168th St. Bicycle/Pedestrian Lanes in Cascade/Benson Hill
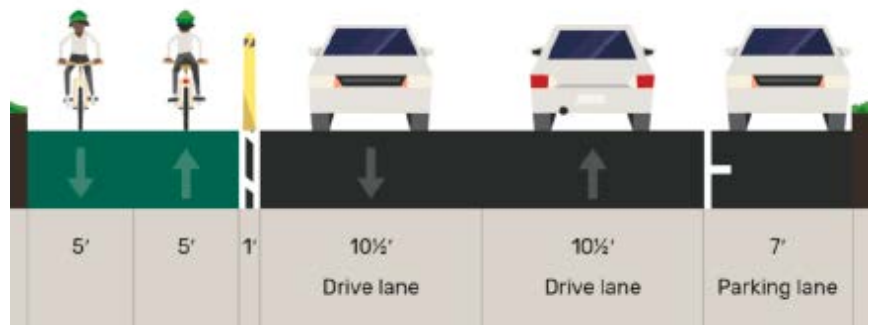
CONNECTING AN UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITY

REQUEST: The City of Renton requests a $1 million allocation in the 2021-23 Capital Budget to assist the City with a project to build a 1.26-mile-long connected bicycle network and to improve crossings between 108th Avenue SE and 128th Avenue SE.

BACKGROUND/NARRATIVE: Since annexing Cascade/Benson Hill in 2008, Renton has been steadily working to address significant infrastructure investment deficiencies in the neighborhood, which is comprised of 54 percent communities of color. Four (4) of every 10 households in Cascade/Benson Hill are cost-burdened, and more than one-third (36 percent) of the residents speak a primary language other than English. In developing a neighborhood plan and in surveying residents' needs, Renton has found that a top priority for citizens of Cascade/Benson Hill is to have safe walking and bicycle connections.

BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT: This project establishes a key east-west route in the Cascade/Benson neighborhood that connects multiple community destinations and improves access to transit, featuring dedicated bicycle-lane components, as well as the development of three safety crossings between 108th Avenue SE and 128th Avenue SE. The project is listed as a "TIER 1" (highest priority) component of the City's Trails and Bicycle Master Plan.

A major benefit of establishing the connected bicycle network along 168th Street SE is that four schools (Renton Park Elementary, Nelsen Middle School, Lindbergh High School, and Renton Academy) will be linked either via a signed bicycle route or a low-traffic-volume local roadway. One important takeaway of Renton's neighborhood outreach is that many people bike within and beyond their neighborhood to trails, workplaces or school, or

recreation facilities. Public engagement cited barriers to biking focused on the absence of biking facilities, dangerous crossings, and the lack of wayfinding. Cascade Elementary School, the future location of the Family First Community Center, and the future extension of the Soos Creek Trail are all within the project's vicinity. These connections will provide a conduit for neighborhood residents to be physically active, to get out and recreate, and to live healthier lifestyles.

SE 168th St is an existing King County Metro transit route that is due to receive additional service via service restructuring. The improvements for safer crossings will enhance access to transit for those that depend on transit as their main transportation mode as well as new users of public transportation.

Renton also has evaluated this project through an equity lens and can demonstrate that it would be particularly beneficial for residents who are from lower-income households and communities of color.

READINESS OF THIS PROJECT: Renton already identified this project as a priority and has included it in its Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). How the City proceeds with and phases the project will be dependent on funding. The City anticipates it would have the project completely designed and phases under construction by Spring/Summer 2023.

COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL SUPPORT: There is strong community support for the bicycle and pedestrian network envisioned through this project, and Renton anticipates receiving additional support from neighborhood-based, schools-based, and faith-based organizations in Cascade/Benson Hill. Additionally, by constructing a safer bicycle and pedestrian network that can serve the Family First facility and ultimately hook up to the Soos Creek Trail, Renton is designing a project that will have regional benefits.

LOCAL FUNDING AND DOWNSTREAM MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION: Renton will combine state capital dollars with local funds and other outside grant funds to ensure this project can be built as designed. The overall project cost is $2 million and the City will be prepared to construct it in phases. The City also will be taking on the permanent maintenance and upkeep of the 168th Street bicycle and pedestrian network.

PROJECT EXTENTS

Legend:
- Benson Hill Planning Area
- Existing Trails
- Locations of Community Feedback
- ★ Community Center
- Library
- School
- Parks & Open Space
- Renton City Limit

0   0.25   0.5 Miles

Source: City of Renton, 2018

CITY OF RENTON