

Proposed Council Policy – Pedestrian and Cyclist Accommodation in Work Zones and Detours

ISSUE

The Active Transportation Plan (AT Plan) recommended that the City review its current construction detour policies to align with best practice for accommodating all active transportation users.

Upon reviewing the City of Saskatoon's Temporary Traffic Control Manual, increased guidance of how to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists in work zones is recommended. The Administration is proposing a new Council Policy to be used in conjunction with the Temporary Traffic Control Manual to guide the planning and implementation of temporary traffic controls for pedestrian and cyclist facilities in work zones.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council

1. That Council Policy C0X-XXX, Pedestrian and Cyclist Accommodation in Work Zones and Detours, be approved; and
2. That the City Clerk be requested to adopt Council Policy C0X-XXX, Pedestrian and Cyclist Accommodation in Work Zones and Detours as outlined in this report.

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 items under the theme of maintenance and accessibility:

- Action 5A.6: Ensure accessible detours are provided for pedestrians during construction and maintenance.
- Action 5B.3: Ensure detours are provided for bicycle users during construction and maintenance activities.

To implement these action items, the Administration has drafted Council Policy C0X-XXX, Pedestrian and Cyclist Accommodation in Work Zones and Detours.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Current Status

Pedestrian and cyclist detours are primarily administered through the City of Saskatoon Temporary Traffic Control Manual, which complies with the national standards found in the Transportation Association of Canada's Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada.

The City's Detour Group handles approximately 65 percent of detours in Saskatoon, with private contractors handling the remaining 35 percent. In the past few years, the

Detour Group has adopted many of the practices outlined in the proposed policy in their work and have been able to successfully implement many of the objectives identified in the policy.

There is still room for improvement. Residents who happen upon a work zone are unlikely to know who is responsible for the work zone. The community's expectation is that each work zone will be treated the same. The adoption of this policy will help to provide consistent detours and work zones regardless of the provider.

Examples of detours from previous years are shown in Appendix 1.

Discussion

The purpose of the policy is to maximize safety of and minimize impacts of work zones on pedestrians and cyclists. By addressing these needs in a policy to be used in conjunction with the Temporary Traffic Control Manual, a standard is set for all work zone practices in Saskatoon and provides a means for holding the City and private contractors responsible for implementing safe work zones for vulnerable road users.

People traveling using active modes have different needs than those traveling by vehicle. Due to the highly mobile nature of active users, their low tolerance for adding distance to their trips, and their increased vulnerability due to lack of protection, additional considerations are needed when planning and implementing temporary work zones to maximize their safety and minimize work zone impacts.

The key objectives of the proposed policy are:

- To provide pedestrians and cyclists with safe, convenient, and accessible facilities during temporary detours;
- To provide detours for pedestrian and cycling facilities that replicate, as closely as possible, the desirable characteristics of the existing sidewalk, pathway, or cycling facility it is intended to temporarily replace;
- To provide detours that accommodate the needs of a wide range of road users including the elderly, young, and people with accessibility requirements for hearing, visual or mobility; and
- To provide human scaled signage that safely guides pedestrians and cyclists through work zones.

The policy has been drafted based on best practices and is intended to supplement the guidance provided in the City's Temporary Traffic Control Manual and Chapter 6 of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. FHWA was referenced because the Transportation Association of Canada's Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada does not provide guidance for accommodations in work zones to specifically address pedestrian, cyclist and accessibility. The proposed policy is outlined in Appendix 2.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the Detour Group. Internal engagement has occurred with City departments that set up and monitor detours, such as Roadways, Fleet and Support, Saskatoon Light and Power, Urban Forestry, and Water and Waste Operations, to confirm that the objectives within the policy are reasonable to implement and address specific needs related to pedestrians and cyclists in a variety of work zones.

If adopted, the policy would come into effect immediately. While compliance with the policy is encouraged, a grace period will be provided until May 1, 2022, at which point all detours must meet the policy. Communication and education activities would take place leading up to May 1, 2022 and throughout the construction season as needed, as outlined in Appendix 3.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be minor costs associated with updating the Temporary Traffic Control Manual and producing the communications and educational materials. These costs can be accommodated in existing operating and capital budgets.

Costs related to the manufacturing, installing, maintaining, and removing of any additional signage will be paid for by the capital project if a City-led project, or charged to a third party if a project led by others. Examples of third parties include developers, utility companies, etc. This process aligns with the Administration's current practice regarding detours.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications. Privacy, social and environmental implications have not been assessed at this time.

NEXT STEPS

Should City Council approve the proposed policy, the following steps would take place:

1. Update current manuals and guidelines to meet the policy.
2. Provide training for internal staff on changes to work zones based on the policy.
3. Implement communications and education activities outlined in Appendix 3.

APPENDICES

1. Examples of Work Zones
2. Council Policy C0X-XXX, Pedestrian and Cyclist Accommodation in Work Zones and Detours
3. Communication and Education Plan

Report Approval

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