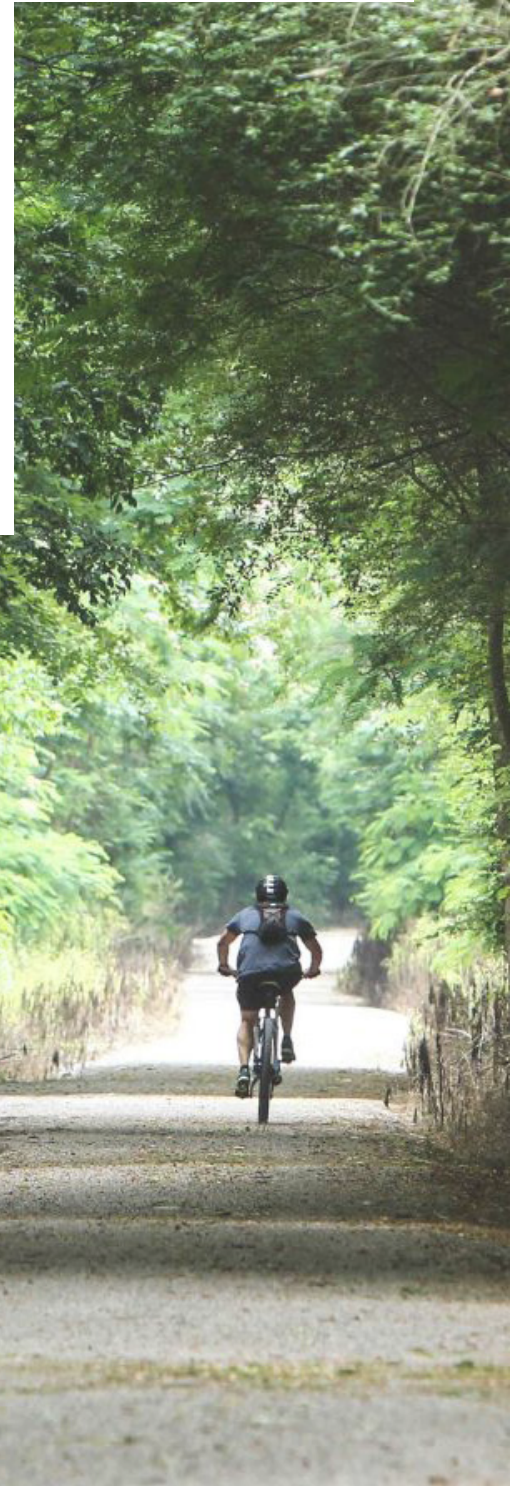


2020 Annual State of the Network Report Greater Birmingham Region

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM



May 2020



“SOMEONE’S SITTING
IN THE SHADE TODAY
BECAUSE SOMEONE
PLANTED A TREE A LONG
TIME AGO”

-WARREN BUFFET

HIGH ORE LINE TRAIL



LEGEND		TRAIL ETIQUETTE	
New Site Area	Shared Bicycle Path	Building	Do not leave your bike at all trail crossings.
Hazardous	Shared Path	Water	Do not drink water from streams or rivers.
High Ore Line Trail	Shared Path	Water	Do not use alcohol or drugs at any time while on the trail.
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RED ROCK
TRAIL SYSTEM

A Plan for Active Transportation

The B-Active Plan, the active transportation plan for the Birmingham region, is a regional “road-map” for local municipalities, counties, and non-profit entities to create a viable, safe and connected bike and pedestrian network for everyone. The plan establishes a vision for what walking and biking can look like in the future. In the past few years alone we’ve seen more bike facilities and trails pop-up around the region than in decades prior and the B-Active Plan hopes to build on that success.

Despite these advances, getting around by anything other than your own car remains a serious challenge for anyone but the most fearless and experienced bicyclist. How many times have you or someone you know said “I would like to bike more...but”. The B-Active plan, is a long term vision for removing the “but”. The plan aims to create a cohesive network of bike facilities aimed at those of you who are interested in biking, but concerned for your safety. The plan establishes a vision to connect what is existing today by expanding the network to viable roads for bike infrastructure throughout the entire Birmingham Metro Region.

Active transportation:
Refers to the human-powered
modes of travel such as walking
and biking, primarily.

Active transportation, also known as non-motorized transportation, refers to the human-powered modes of travel such as walking and biking, primarily. The greater Birmingham regional transportation system currently lacks sufficient non-motorized provisions along many corridors where bicycling and walking should be viable travel choices—especially for short trips. In light of rising energy costs, an aging population, public health concerns, and an increasing demand for alternatives to motor vehicle travel, there is a growing need for infrastructure and development patterns that support what has widely become known as “active transportation.”

DURING PUBLIC OUTREACH

“LACK OF FACILITIES”

WAS THE NUMBER ONE

REASON RESPONDENTS

SAID THEY DO NOT BIKE

MORE.

A photograph of two cyclists in an urban setting. The cyclist on the left is wearing a red helmet with the number 85, yellow-tinted sunglasses, and a red and white cycling jersey that says "MAGIC CITY BIKE" and features a silhouette of a cyclist. The cyclist on the right is wearing a black helmet, glasses, and a bright neon green cycling jersey. They are both looking at a document held by the cyclist on the right. In the background, there are several tall buildings, including one with "REGIONS" and "WELLS FARGO" signs. The overall scene is outdoors with trees and a clear sky.

PLAN STRATEGY

MORE USERS.

A focus on improvements that encourage and attract more people to use active transportation in the Greater Birmingham Area.

SAFE CONNECTIVITY.

Residents of all ages and abilities feel comfortable experiencing the region and all its amenities on foot or by bike through a connected network.

IMPLEMENTATION.

Guidance is provided to enable jurisdictions to move to implementation of the active transportation network.

WHAT IS THE B-ACTIVE PLAN FOR?

Key questions of the B-ACTIVE Plan:

- Where are the major gaps and barriers in the regional bicycle and trail system today?
- What is needed to attract new users to the active transportation network (i.e. to make people feel safer commuting by bicycle)?
- How can we increase regional connectivity?
- What and where are the key projects needed for implementation?

Why is the B-ACTIVE Plan important to the Greater Birmingham region?

Active transportation is an opportunity for everyone. All of us are pedestrians at some point during the day. Even if you are walking between your car in the parking lot to the grocery store's entrance, you are traveling as a pedestrian. People using walking assistance devices such as wheelchairs or walkers are also pedestrians. Whether you are an avid cyclist, occasional rider, or do not ever ride a bicycle, a safe and connected active transportation network benefits for the larger community and region. These benefits include:



Goals & Objectives

The B-Active Plan crafts a vision for the future of biking and walking in the area through strategic goal setting. It is clear that a growing population within the region hope to see an improved environment for biking and walking. The goals and objectives below are the building blocks of the

approach for creating an active transportation network in the Greater Birmingham area by the municipalities in the region.

	GOAL	OBJECTIVES
CONNECT	The Greater Birmingham area is connected through a network of low-stress bicycle facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build connected bicycle facilities. - Remove gaps in the sidewalk network. - Provide active transportation linkages to existing transit routes and stops. - Provide users the choice to make trips to key destinations on a bike or walking.
ACCESS FOR ALL	The future network of facilities improves (1) access to active transportation routes for the entire region and (2) access for more ages and abilities to use the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide infrastructure access points all around the region. - Provide guidelines to designing facilities that are safe enough for any type of active transportation user. - Provide users the choice to make trips to key destinations on a bike or walking.
PROTECT USERS	Implementation of the Plan decreases the number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Record and analyze yearly crash data. - Implement countermeasures at key intersections and streets that have high-density of bike/pedestrian crashes.
MORE USERS	The number of people using active transportation grows as the system is implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement system for measuring the number of people using the existing active transportation system. - Create yearly progress reports in tandem with new active transportation infrastructure.
POLICY SUPPORT	The network of infrastructure is supported by policies that encourage safe travel for all road users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of Complete Streets ordinances and policies by municipalities within the region. - Create design guidelines for facility construction. - Identify funding mechanisms for implementation.
EDUCATE	Residents of all types—students, families, children, etc.—have opportunities to learn about the benefits of active transportation and associated laws and safe practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host annual safety and encouragement event supporting all modes of transportation. - Implement biking and walking safety training in schools within the region.
PRIORITIZE, IMPLEMENT, & MAINTAIN	Key connections in the network of facilities are strategically prioritized to create a smooth path to implementation. A variety of different funding mechanisms are identified to implement and maintain the network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify “low-hanging fruit” projects and highly prioritized projects to implement first. - Provide a general timeline for implementing identified projects. - Encourage municipalities to include a maintenance schedule in annual budgets.

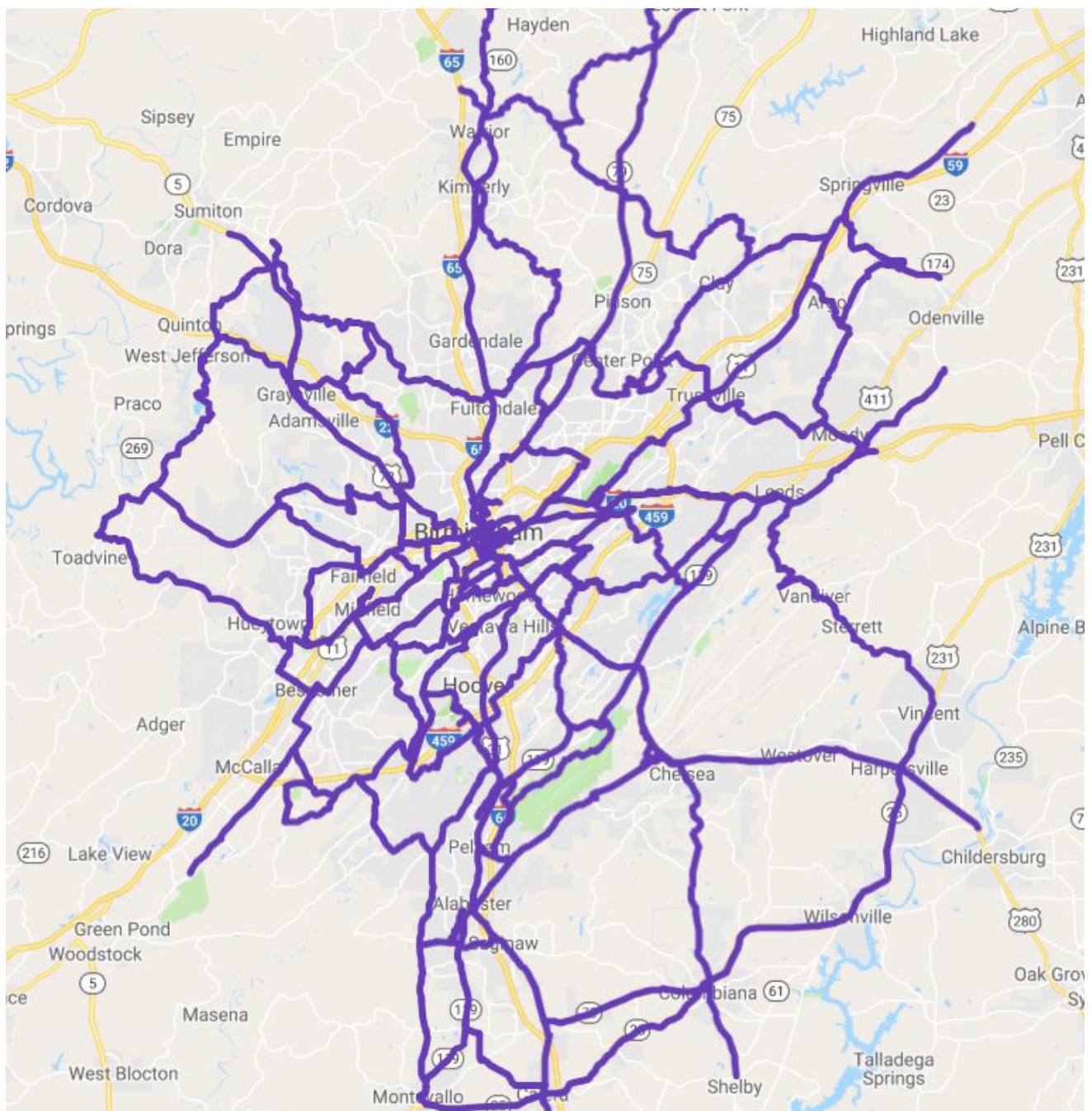
The B-Active Regional Network

The final regional network is the result of detailed analysis of existing conditions, public and stakeholder input, and iterative vetting. The network consists of proposed on-road

and off-road facilities across four counties that connect communities and destinations throughout the region.

Explore the interactive map at www.B-Activeplan.com

Now you can explore the B-Active Plan from the convenience of your browser or phone! At B-Activeplan.com you can check out the plan with all the convenient features of a google map. Additionally you can turn on and off the existing facilities so you can plan your route and see how the plan will connect to what exists today.



2020 State of the Network - Where we stand today

This document is our second edition of an Annual State of the Network Report. Its purpose is to tout the successes of recently constructed bicycle and pedestrian facilities and to update you with what's happening with the implementation of the B-Active Plan. We are happy to report that since last May 2019, three (3) miles of new bike lanes were constructed within the City of Birmingham and

four (4) miles of greenways/ trails were constructed within the cities of Gardendale and Birmingham. In addition, this annual report highlights funded / planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities to help educate the public on where to expect new active transportation on the ground facilities in the near future.



48 Miles of Shared-Use Paths

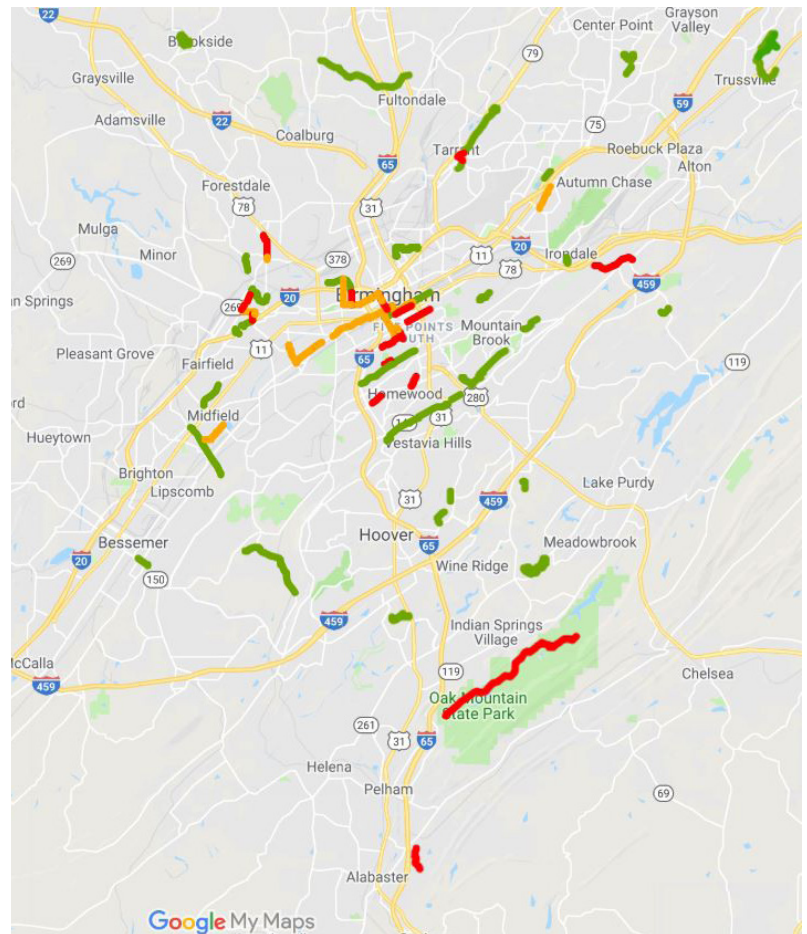
17 Miles of Bike Lanes

10 miles of Sharrows

So where can I find the existing bike lanes and trails?

The RPCGB has created an online interactive map, via google maps, as a resource for you to know where bike facilities exist today. The RPCGB will maintain the map (as shown to the right) as new bike lanes and trails are constructed so that this can be your go-to, easy-to-use resource to plan your ride.

Check out the map and plan your next ride at: www.B-Activeplan.com



Recent success stories

HIGH ORE LINE TRAIL EXTENSION TO RED MOUNTAIN PARK

In 2019, the final mile of Birmingham's three (3) mile High Ore Line Trail was completed and now provides access into Red Mountain Park. The completion of this trail creates a vital pedestrian and bike connection into one of the largest parks and open space areas in Birmingham with its network of hiking and biking friendly natural trails. The High Ore Line Trail starts in Midfield at the Jefferson County Western Health Center and runs three (3) miles along an old railroad line. Parking is available at the health center and at the newly established Venice Road parking lot near the entrance to Red Mountain Park off of Lakeshore Parkway.



Source: Freshwater Land Trust



Source: Freshwater Land Trust

FIVE MILE CREEK GREENWAY - GARDENDALE SEGMENT

The Five Mile Creek Greenway in Gardendale is the newest part of a planned 16.5 mile rails-to-trails project spanning North Jefferson County. The Gardendale section adds an additional two (2) miles to the existing 3.5 mile Five Mile Creek Greenway - Black Creek Park in Fultondale. Five Mile Creek Greenway is a flat, gravel trail that is open to walkers, runners, bikers, and dogs on leashes. The trail opened in Summer 2019.



CLAIRMONT AVENUE PEDESTRIAN TRAIL EXTENSION

A part of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (www.freshwaterlandtrust.org/find-a-trail), the pedestrian oriented Clairmont Avenue Trail in Birmingham was expanded and improved in the Summer of 2019. The 0.8-mile trail extension creates further recreational opportunities for residents in the Crestwood South neighborhood through a scenic meandering path along Clairmont Avenue.



What's coming soon

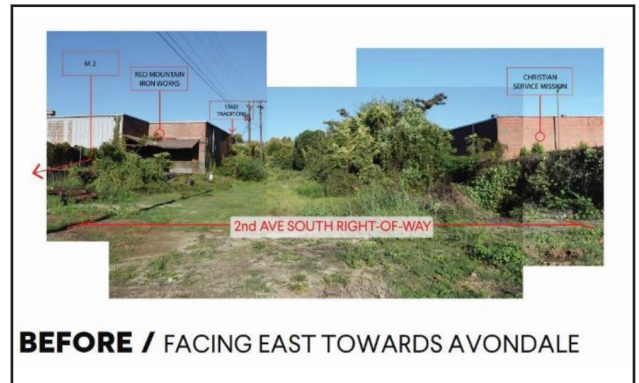
This list is intended to serve as a preview of bike and trail facilities that are expected to be constructed in the next 1 - 5 years. Unforeseen funding, development, or environmental challenges can delay projects past anticipated time lines so the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham cannot give exact dates for the projects listed below. This list is also not comprehensive but instead is a showcase of just a few exciting projects happening across the region.

JONES VALLEY TRAIL EXTENSION

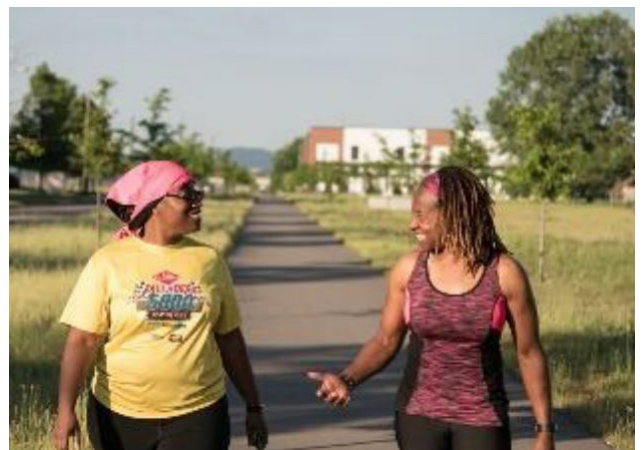
Currently, the Jones Valley Trail – a part of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System – runs from the eastern terminus of the Rotary Trail to 32nd Street South. The Freshwater Land Trust has recently announced an ambitious plan to construct an extension of the trail from 32nd Street South to 41st Street in Avondale. This would provide a critical connection for commuters, recreational users, and tourists and would establish an uninterrupted fully separated bike facility all the way from Avondale to Downtown Birmingham. This is a critical part of an even larger goal of the Freshwater Land Trust, which is to connect Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve on the east side of Birmingham to Red Mountain Park on the west side of Birmingham.

Freshwater Land Trust is currently leading efforts to raise \$1,000,000 for construction of the trail and hopes to meet that goal and begin construction by the end of 2020.

To follow the progress visit: www.Jonesvalleytrail.swell.gives



Source: Freshwater Land Trust,
Goodwyn Mills & Cawood



Riders (above) and walkers (above right) enjoying the existing Jones Valley Trail

Source: Freshwater Land Trust

What's coming soon - continued

LAKESHORE TRAIL/ SHADES CREEK GREENWAY EXTENSION

As a future extension of the popular Lakeshore Trail in Homewood, this two (2) mile trail project will increase the overall distance of the Lakeshore Trail from three (3) miles to five (5) total miles. The extension will begin at the current western-end of the Lakeshore Trail at the intersection of Columbiana Road and Greensprings Highway and will extend the trail further westward along Lakeshore Parkway to end at approximately 0.3 miles from West Oxmoor Road.



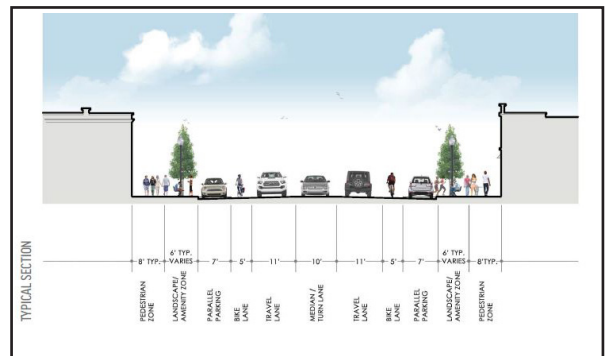
MICRO-MOBILITY OPTIONS IN BIRMINGHAM

In early 2020, the City of Birmingham adopted a new micro-mobility ordinance to allow for scooter and bike share companies to provide services to the Birmingham community. The City is currently working with vendors to locate micro-mobility corral stations and expand the service area beyond the original ZYP bikeshare area. Look for micro-mobility options to appear in Birmingham sometime in 2020.



41ST STREET COMPLETE STREETS

As a proposed redesign of 41st Street through the Avondale commercial district of Birmingham, this project would run from 2nd Avenue South to 5th Avenue South and will focus on enhancing both the pedestrian and bicycling experience along the street. The project will reduce the number of travel lanes from 4 to 2 while preserving the center turn lane, and will add bike lanes, on-street parking and improved sidewalks and streetscape amenities along 41st Street.



Source: EDT Engineering, Macknally Land Design



Clairmont
Avenue
Walking
Trail
0.8 mile
RED ROCK
TRAIL SYSTEM



SPEED
LIMIT
30



Weekly
Average
Fuel