

Victoria Avenue 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 the 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 Victoria Avenue from 8th Street East to Taylor Street East to position the City of Saskatoon to meet the modal shift targets in the Growth Plan and Active Transportation Plan.

BACKGROUND

History

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, completion of conceptual designs was identified for active transportation facilities on five corridors. The Administration developed the conceptual design that is being submitted with this report for one project corridor:

- Victoria Avenue from 8th Street East to Taylor Street East.

Urban Systems Ltd. was retained to develop conceptual designs for the following corridors:

- 3rd Avenue North from 25th Street East to 2nd Avenue North (in progress);
- 29th Street West or 31st Street West from the Circle Drive South underpasses to Idylwyld Drive North (completed for 31st Street West route and approved in principle);
- 14th Street East from Saskatchewan Crescent East to Cumberland Avenue South (completed and approved in principle); and
- Dudley Street from Dawes Avenue to Spadina Crescent West (completed and approved in principle).

The AT Plan identified Victoria Avenue from the Traffic Bridge to Adelaide Street East as a future All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling route. Additional details on why Victoria Avenue was selected as an AAA cycling route can be found in Appendix 1.

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 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”

The Neighbourhood Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement projects, including Victoria Avenue, were identified on the list of prioritized transportation infrastructure projects.

Current Status

Traffic volumes and speeds along Victoria Avenue are above 1,500 vehicles per day and above 30 km/h. At these volumes and speeds, physical separation between cyclists and vehicles is required for a cycling facility to be safe for users of all ages and abilities.

To improve active transportation along Victoria Avenue from 8th Street East to Taylor Street East, a protected cycling facility (e.g. bike lanes or cycle tracks) are recommended to physically separate cyclists from vehicles and pedestrians using a variety of treatment options. The technical report for the Victoria Avenue corridor can be found in Appendix 2.

Public Engagement

An in-person open house was held on March 11, 2020 for the Victoria Avenue corridor to identify challenges and opportunities for the provision of a cycling facility on this corridor. Concepts were developed based on the feedback received at the open house and presented to the public at an online meeting held on December 9, 2020. An online survey was posted to the projects engage page, and residents were also able to submit

comments directly via email and phone call. The public engagement undertakings and summary are included in the technical report in the appended Neighbourhood Bikeways Project – Victoria Avenue Corridor.

OPTIONS

To improve active transportation along Victoria Avenue from 8th Street East to Taylor Street East, five options were developed. A “Do Nothing” option that does not provide a AAA cycling facility on Victoria Avenue has been included for comparison. A brief summary of the options and some of the benefits are shown below. Details of the options can be found in Appendix 3.

	Options					
	1 - Bidirectional Bike Lane (West Side)	2 - Protected Street-Level Bike Lanes without Parking	3 - Raised Bike Lanes without Parking	4 - Protected Street-Level Bike Lanes with Parking	5 - Raised Bike Lanes with Parking	6 - Do Nothing
Provides AAA Facility	X	X	X	X	X	
Improves Cyclist Safety	X	X	X	X	X	
Minimizes Cyclist Delay		X	X	X	X	
Maximizes for Cyclist Comfort	X	X		X		
Maintains Some On-Street Parking	X			X	X	X
Maintains Median Trees	X	X	X			X
Capital Cost	\$758,234	\$472,257	\$5,555,039	\$6,297,570	\$7,426,880	\$ 49,500

Traffic Calming at Victoria Avenue and 6th Street

The Buena Vista Neighbourhood Traffic Review (NTR), completed in 2017, recommended that curb extensions be installed at Victoria Avenue and 6th Street to improve pedestrian safety for those crossing Victoria Avenue. To meet the Buena Vista NTR recommendations for Victoria Avenue, Options 1 to 5 include a raised crosswalk at Victoria Avenue and 6th Street East. Installing bike lanes on Victoria Avenue would narrow the roadway width and reduce the need for additional horizontal deflections such as curb extensions.

Option 6 does not include the installation of a cycling facility along Victoria Avenue, and as a result, horizontal traffic calming could be provided along Victoria Avenue. For Option 6, the temporary curb extension would be installed permanently as part of the NTR permanent implementation once funding is approved.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council :
That Option 4 - Protected Street-Level Bike Lanes with Parking along Victoria Avenue between 8th Street East and Taylor Street East be approved in principle.

RATIONALE

All the options presented are technically feasible. The Administration is supportive of any of the options that provide an AAA facility on Victoria Avenue and further the goal of a complete and connected bicycle network for all ages and abilities. The detailed evaluation table can be found in the technical report in the appended Neighbourhood Bikeways Project – Victoria Avenue Corridor.

Option 4 is recommended as it strikes a balance between the transportation benefits and the impacts to parking and vegetation. The options were evaluated based on the following:

- Transportation Network;
- Cyclist Accommodation;
- Safety;
- Traffic Operation;
- Parking Impacts; and
- Vegetation Impacts.

The recommended option is included in Appendix 4.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total estimated costs for the six options are as follows:

	Alternatives					
	Option 1 Bidirectional Bike Lane (West Side)	Option 2 Protected Street-Level Bike Lanes without Parking	Option 3 Raised Bike Lanes without Parking	Option 4 Protected Street-Level Bike Lanes with Parking	Option 5 Raised Bike Lanes with Parking	Option 6 Do Nothing
Signage and Pavement Markings	\$110,214	\$ 73,515	\$ 73,515	\$ 73,515	\$ 73,515	-
Traffic Signal Upgrades	\$ 32,500	\$ 32,500	\$ 32,500	\$ 32,500	\$ 32,500	-
Protected Cycling Facility	\$192,649	\$295,151	\$4,915,862	\$ 474,271	\$1,868,499	-
Median Work	\$325,783	-	-	\$5,116,620	\$4,749,038	-
Traffic Calming	\$ 28,158	\$ 28,158	\$ 28,158	\$ 28,158	\$ 28,158	\$ 45,000
Engineering (10%)	\$ 68,930	\$ 42,932	\$ 505,004	\$ 572,506	\$ 675,171	\$ 4,500
Total	\$758,234	\$472,256	\$5,555,039	\$6,297,570	\$7,426,881	\$ 49,500

There is adequate funding in the 2021 budget for Capital Project #1504 - Neighbourhood Traffic Review Permanent Installations for the installation of the permanent curb extension for Option 6.

Funding of detailed design for the AAA cycling facility has not been approved in the 2021 budget. Construction is not funded.

ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, or social implications identified with this report. 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. The recommended Option 4 does require removal of vegetation in the median which would be done in consultation with Urban Forestry. On-street parking implications for the various options are detailed in the appended Victoria Avenue Bikeway Options.

NEXT STEPS

1. Detailed design and cost estimate refinement for the selected option will be included in the next Business Plan and Budget Deliberations for consideration.
2. Include the project on the prioritized transportation infrastructure list for the following budget cycle.
3. Apply for alternate sources of funding if applicable and available.
4. Once funding is secured and approved by City Council, construction will proceed.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

1. An email update will be sent to the project subscriber list informing them of the decision.
2. Construction notices will be circulated to adjacent property owners prior to construction.

APPENDICES

1. Route Analysis for an All Ages and Abilities Cycling Route in Buena Vista
2. Neighbourhood Bikeways Project – Victoria Avenue Corridor
3. Victoria Avenue Bikeway Options
4. Victoria Avenue Bikeway Recommended Conceptual Design

Report Approval

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