

Connecting Avenue C: Walking and Cycling Improvement Project

ISSUE

Saskatoon's Growth Plan and Active Transportation Plan were developed with objectives to increase transportation choices so that Saskatoon remains a healthy, sustainable, accessible, and attractive place to live, work and play today and for future generations.

This project identifies transportation improvements for Avenue C from Spadina Crescent West to 45th Street West to position the City of Saskatoon to improve the accessibility, comfort, convenience, and safety for active transportation.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council that the Connecting Avenue C: Walking and Cycling Improvements Functional Design Report be approved.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular Business Meeting held on June 27, 2016, City Council approved the Active Transportation Plan (AT Plan). The AT Plan identified the following benefits of active transportation:

- Economic benefits;
- Health benefits;
- Environmental benefits;
- Societal benefits; and
- Safety.

Engagement during the AT Plan development found that Saskatoon residents have safety related concerns cycling on busy streets without safe bicycle infrastructure. 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, WSP Canada Inc. was retained to develop conceptual designs for walking and cycling improvements on Avenue C from Spadina Crescent West to 45th Street West.

The AT Plan identified Avenue C as a future All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling route.

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.”

The Standing Policy Committee on Transportation, at its meeting held on January 10, 2023, received a report that included a list of the current planned sidewalk infill locations. Both sides of Avenue C North from Circle Drive to Haskamp Street were included on the list of locations to be funded through the reallocation pool.

At its Regular Business Meeting held on May 31, 2023, City Council approved the Funding for Active Transportation Fund report and resolved, in part:

- “1. That Capital Project P.02468 Active Transportation Plan Implementation be increased by \$1,810,000 funded from Infrastructure Canada - Active Transportation Fund; and”

The Dudley Street Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement project received funding of \$1,610,000 which is 60 per cent of the total eligible project costs from the federal government through the Active Transportation Fund. The remaining \$1,148,400 for the project construction was reprioritized from existing funding within Capital Project P.02468 Active Transportation Plan Implementation. The funding for the new sidewalks along Avenue C North from Circle Drive to Haskamp Street has been reallocated to the Dudley Street Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement project.

At its Regular Business Meeting held on March 29, 2023, City Council received the Saskatoon Transportation Master Plan – Updated Prioritization Criteria and resolved:

- “That the criteria for prioritizing transportation projects, as provided within this report, be approved.”

The Standing Policy Committee on Transportation, at its meeting held on October 3, 2023, received the Saskatoon Transportation Master Plan – 2023 Prioritized Infrastructure List report as information. The Connecting Avenue C project is ranked as priority #6 and the Sidewalk Infill Program is ranked as priority #14 on the prioritized infrastructure list.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Existing Conditions

Avenue C connects the residential neighbourhoods of Riversdale, Caswell Hill, and Mayfair with the industrial Airport Business Area. The AT Plan completed an equity analysis based on youth, newcomer, Aboriginal, low income, and senior population for each neighbourhood. Based on the equity analysis, the Riversdale neighbourhood has a very high equity need and Caswell Hill and Mayfair have a moderate equity score.

Sidewalks are located on both sides of Avenue C for the majority of the corridor, however, gaps in the sidewalk network do exist. In addition, there are several intersections along Avenue C that do not have accessible pedestrian ramps. There are currently no north-south dedicated cycling facilities near the project study area.

Current Status

To improve active transportation along Avenue C from Spadina Crescent West to 45th Street West, the project includes:

- Neighbourhood bikeway from Spadina Crescent to 19th Street which will feature:
 - Cyclists riding on street in mixed traffic.
 - Recommended posted speed limit of 30 km/h.
 - Curb extensions to improve pedestrian safety and for traffic calming at Spadina Crescent and Sonnenschein Way. Localized parking restrictions will be required for the curb extensions.
 - Raised crosswalk at Sonnenschein Way.
- Protected bike lanes from 19th Street to Jamieson Street which will feature:
 - 1.8 metre wide unidirectional bike lanes.
 - Curb extensions to improve pedestrian safety at 20th Street, 21st Street, 22nd Street, 23rd Street and Jamieson Street.
 - Removing 85 on-street parking spaces on the east side of Avenue C and removing 18 on-street parking spaces on the west side of Avenue C.
 - Filling gaps in the sidewalk network (pending further feasibility analysis) on the east side of Avenue C between 23rd Street and Jamieson Street.
- Neighbourhood bikeway from Jamieson Street to 38th Street which will feature:
 - Cyclist riding on street in mixed traffic.
 - Recommended posted speed limit of 30 km/h.
 - Filling gaps in the sidewalk network (pending further feasibility analysis) on the west side of Avenue C between 24th Street and 25th Street.
 - Pedestrian and cyclist activated signals at 29th Street and 33rd Street.
 - New four-way stops at 25th Street, 31st Street, and 37th Street.
 - Traffic control changed to stop sign control in the east-west direction along Avenue C.
 - Localized parking restrictions at 36th Street and 38th Street to allow cyclists to travel through the directional closures.
- Shared-use pathway and sidewalk from 38th Street to 45th Street which will feature:
 - 3 metre wide shared-use path on the east side of Avenue C.

Connecting Avenue C: Walking and Cycling Improvement Project

- Filling gaps in the sidewalk network (pending further feasibility analysis) on the west side of Avenue C between the rail crossing and 45th Street.
 - New four-way stop at 38th Street.
 - Removing on-street parking from the east side of Avenue C between 38th Street and 39th Street.
 - Converting the channelized islands on the north side of Circle Drive and Avenue C to smart channels, to enlarge the islands and enable accessibility ramps to be installed.
 - Additional right-of-way will be required on the southwest, northwest and northeast corners of the intersection of Circle Drive and Avenue C to accommodate the proposed changes.
 - Additional right-of-way will be required on the east side of Avenue C between Circle Drive and Gyles Place, and on the west side of Avenue C between Circle Drive and Cynthia Street to accommodate the shared-use pathway and sidewalk.
- Accessibility ramps will be installed with all new sidewalk and pathway work.
 - Accessibility ramps will be installed at numerous locations where sidewalk exists without a ramp.

Engagement

Three rounds of public engagement were completed for the project. Phase 1 identified challenges and opportunities for the corridor and occurred in spring 2022 with an online questionnaire and virtual stakeholder workshop. Phase 2 of engagement discussed design options and took place in late fall 2022 with an online questionnaire, virtual community session and virtual stakeholder workshop. Phase 3 discussed the recommended design in June 2023 and included an online questionnaire, in-person community session and in-person stakeholder workshop.

Implementation

Given the length of the Avenue C corridor, improvements can be implemented in phases, with the highest priority segments being completed first. The recommended project phasing is as follows:

- Phase 1 – Spadina Crescent to Jamieson Street.
- Phase 2 – Jamieson Street to 38th Street.
- Phase 3 – 38th Street to 45th Street.

Property acquisition will be required before construction for Phase 3 can be completed.

Project Report

The technical report, including engagement summaries, is provided as Appendix 1.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total estimated cost for construction of the Connecting Avenue C Walking and Cycling Improvement project is summarized in the following table:

Connecting Avenue C: Walking and Cycling Improvement Project

	Estimated Cost	Implementation	Implementation Cost
Spadina Crescent to 19 th Street	\$ 104,548	Phase 1	\$ 3,414,180
19 th Street to Jamieson Street	\$ 3,309,632		
Jamieson Street to 38 th Street	\$ 1,036,941	Phase 2	\$ 1,036,941
38 th Street to 41 st Street	\$ 2,265,438	Phase 3	\$ 4,342,476
41 st Street to 45 th Street	\$ 2,077,038		
Total			\$ 8,793,597

The cost estimates do not include the cost of property acquisition for the additional right-of-way required. The detailed design and construction of the project is currently unfunded.

Administration will look for opportunities to leverage alternative funding programs that this project may be applicable for.

A total of 35 paid on-street parking spaces would be removed from the Riversdale Business Improvement District (BID). This would result in close to a 11% reduction of the paid parking supply in the Riversdale BID, a revenue loss of approximately \$68,000 per year, and a reduction of approximately \$34,000 per year to the BID Streetscape Reserve. The revenue loss assumes that a person attempting to park, leaves the area without parking and does not park in a different paid parking space. In other words, this is the worst-case scenario for project financial implications on parking revenue.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy or legal 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 alternative mode of transportation. Active transportation provides numerous quality of life and societal benefits. The AT Plan identified that a high level of active transportation in a community is viewed as a strong indicator of sustainability and liveability. Building active transportation facilities can provide affordable and accessible transportation choices for people and provide mobility options for those who may not have access to a vehicle.

NEXT STEPS

1. Detailed design and cost estimate refinement will be included in future Business Plan and Budget Deliberations for consideration.
2. The project will remain on the Transportation Master Plan list of prioritized transportation infrastructure projects awaiting funding.
3. Consult with the required property owners and complete agreements for the purchase of the required right-of-way.
4. Apply for alternate sources of funding if applicable and available.
5. Once funding is secured and approved by City Council, construction will proceed.

APPENDICES

1. Connecting Avenue C Walking and Cycling Improvements Functional Design Report

Report Approval

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