



ROUTE OF THE BADGER

CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN

WHEN TRAILS ARE AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITIES, COMMUNITIES THRIVE.

The Route of the Badger offers a vision of healthy, thriving communities in Southeast Wisconsin centered around a connected, 700-mile world-class regional trail and on-street bicycling network that connects people across cities, towns and counties. Southeast Wisconsin is home to 303 miles of existing trails, which means that a relatively small investment that builds upon existing infrastructure could improve connectivity throughout the region. This approach to trail-system development is a placemaking strategy that positions trails as community necessities rather than nice-to-have amenities. When more people can use trails to get where they want to go, the benefits to the economy, social equity, recreation and transportation systems become the foundation of healthy, sustainable communities.

WHAT CAN THE ROUTE OF THE BADGER DO FOR WISCONSIN?

EXPAND SMART TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS



In Milwaukee, as many as 1 in 5 residents do not own a car,¹ which means their transportation options are limited. With access to a connected regional trail system, they'll have more active transportation options that safely and conveniently connect them—and others across the region—to the places they want and need to go. The Route of the Badger will integrate with Wisconsin's burgeoning multimodal transportation system, creating safe routes to everywhere for everyone, regardless of age, race and income.



FUEL STRONG BUSINESSES AND ECONOMIES

In Wisconsin, the economic impact of bicycle recreation and tourism is more than \$900 million each year.² Vibrant regional trail systems are proven economic drivers, sparking neighborhood-scale economic development with tourism, new investment in trailside businesses and commercial opportunities along trail routes.



PROMOTE SOCIAL EQUITY

Just like with other forms of infrastructure, disparities exist in the distribution of trails and active transportation networks. These disparities often coincide with other socioeconomic disparities that have a negative impact on people and places. If done thoughtfully and with meaningful community engagement, comprehensive trail systems can bridge gaps within and between communities—providing access to safe transportation, physical activity and outdoor recreation, while improving health and quality of life.



IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH

Creating accessible opportunities for people to get out and get moving is a game changer for public health. When people have access to safe places to walk within 10 minutes of their home, they are 1.5 times more likely to meet recommended activity levels than those who don't.³ The Route of the Badger will give people living in Southeast Wisconsin new access to outdoor recreation, with the potential for improved physical activity and a savings in direct health-care costs of more than \$22.4 million.⁴



ENHANCE REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Quality of place is a key factor in attracting and retaining a skilled, highly educated workforce. Millennials walk, bike and take public transportation significantly more than people their age did a decade ago,⁵ and nearly 80 percent of those living in large cities say they get around on foot.⁶ The Route of the Badger will expand on this value, helping the region become a talent magnet.

¹ Alliance for Biking and Walking 2016 Benchmarking Report

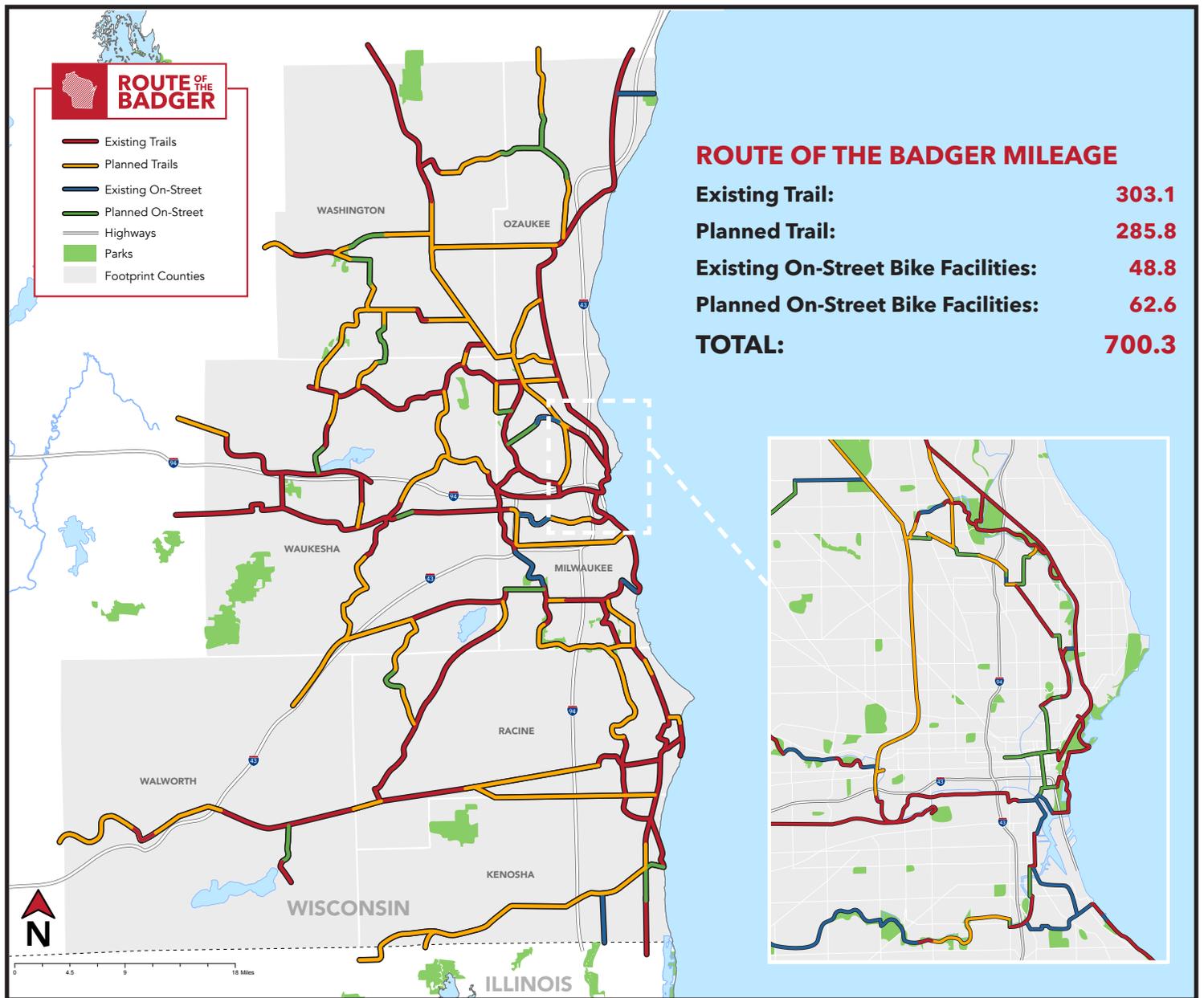
² Valuing Bicycling's Economic and Health Impacts in Wisconsin, January 2010

³ Places to Walk: Convenience and Regular Physical Activity, American Journal of Public Health, 2003

⁴ Valuing the Economic and Health Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin, May 2011

⁵ Millennials in Motion: Changing Travel Habits of Young Americans and the Implications for Public Policy, 2014

⁶ Millennials & Mobility: Understanding the Millennial Mindset and New Opportunities for Transit Providers, 2013



HOW IS THE ROUTE OF THE BADGER BEING BUILT?

The Route of the Badger coalition includes Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), Wisconsin Bike Fed and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), as well as various municipalities, nonprofits and citizens. The first phase included a collaborative analysis with all seven counties using innovative tools and data to envision the 700-miles-plus trail system. Our early focus is to close network gaps between urban and suburban neighborhoods. When complete, the Route of the Badger will transform Southeast Wisconsin—generating new opportunities for physical activity, tourism, recreation and stronger businesses along its route.



ABOUT RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY'S TRAILNATION™ PROJECTS

Our TrailNation™ Projects are network-building initiatives intended to catalyze the development of trail networks nationwide. The heart of this work will come through smart investments that close gaps and improve access to trail networks across communities.

Join the movement to bring the Route of the Badger to reality. Sign on at railstotrails.org/badger.

