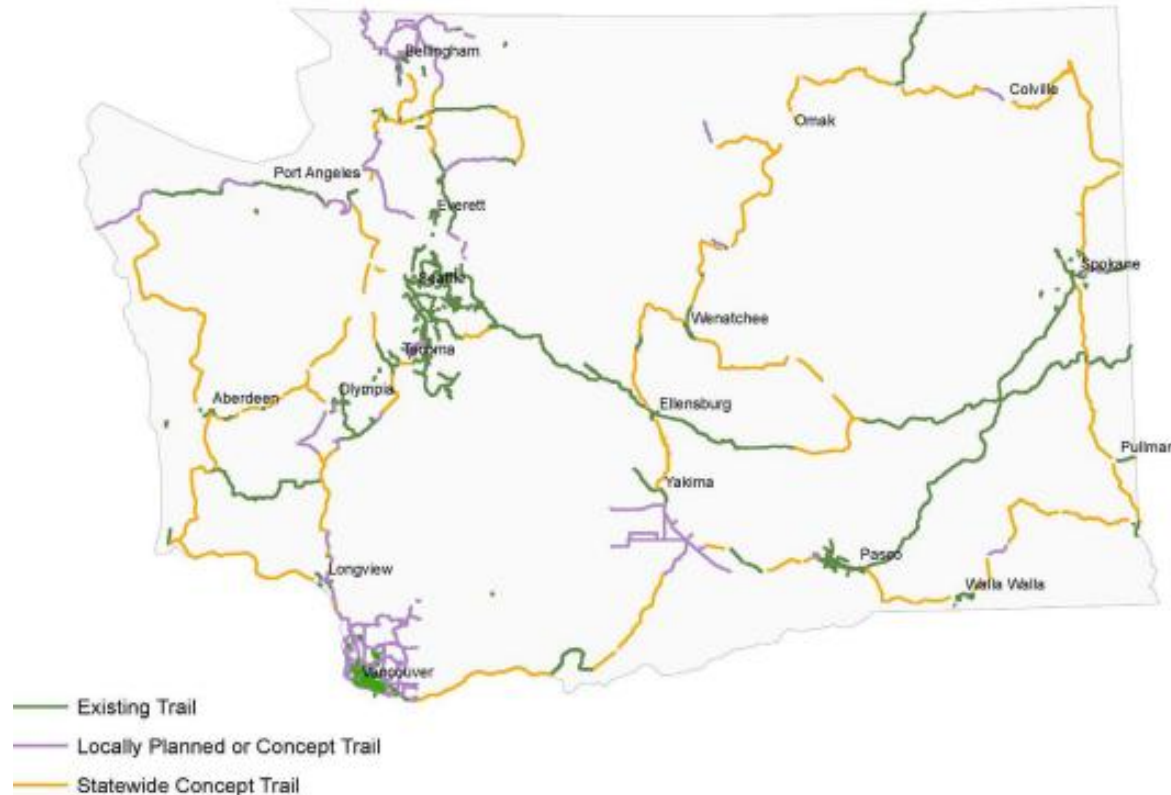


Photo credits: Circuit Trails Network

# Creating and Enhancing Connections

Existing, Locally Planned and Statewide Concept Trails Serving a Transportation Function



- Accelerate WA's legacy of trail building
- Build on WSDOT ATP gap analysis and local/regional planning
- Connect population centers
- Foster economic development
- Enhance system resilience / redundancy
- Identify project phasing to guide implementation
- Leverage existing funding and project opportunities

Source: Washington State Active Transportation Plan 2020 and Beyond

# Cycle Highways Program Model (if funded)

Collective impact model

Core statewide staff to provide support and leadership on:

- Convening and coalition building
- Statewide gap identification and planning support
- Design excellence
- Wayfinding, branding, and public awareness
- Maintenance best practices and agreements
- Funding and construction resources
- Equity focus and partnership to mitigate displacement risks and bring benefits to overburdened communities
- Coordination of local/regional plans with WSDOT Complete Streets projects
- Collaborating in efforts to win grants

# Regional Connections Proviso (2026)

Develop a regional connections action plan for the statewide development of active transportation infrastructure that connects population centers, supports mode shift, and improves safety performance (2026 ESSB 6005, Section 223 (12))



*Photo credit: Toole Design*

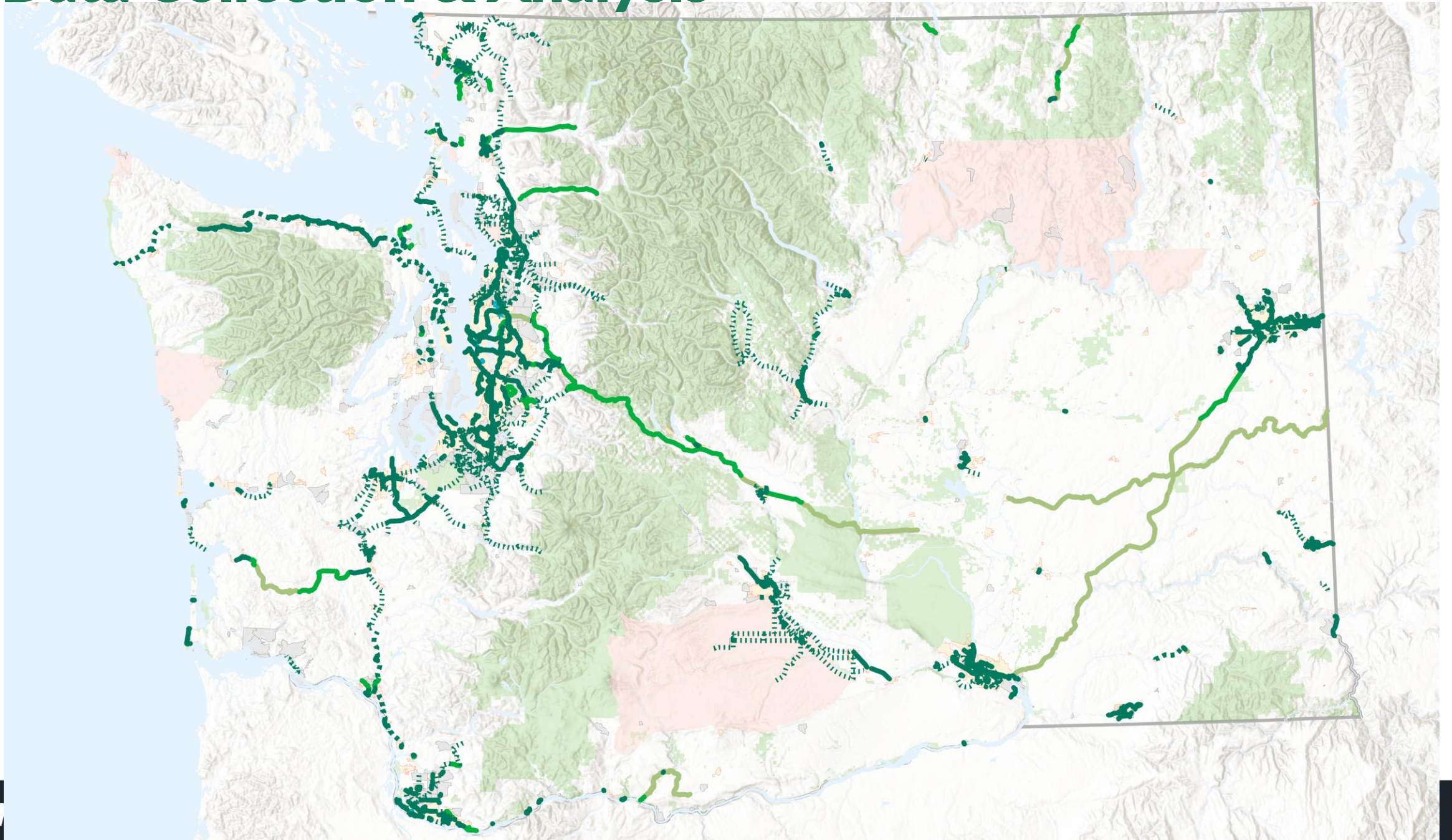
# Next Steps

- ✓ Complete the Regional Connections Action Plan by December 2026.
  - Examine state statutes, rules, design guidance, and funding program criteria to determine if there are legal or administrative barriers to building and maintaining a regional connections network;
  - Develop a cost estimating methodology for use in route planning and project prioritizing and development;
  - Develop strategies and technical guidance for regional connections maintenance and operations; and
  - Collect and update data to support a conceptual network map identifying existing, planned, and potential connections

*Photo credit: Toole Design*

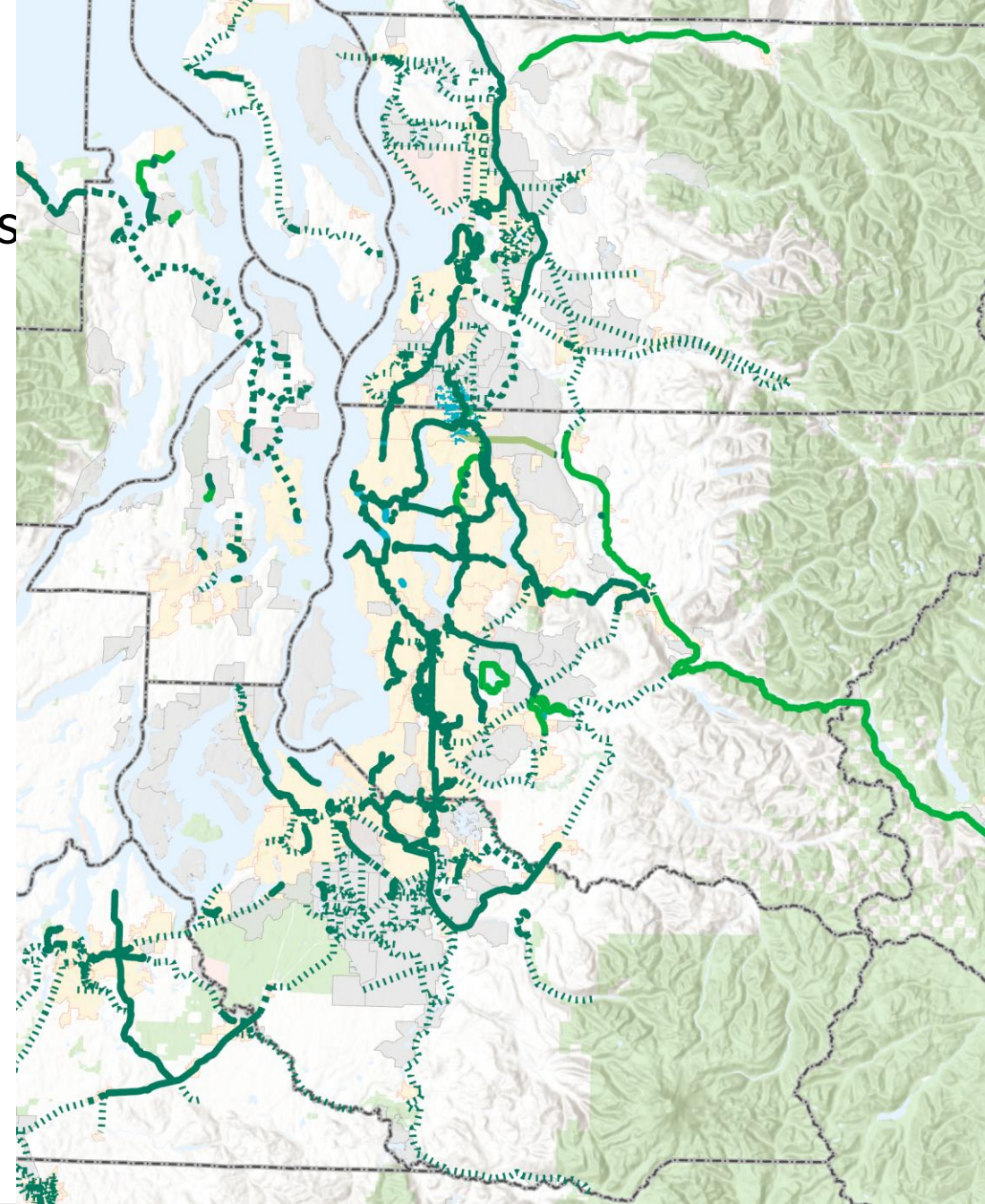


# Data Collection & Analysis



# Data Collection & Analysis

- Collection to date focused on shared-use paths
  - Existing, planned, and proposed
  - Reviewed MPO/RTPO, county, and some city plans
- Used to develop conceptual draft network for December 2026 proviso report
- Interactive review map forthcoming
  
- Contact Grace Young ([grace.young@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:grace.young@wsdot.wa.gov)) to provide data and/or receive updates
  - Trail/Transportation Plan adoption
  - New facilities opened
  - Major project planning activities



# Thank you!



Grace Young, Active Transportation GIS & Data Specialist, WSDOT, [Grace.Young@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:Grace.Young@wsdot.wa.gov)