

Assiniboine Drive CN Rail Pedestrian Crossing – Capital Budget Adjustment

ISSUE

This report provides an update on the Assiniboine Drive CN Rail Pedestrian Crossing project and outlines the capital project adjustments required to fund construction.

RECOMMENDATION

That City Council approve the reallocation of funds from the following 2024 Transportation Projects to fund the Assiniboine Drive CN Rail Pedestrian Crossing project:

- \$250,000 from Capital Project 2288 Transportation Safety: Community Traffic Reviews - defer 'Clancy Drive – Pandygrasse Road to Circle Drive', and '18th Street West – Vancouver Avenue to Avenue W South'.
- \$50,000 from Capital Project 2288 Transportation Safety: Road Safety Program – defer 'software and inventory'.
- \$500,000 from Capital Project 2468 Active Transportation Plan Implementation: Cycling Network – defer 'improvements to existing cycling facilities and constructing new facilities to address gaps and barriers'.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular Business Meeting held on January 29, 2018, City Council considered the following inquiry put forth by Councillor Donauer:

“Would the Administration please report back concerning a proper, legal and safe method for pedestrians and cyclists to get from the residential areas of River Heights and Lawson Heights to the North Industrial employment area. Currently, there is no legal way for pedestrians or cyclists to move between these residential neighbourhoods and the North Industrial. Specifically, comment on the ability to get from Warman/Assiniboine intersection area to the North Industrial. Currently, residents are crossing the railway tracks illegally, which is becoming more of a problem with the Railway Police and the Saskatoon Police Service. This leaves no safe option for pedestrians and cyclists.”

At its meeting held on June 1, 2020, the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation received an information report on whistle cessation and railway crossing projects. With regards to the CN rail crossing near the intersection of Assiniboine Drive and Warman Road, this report noted:

- A functional plan for the pedestrian and cyclist crossing at Warman Road and Assiniboine Drive has been completed and provided to CN for comment and

review. The functional plan presented is for an accessible crossing with ramp slopes, landing areas, tactile surfaces, etc. to meet accessibility guidelines.

- The Administration was waiting on review and comments back from CN before proceeding with detailed design and cost estimates.
- The project was included on the prioritized transportation infrastructure project list, and funding requests will occur with the next multi-year budget cycle.
- The preliminary high-level cost estimate of the crossing is \$500,000.

At its meeting held on June 22, 2020, the Governance and Priorities Committee considered the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program 2020, and resolved, in part:

“That an amount of \$0.50M for ‘Pedestrian/Cyclist Rail Crossing near Warman/Assiniboine be recommended for consideration under the Reallocation Prioritization List.”

At its Regular Business Meeting held on July 27, 2020, City Council considered the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program – Reallocation Prioritization List and resolved:

“That the budget allocations as shown in the attached Final Allocation List be approved; and that the Administration be directed to take appropriate action to deliver the initiatives.”

The final list referred to in the resolution included \$0.50M of funding for the Pedestrian/Cyclist Rail Crossing near Warman Road/Assiniboine Drive.

At its Regular Business Meeting held on May 3, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation received the Rail-Related Transportation Projects report, which included a progress update for the CN rail crossing near the intersection of Assiniboine Drive and Warman Road. Transportation had completed a preliminary functional design for the pedestrian and cyclist crossing at Warman Road and Assiniboine Drive. An engineering consultant was retained to finalize the functional design details and complete an independent safety audit for the project in anticipation of required application for whistle cessation, and address CN’s requirements for the safety of the crossing. The detailed design was submitted to CN in July 2021 for their review and endorsement.

On June 8, 2022, the Administration received review comments from CN.

The Administration completed additional work in response to CN’s comments and provided this information to CN on November 21, 2022.

At a Special Meeting held on October 10, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation received the 2024/2025 Transportation Services Capital Budget Supplemental Information report.

At the Preliminary Business Plan and Budget meeting on November 28, 2023, City Council received the Assiniboine Drive CN Rail Pedestrian Crossing – November 2023 Update. The report provided an update on the anticipated project costs and possible funding sources. The updated cost estimate at that time was \$1,650,000. Increases in project estimates accounted for a retaining wall, tamper proof fencing, and rail crossing surface and warning system with gates. Jay Magus, Director of Transportation, provided a verbal update that adequate funding was available because previous rail safety projects had extra funds remaining due to federal Rail Safety Improvement Program grant contributions.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Formal agreements between CN and the City for the rail crossing surface and warning system were executed on February 23, 2024. CN estimates that the rail crossing surface will cost \$58,700 and the rail crossing warning system will cost \$635,000. CN has advised that for the 2024 construction season they are prioritizing upgrades necessary to meet Transport Canada regulatory requirements that must be completed by November 1, 2024 and that the crossing and signal work for this pedestrian crossing is expected to be deferred into the 2025 construction season.

The design of the pathway includes a retaining wall required for the pathway which was designed using consulting services for geotechnical and structural expertise. The tender package submissions for the pathway closed on June 18, 2024. One bid was received at a price of \$1,646,824, excluding taxes, which exceeded the budget for the pathway portion of the project. Administration has negotiated a cost adjustment with the sole bidder to reduce the cost to \$1,471,278, excluding taxes, subject to a 2025 construction completion, which would align with the anticipated CN crossing construction timeline.

Based on the bid submission with the cost adjustment applied, the total anticipated cost of the project is now \$2,450,000, which includes \$693,700 for the rail crossing surface and rail crossing warning system, \$1,559,555 for the pathway construction (including applicable tax), and \$196,745 for internal costs, utilities, geotechnical and structural engineering, design and construction engineering and contingency.

There is \$1,650,000 of funding currently allocated to the project, resulting in a shortfall of \$800,000.

The following 2024 projects shown in the 2024/2025 Transportation Services Capital Budget Supplemental Information report are recommended to be deferred to future years to reallocate these funds to fund the Assiniboine Drive CN Rail Pedestrian Crossing:

- \$250,000 from Capital Project 2288 Transportation Safety: Community Traffic Reviews – Defer the Clancy Drive – Pendencygrasse Road to Circle Drive and 18th Street West – Vancouver Avenue to Avenue W South Community Traffic Reviews from 2024 to 2025 and defer projects on 20th Street and Laurier Drive from 2025 to 2026.

- \$50,000 from Capital Project 2288 Transportation Safety: Road Safety Program – Defer the software and network inventory development project designed to assist with future decision making for such items as safety improvements and selecting locations for road safety audits.
- \$500,000 from Capital Project 2468 Active Transportation Plan Implementation: Cycling Network – Defer the construction of the 31st Street Neighbourhood Bikeway connection to 33rd Street Multi-Use Pathway on Idylwyld Drive. Together with the already approved \$500,000 from 2022, 2023 and 2024 budgets and approval of the \$350,000 2025 budget allotment, an additional \$500,000 (plus inflation) would be required in the 2026 budget to deliver the project in 2026.

The \$800,000 of reallocated funds would be adequate to cover the expected shortfall. Any unused funds would be returned to the deferred projects.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Capital Project 2288 Transportation Safety is funded through the Transportation Infrastructure Reserve, Traffic Safety Reserve and the Transportation Infrastructure Expansion Reserve.

Capital Project 2468 Active Transportation Plan Implementation is funded through Active Transportation Reserve, Transportation Infrastructure Expansion Reserve and Traffic Safety Reserve. Approved 2024 funding remains in Capital Project 2468 for AT Plan Implementation, Accessible Pedestrian Signal Program, Curb Ramp Program, New Sidewalk Program, and there is \$200,000 remaining for Cycling Network.

The Assiniboine Drive CN Rail Pedestrian Crossing project is eligible for funding through these reserves.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Although the crossing agreements with CN do not stipulate a construction deadline, there is an ongoing trespassing issue at this crossing. Constructing a legal crossing that meets accessibility guidelines will be beneficial for people in residential neighbourhoods on the east side of the crossing wanting to access businesses on the west side of the crossing for employment or shopping. Further, after many years of negotiations with CN, all approvals and agreements are now in place to proceed with the project.

The Connecting Millar Avenue walking and cycling conceptual design project is currently underway for active transportation infrastructure from the CN rail pedestrian crossing along 43rd Street to Millar Avenue and along Millar Avenue from 43rd Street to Marquis Drive. Constructing the CN rail pedestrian crossing would provide a key legal active transportation crossing that would link existing active transportation corridors on the east side with planned active transportation corridors on the west side of the CN rail.

There are no privacy or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

1. Award tender.
2. Proceed with construction.
3. Apply for whistle cessation.

Report Approval

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