

31st Street West Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement Project

ISSUE

To meet the needs of the Growth Plan, several modal shift targets were established in the Growth Plan and the Active Transportation Plan to mitigate future traffic congestion and infrastructure needs:

- Transit – increase from 4% to 8% of all trips and from 10% to 25% for the peak period to Downtown and University areas.
- Cycling – increase from 4% to 8% for all trips and from 2% to 4% of commute trips.
- Walking – increase from 8% to 16% of all trips and from 5.5% to 11% of commute trips.

This transportation project identifies transportation improvements required on 31st Street West from Circle Drive West to Idylwyld Drive North to position the City of Saskatoon to meet the modal shift targets in the Growth Plan and Active Transportation Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council that the 31st Street Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement Project be approved in principle.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular Business Meeting held on June 27, 2016, City Council approved the Active Transportation Plan (AT Plan). As part of the AT Plan, the City committed to the following action item under the theme of connectivity: “Develop a complete and connected bicycle network for all ages and abilities.”

To work towards achieving this action item, Urban Systems Ltd. was retained to develop conceptual designs for active transportation facilities on the following corridors:

- 3rd Avenue North from 25th Street East to 2nd Avenue North;
- 29th Street West or 31st Street West from the Circle Drive underpasses to Idylwyld Drive North;
- 14th Street East from Saskatchewan Crescent East to Cumberland Avenue South;
- Dudley Street from Dawes Avenue to Spadina Crescent West; and
- Victoria Avenue from 8th Street East to Taylor Street East (conceptual designs developed by Administration).

The AT Plan identified 29th Street West as a future All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling route; however, 31st Street West was explored as an alternative corridor to 29th Street West due to its relatively low traffic volumes. Both 29th Street West and 31st Street West

were presented to the public as possible streets for the neighbourhood bikeway, pedestrian and traffic safety improvement project.

A neighbourhood bikeway is a type of AAA cycling facility. It is a facility that is a shared roadway on streets with low traffic volumes and speeds, uses traffic calming measures to reduce traffic volumes and speeds, and where on-street parking is generally not impacted. Design treatments can include intersection treatments, signage, pavement markings, and traffic calming to reduce vehicular speeds. A bikeway significantly differs from a protected bike lane. Protected bike lanes physically separate cyclists from vehicles and pedestrians using a variety of treatment options. Physical separation is required when traffic speeds and volumes cannot be reduced to meet neighbourhood bikeway thresholds.

At its Regular Business Meeting held on March 25, 2019, City Council received a report regarding the Active Transportation Implementation Plan and resolved, in part:

- “1. That the Active Transportation Implementation Plan be endorsed with the exception of the elements pertaining to the Downtown AAA Network, which is the subject of a future report to City Council; and”

The implementation strategy included five key components:

- Integration with standard practice;
- Leverage other projects;
- Shelf-ready projects;
- Leverage all funding opportunities; and
- Measure and report progress.

At its Regular Business Meeting held on April 29, 2019, City Council received a report regarding the Downtown Active Transportation Network and resolved, in part:

- “3. That the Administration halt work on the downtown Active Transportation network and re-focus on planning of Active Transportation infrastructure connections city-wide.”

At its Regular Business Meeting held on June 29, 2020, City Council received the Saskatoon Transportation Strategy – Infrastructure Plan, and resolved, in part;

- “1. That the list of prioritized transportation projects be approved in principle;
2. That the information within the report of the General Manager, Transportation and Construction dated June 1, 2020, be included in the next multi-year budget cycle; and”

Both the sidewalk infill (if feasible) and the 31st Street West Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement projects, were identified on the list of prioritized transportation infrastructure projects.

Technical Services division has an asset preservation project planned for shallow reconstruction along 31st Street West between Avenue G and Avenue H in 2021, and shallow reconstruction between Avenue I and Avenue H in 2022. This work can be completed independently of the 31st Street West bikeway, pedestrian and traffic safety improvements.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Current Status

To improve active transportation along 31st Street West from Circle Drive West to Idylwyld Drive North, the project will feature:

- Cyclists riding on street in mixed traffic:
 - From Avenue W to McMillan Avenue
 - From Avenue L to Idylwyld Drive
- Traffic calming circles at Avenue U and Avenue R
- Curb extensions to improve pedestrian safety and for traffic calming at Avenue U, Avenue T, Avenue R, and McMillan Avenue
- Pedestrian and cyclist-activated signals at Avenue P and Avenue H
- Filling gaps in the sidewalk network (pending further feasibility analysis) from
 - North side from Avenue W to Avenue T
 - Both sides between Pierre Radisson Park and Avenue L
 - Both sides between Avenue K and Avenue I
- Multi-Use Pathway (3 metres wide) between McMillan Avenue and Avenue L and through Pierre Radisson Park
- Widen and improve the existing pedestrian pathway through Ashworth Holmes Park
- Accessibility curb ramps will be installed with all new sidewalk and pathway work
- Accessibility curb ramps will be installed at numerous locations where sidewalk exists without a ramp
- Remove the channelized right turns at Idylwyld Drive on the east side of intersection
- All existing on-street parking will be maintained

To improve pedestrian comfort and safety on 29th Street West from Circle Drive West to Idylwyld Drive North, curb extensions are recommended at intersections with Avenue H, Avenue P, and Avenue W.

Engagement

An open house was held on March 12, 2020 for the 29th Street West and 31st Street West corridors to identify challenges and opportunities. Based on the technical analysis and public feedback, 31st Street West was selected as the recommended street for the project. Designs were developed based on the feedback received at the open house and presented to the public at an online meeting held on September 9, 2020.

Project Report

The technical report is provided as Appendix 1.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total estimated cost for construction of the 31st Street West and 29th Street West corridors are summarized in the following table:

Item	Estimated Cost
Bikeway improvements (signage and pavement markings)	\$ 131,625
Pedestrian and cyclist actuated crossing devices	\$ 422,500
Pathways	\$ 130,000
Sidewalks	\$1,388,075
Traffic calming measures – 31 st Street West	\$ 643,500
Traffic calming measures – 29 th Street West	\$ 351,000
Miscellaneous (temporary traffic control, drainage, etc.)	\$ 270,400
Engineering	\$ 334,000
Total	\$3,671,100

Funding of \$50,000 has been approved in the 2021 budget for detailed design. Construction is not funded.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, or social implications identified. Supporting Active Transportation is a key initiative in the Low Emissions Community Plan. This project will support the lowering of harmful emissions by providing a safe alternate mode of transportation.

NEXT STEPS

1. Detailed design and cost estimate refinement completed in the first half of 2021.
2. Include the project on the priority list for transportation infrastructure for the next budget cycle.
3. Apply for alternate sources of funding if applicable and available.
4. Once funding is secured construction will proceed.

APPENDICES

1. Neighbourhood Bikeways Project – 31st Street Corridor Report

Report Approval

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