

31st Street Bikeway Connection to 33rd Street Shared-use Pathway Functional Plan

ISSUE

This project provides details on a shared-use pathway connection between the existing 33rd Street shared-use pathway and the future 31st Street Neighbourhood Bikeway.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council that the functional plan for the 31st Street Bikeway Connection to 33rd Street Shared-use Pathway project be approved.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular Business Meeting held on January 25, 2021, City Council received the 31st Street West Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement Project and resolved:

1. That the 31st Street Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement Project be approved in principle; and
2. That when one is available, that the Administration provide an update regarding the functional plan to connect the 31st Street bikeway to the 33rd Street multi-use trail.”

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Current Status

There is an existing shared-use pathway on the south side of 33rd Street East from Ontario Avenue to Spadina Crescent East which connects the Saskatchewan Polytechnic campus with the Meewasin Valley Trail system.

The extent of the approved 31st Street Neighbourhood Bikeway is from Avenue W North to Idylwyld Drive North.

These two facilities result in a gap between 31st Street West and 33rd Street East. To align with guidance provided in the Active Transportation Plan, a connection is required to provide network continuity.

Discussion/Analysis

A review of possible options to connect the future 31st Street neighbourhood bikeway with the existing 33rd Street shared-use pathway was completed. The study area is indicated in Appendix 1.

Six options were developed for consideration:

- 1 – 31st Street
- 2 – Idylwyld Drive and North of Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre
- 3 – 31st Street and West of Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre
- 4 – 31st Street and East of Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre
- 5 - Idylwyld Drive and 33rd Street East
- 6 – Do Nothing

The alignment options are shown in Appendix 2.

The properties where Saskatchewan Polytechnic resides are owned by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation or His Majesty the King, in essence the Province of Saskatchewan. Stakeholder engagement was held with Saskatchewan Polytechnic and SaskBuilds, a provincial ministry that oversees the management of all infrastructure projects and assets. Meetings were held on January 16, 2023 and June 27, 2023.

The feedback from the stakeholders indicated they did not support a shared-use pathway routed through the campus, but did support Option 5, a shared-use pathway along Idylwyld Drive North and 33rd Street East. Pathways in these locations allow people to easily connect to the adjacent destinations and directly connect to the existing shared-use pathway on 33rd Street East and the future 31st Street Neighbourhood Bikeway. Option 5 will also connect directly to the Bus Rapid Transit station on the south side of 33rd Street between Alberta Avenue and Idylwyld Drive. However, there is insufficient existing public right-of-way along Idylwyld Drive and 33rd Street to construct a 3.0 metre-wide shared-use pathway. An expansion of the public right-of-way into provincial lands is required.

In exploring the expansion of the public right-of-way, two options were developed for the shared-use pathway. These options are:

- Option 5A: a 3.0 metre-wide shared-use pathway along Idylwyld Drive North and 33rd Street East that would be combined with the adjacent roadway curbing. The existing light poles and signs would be relocated and placed behind the shared-use pathway, if feasible.
- Option 5B: a 3.0 metre-wide shared-use pathway along Idylwyld Drive North and 33rd Street East that would be offset 1.5 metres from the adjacent roadway curbing to allow for the placement of light poles, signs, fire hydrants and other items in the amenity strip.

Typical cross-sections Options 5A and 5B are shown in Appendix 3.

Through consultation with SaskBuilds and Saskatchewan Polytechnic, both design options have been developed so the existing parking lots of the adjacent property are not impacted.

As Option 5B provides space between the roadway and the shared-use pathway, it is the recommended option as the additional room provides a more comfortable place to walk or cycle as people are further away from traffic. Option 5B is included in Appendix 4.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Administration has discussed with SaskBuilds dedicating the required property to allow for the shared-use pathway connection to proceed. SaskBuilds has provided verbal indication that the Province would be open to dedicating the required property to public right-of-way to permit the construction of Option 5B. The future capital project would be responsible for all costs associated with the mitigation of any Saskatchewan Polytechnic infrastructure and landscaping required to be relocated or removed to allow for the shared-use pathway to be constructed. The Province is currently reviewing the Dedication and Access Agreement and once finalized a conditional agreement would be brought to City Council for approval consideration.

The Administration considered estimated project costs when reviewing options. The costs factored in construction items such as concrete and pavement, intersection improvements to the Idylwyld Drive and 33rd Street intersection, utility relocates, landscaping, project administration, etc.

The cost estimate for this connection is \$1,160,000, which will be refined during the detailed design phase. The detailed design and construction of the shared-use pathway is currently unfunded. The costs for the upgrades required at 31st Street West and Idylwyld Drive North as recommended in the 31st Street Bikeway, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Improvement Project are not included in this estimate since they were captured in that project's estimate.

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

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 supports the lowering of harmful emissions by providing a safe alternative mode of transportation. Active transportation provides numerous quality of life and societal benefits. The Active Transportation 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.

The project may be constructed in phases depending on funding availability, aligning with future city street asset management projects, other Transportation projects such as Bus Rapid Transit, or the re-development of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic properties.

As this is not a delegated matter to Standing Policy Committee on Transportation, the Committee is being asked to make a recommendation to City Council.

NEXT STEPS

If the recommendation is approved by City Council, next steps would involve the following:

1. Finalize the conditional Dedication and Access Agreement with the Province for the required lands and report to the appropriate Committee.
2. Detail design and cost estimate refinement will be included in future Business Plan and Budget Deliberations for consideration.
3. The project will be added to the Transportation Master Plan list of transportation infrastructure projects for future prioritization.
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. Study Area
2. Alignment Options
3. Typical Cross-Sections (Options 5A and 5B)
4. Recommended Option (Option 5B)

Report Approval

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