

Proposed Link Pathway Route

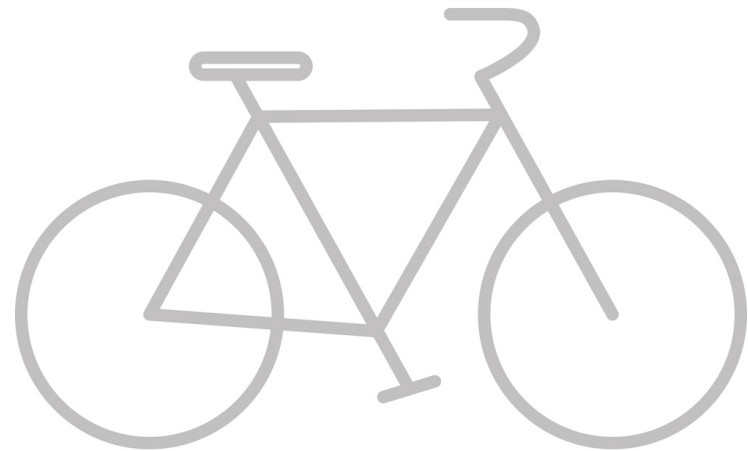
Route Recommendations and Rationale

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Project History

The development of the LINK Pathway has been ongoing for approximately 8 years, driven forward by a not-for-profit, charitable organization known as the Link Pathway Committee. The proposed project seeks to establish an approximately 14 km asphalt bike trail from the City of Lethbridge to the Town of Coaldale, passing through Lethbridge County lands to create a regional tourism and recreation asset. The project, to date, has seen wide community support with robust fundraising but has so far struggled to define a route that can be brought forward for consideration and approval by Lethbridge County.

Committee members worked hard to find a route that utilized public or institutionally owned corridors to route the pathway for the entire route without impinging on private land to the greatest extent possible, and in the spring of 2021, they had a workable route that followed these guidelines. However, they had not foreseen two problems. First, the route proposed crossing the CP rail line into the City of Lethbridge at 43rd Street. While CP rail was amenable to the crossing, substantial infrastructure was required for the crossing and CP quoted the Committee a price of over \$500,000 to install proper crossing infrastructure. Secondly, there was very loud opposition from county residents in certain areas to all proposed routes. Residents primarily cited concerns over privacy, security, and property value impacts in their written rationales opposing the development despite the fact that there would be no infringement on property lines.



Decision Matrix

In light of the issues previously described, Progressive West Consulting was asked to review route options, work with Edwards Land to hold discussions with land owners, and liaison with government entities to find the least objectionable route from end to end.

For recommending a viable route for the Link Pathway our methodology has involved balancing the following factors:

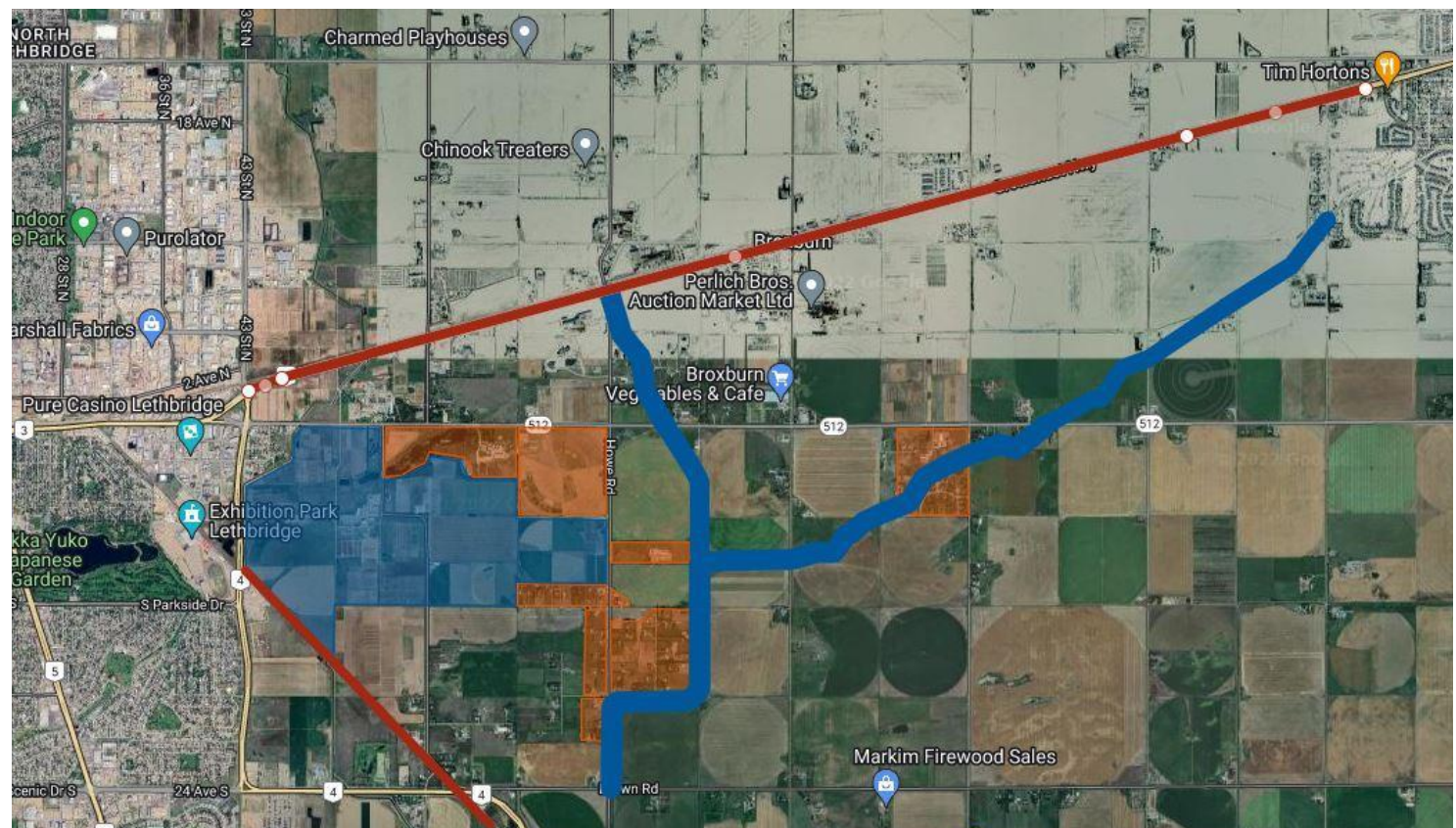
1. Wherever possible, utilize publicly or institutionally owned rights-of-way.
2. Where possible, avoid proximity to private residences.
3. Where proximity to private residences cannot be avoided, go above and beyond to address private resident concerns with project engineering and design.
4. Accommodate unique or individual landowner requests to the greatest extent feasible.

Figure 1.1 Decision Matrix Landscape

Blue Areas delineate institutional right of ways or publicly owned land in the project area.

Orange Areas indicate areas of concern for routing the pathway.

Red Areas indicate firm barriers.



Detailed Recommended Route

Progressive West's view is that connecting the blue areas on the map would constitute the path of least resistance, avoid infringements on the greatest number of private properties, minimize the number of stakeholders who much be dealt with, and offer opportunities for value added development of the asset by working with the public institutions who own the land to profile more agri-food experiences, information, or products.

Figure 1.2 Coaldale to Hwy 512

The eastern leg of the path will follow the north bank of SMRID drainage canal from storm water pond adjacent to 30th Street, Coaldale. It will be on the west side going north-south, then on the north side going east-west. This allows separation from the estates along 30th street with room to install trees for privacy and low chain-link fences to prevent dog incursions.

The **Green Pin** indicates a potential picnic kiosk location (undecided).

The **Dark Blue** pin indicates a bridge over the drainage canal and a picnic kiosk location on land owned by the Link Pathway Committee, adjacent to Highway 512.

The **Light Blue** pin indicates the Highway 512 underpass which will be installed by Volker Stevin.



Figure 1.3 Vista Meadows / Mustang Acres

Crossing under Highway 512 via a pedestrian / bike underpass, the pathway emerges into the irrigation right of way on the south side of the drainage canal and proceeds on the south side of this canal east-west.

The detailed property map of Vista Meadows from the Lethbridge County Public GIS shows the property lines in the area of the development. The irrigation right-of-way bisects the area, and the county owned parcel around the storm water pond extends along the south-side of the irrigation right-of-way through the area of development.

It is important to note that this is county-owned land along an east-west institutional right of way (the drainage canal).

We encourage you to read the Phase 1 Public Consultation report which is available on the Link Pathway website to see how we have engaged with area residents and the recommendations to the Link Pathway Committee that arose from those consultations.

The **Green Pin** indicates a potential picnic kiosk location (undecided).

The **Dark Blue** pin indicates a picnic kiosk location on land owned by the Link Pathway Committee, adjacent to Highway 512

The **Light Blue** pin indicates the Highway 512 underpass which will be installed by Volker Stevin.



Figure 1.4 Main Canal to Irrigation Display

The pathway runs east-west on the south side of the drainage canal till it reaches the main Canal.

The **Green Pin** delineates a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the main canal to the west bank.

The path then travels north-south along the west bank of the main canal till it reaches the south-side of Highway 512.

The path runs east-west on private land outside the Highway 512 right-of-way till it reaches the intersection of Howe Road and Highway 512.

The **Yellow Pin** delineates a controlled pedestrian crossing of Howe Road.

The path then runs north-south within the Howe Road right-of-way (County owned land) until it reaches the Irrigation Display delineated by the **Purple Pin**.

The main picnic kiosk and donor recognition wall will be located at the Purple Pin in proximity to the irrigation display.

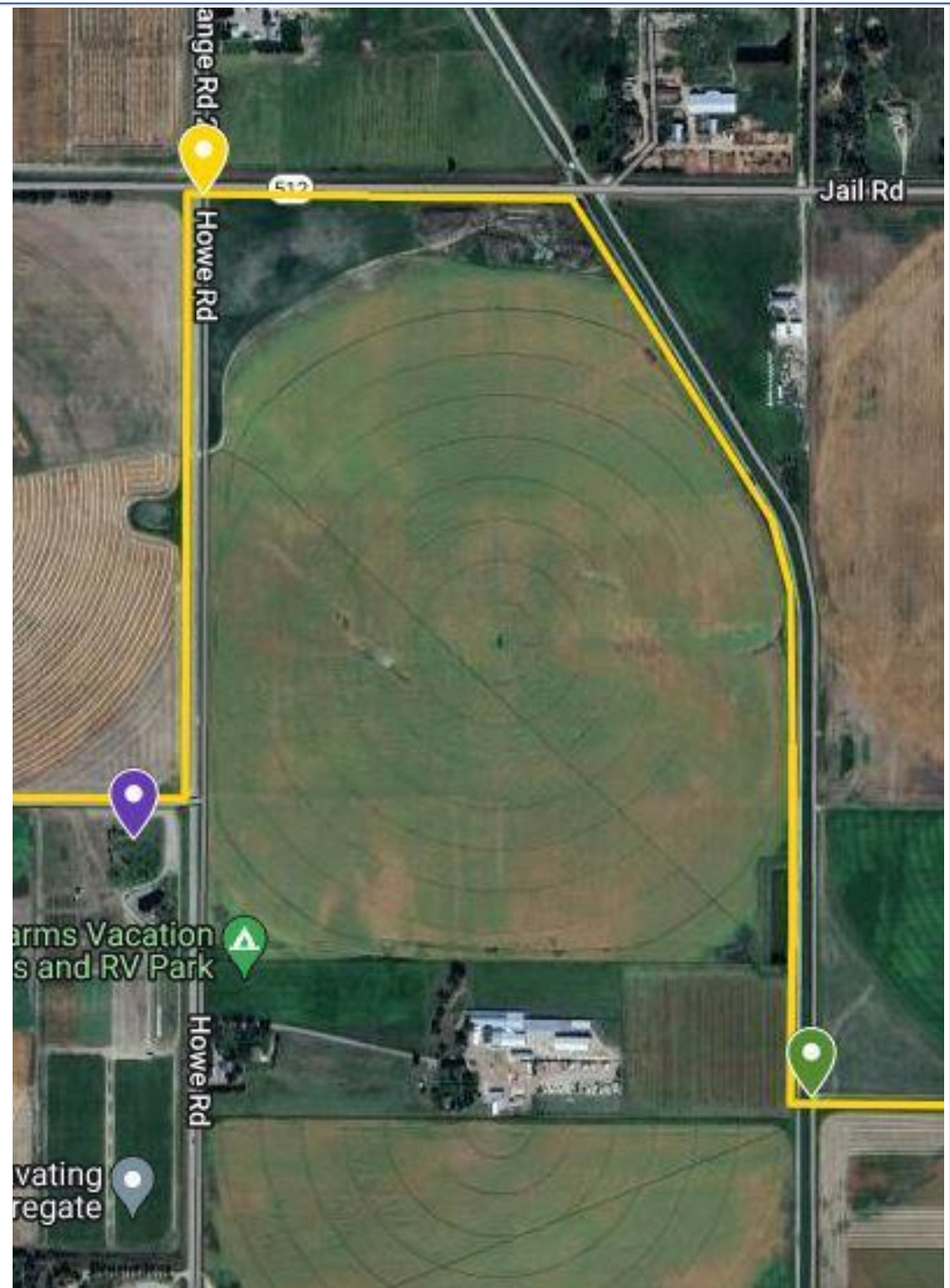


Figure 1.5 Irrigation Display to 43rd Street S

From the Irrigation Display (**Purple Pin**) the pathway runs east-west across land owned by Alberta Infrastructure. The route will continue west through the Lethbridge College Demonstration Farm while maintaining distance from the boundary fence of the Lethbridge Correctional Centre.

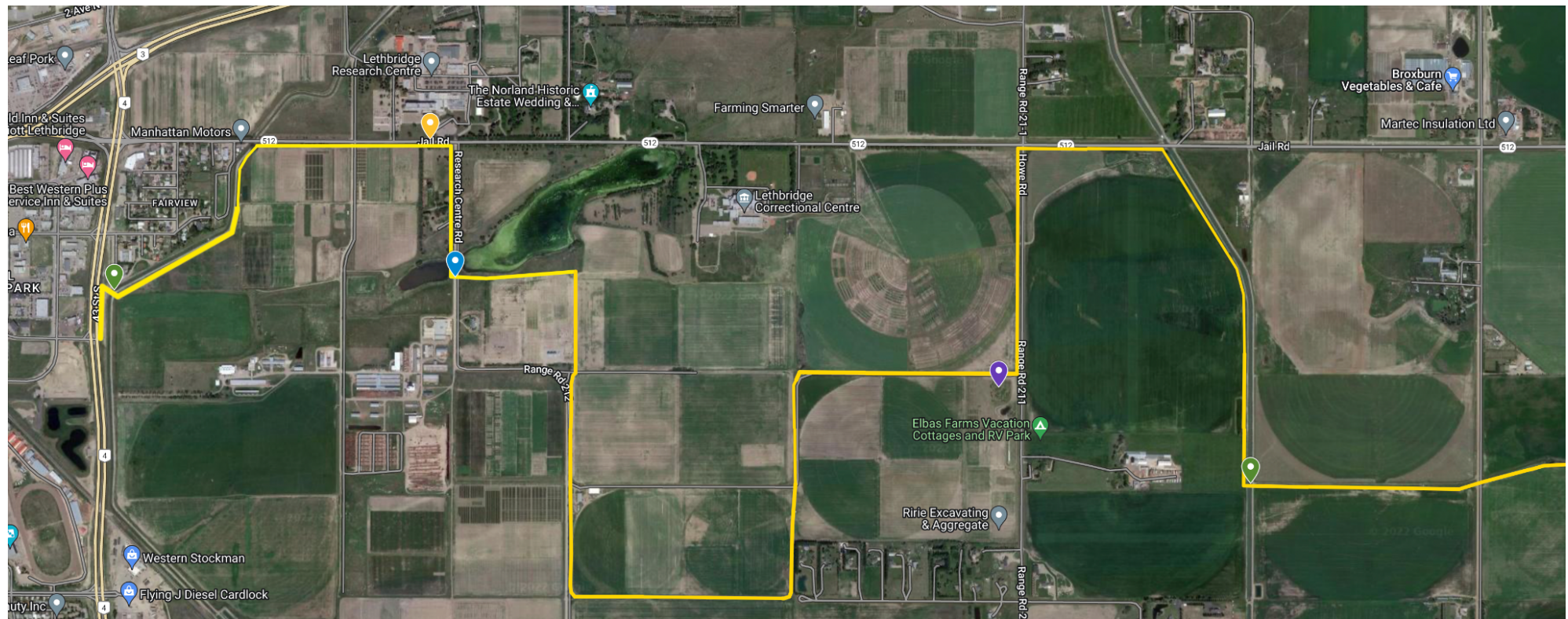
The pathway continues along the southern side of the ponds here past the Fresh Start Treatment Centre to a controlled crossing over Research Centre Road, marked by the **Blue Pin**.

It then runs north-south on the west side of Research Centre Road on land owned by the Government of Canada till it reaches Highway 512. There will be a controlled pedestrian / bike crossing of Highway 512 into the Research Station for commuters marked by the **Yellow Pin**.

The path extends east-west on the south side of Highway 512 on Government of Canada land till it reaches the main canal.

The path travels north-south on the south-east bank of the main canal, on Government of Canada land, or within the SMRID right-of-way as appropriate. It will be below the driving bank on the flat, offering **privacy and separation** from the Fairview development.

At the **Green Pin**, the path climbs the bank and crosses the main Canal via a foot bridge into the City of Lethbridge, turning south again to a future controlled crossing of 43rd Street South into WT Hill and the City's internal pedestrian / bike pathway system.



Summary

This route has the following attributes.

- 1.) It works. All landowners along the proposed route have approved appropriate easements to allow the pathway to be built.
- 2.) It is efficient in that it makes almost complete use of public or institutional right of ways, with the majority of the route following irrigation rights-of-way or routing along the edge of publicly owned land which minimizes the number of stakeholders who have to be negotiated with and avoids most private land.
- 3.) It is respectful in that it avoids the vast majority of private residences OR provides a physical separation between the path route and nearby residences. Along the entire 15 km route, there are only 9 residences where the pathway skirts private residential property lines without an existing separation. (Recommendations to respect these property owners can be found in the Phase 1 Public Consultations report on the Link Pathway website).
- 4.) It allows for value-added development. The route as described here provides the following secondary benefits.
 - a. Provides safe commuting to Research Station facilities and the Lethbridge College Demonstration Farm.
 - b. Provides a cycling amenity to patients at the Fresh Start Treatment Centre.
 - c. Provides tourism access to the demonstration farm and other regional products.
 - d. Provides a tourism amenity to Exhibition Park, Nikka Yuko, Tourism Lethbridge, Lethbridge County, and the Town of Coaldale.
- 5.) It can be built fast. There are no major engineering obstacles and fundraising to complete the project is achievable. The \$1 million naming sponsorship from Cor Van Raay provides approximately one quarter of the total cash cost. Many of the major components have been donated (such as the underpass unit), and other component donations are expected. Locally produced bridges have been identified that are both visually appealing and cheaper than original estimates. The proposed path is being built at a time when many government grants exist to help fund the decarbonization of society and this project fits the bill – specifically with respect to the well-funded Active Transportation Fund.

If this route is approved, the Link Pathway hopes to begin construction from Coaldale to Highway 512 this season.