

Connecting Victoria Avenue from Taylor Street to Ruth Street - Active Transportation Improvements

ISSUE

This project identifies transportation improvements for Victoria Avenue from Taylor Street to Ruth Street, to promote this section of Victoria Avenue as a safe All Ages and Abilities (AAA) multi-modal transportation corridor for vehicles and active transportation.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council that the Connecting Victoria Avenue (Taylor Street to Ruth Street): Functional Design Report Option 1 – One-Way Protected Bike Lane be approved.

BACKGROUND

The report background is included in Appendix 1.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Existing Conditions

Victoria Avenue between Taylor Street and Ruth Street is a collector street that connects the Queen Elizabeth neighbourhood with the Buena Vista and Avalon neighbourhoods. Victoria Avenue directly connects to the Traffic Bridge and 3rd Avenue downtown. It has two driving lanes and two parking lanes, and a posted speed limit of 50 km/h. There are missing sidewalks and accessibility ramps for a portion of the corridor.

There are two standard crosswalks installed on this section of Victoria Avenue, one at Isabella Street, and one at Hilliard Street.

There are raised cycle tracks on Victoria Avenue between 8th Street and the Traffic Bridge. City Council has approved street level protected bike lanes for Victoria Avenue between 8th Street and Taylor Street.

There is no dedicated cycling infrastructure on Victoria Avenue between Taylor Street and Ruth Street. With this report, planning for active transportation improvements on Victoria Avenue will be complete.

Current Status

CIMA+ was retained to complete a functional planning study for active transportation improvements for Victoria Avenue between Taylor Street and Ruth Street. The scope included an existing conditions review, developing and evaluating design options, preparing a functional design plan, and undertaking engagement activities. The report detailing the functional plan is included in Appendix 2.

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The report outlines the process followed to determine the recommended option. At a high level the process included:

1. Identify Potential Facility Types:

- Initial review of potential facility types: Protected bike lanes, shared street, neighbourhood bikeway, conventional or buffered bicycle lane, bike pathway with separate walkway, shared-use path.
- Non-starter assessment: Raised cycle track (one-way or two-way) and off-street shared-use pathway were eliminated as they extend beyond the existing pavement width and would require costly rework of existing and recent sidewalk construction.
- Potential facility type options: Considering the existing vehicle volumes and speeds, a protected facility is expected to be the most appropriate for the Victoria Avenue corridor.
- Protected facility options: one-way protected bike lane, two-way protected bike lane.
- Options requiring significant supplemental mitigations: neighbourhood bikeway, conventional or painted bike lanes, buffered bike lanes.

2. Options Development

- Option 1 – One-Way Protected Bike Lane, key design elements include:
 - a) Separated bike lanes for each direction on each side of the roadway.
 - b) Physical barrier between vulnerable road users and vehicles.
 - c) On-street parking is removed from Victoria Avenue.
- Option 2 – Two-Way Protected Bike Lane, key design elements include:
 - a) Bike lanes for each direction of travel provided on east side of the street. This side of the street was selected because there are fewer driveway accesses.
 - b) Physical barrier between vulnerable road users and vehicles.
 - c) On-street parking provided on west side of the street.
- Option 3 – Neighbourhood Bikeway, key design elements include:
 - a) Reduced speed limit to 30 km/h.
 - b) Access and turn restrictions required to limit volumes, resulting in traffic circulation changes. Diverted traffic may trigger the need for a signal at Ruth Street and Broadway Avenue.
 - c) Raised and horizontal deflections to reduce speed.
 - d) Curb extensions and planting space along the corridor on alternating sides of the street.
 - e) On-street parking is retained except at locations with traffic calming measures.

3. Evaluation process:

- Evaluation scoring - developed based on industry best practice, project priorities, and feedback from public consultation.

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Category	Category Weighting	Criteria	Criteria Weighting
Safety and Security	40%	Conflict Points	25%
		Safety and Comfort of Facility	25%
		Personal Security	10%
		Intuitive Design	20%
		User Adherence	20%
Community Context	20%	Parking	20%
		Loading	10%
		Network Operations	25%
		Community Livability	20%
		Community Support	25%
Accessibility	20%	All Seasons	50%
		Accessibility	50%
Cost and Constructability	20%	Constructability / Ability to Implement	20%
		Operating Cost	40%
		Capital Cost	40%

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- Evaluation results:
 - a) One-way protected bike lane = 81
 - b) Two-way protected bike lane = 65
 - c) Neighbourhood bikeway = 58

Functional Design

The one-way protected bike lane was selected as the preferred alternative for cycling infrastructure (Appendix 3). This option meets all the technical requirements, meets user expectations, and integrates well with the approved cycling facilities planned for Victoria Avenue between Taylor Street and 8th Street.

Functional design features:

- Protected on-street bike lanes which will include:
 - 2.2-metre-wide unidirectional bike lanes.
 - Removing on-street parking along Victoria Avenue.
- Intersection improvements at Victoria Avenue and Taylor Street including protected intersection design elements.
- Pedestrian and cyclist activated signal at Victoria Avenue and Ruth Street.
- Filling gaps in the sidewalk network on Victoria Avenue (between Taylor Street and Willow Street sidewalk is missing for three blocks on the west side and two blocks on the east side).
- Accessibility ramps will be installed with all new sidewalk work and at locations where existing sidewalks do not have ramps.
- Optional curb extensions at Hilliard Street and at Isabella Street. A review of the need for the curb extensions will be completed during the detailed design phase.

Although on-street parking will be removed from Victoria Avenue, parking use studies show that existing on-street parking demand is very low (0-14% parking demand for most blocks). Most of the properties in the study area flank Victoria Avenue and have

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driveways in the boulevard (Appendix 4). Of the 32 properties adjacent to Victoria Avenue in the study area, three front Victoria Avenue. Delivery access and on-street parking will be available from the side streets. There was no accessible parking zones identified, or placards present in parked vehicles during any of the parking counts. Localized parking restrictions may be required at the intersections for curb extension installations and visibility. All properties will retain driveway and alley access. Photographs of Victoria Avenue are provided block by block in Appendix 5.

A multi-modal level of service was completed for the corridor for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. Acceptable levels of service are met for all modes.

Cost Estimate

Option	Cost
Option 1 – One-Way Protected Bike Lane	\$3.6 M
Option 2 – Two-Way Protected Bike Lane	\$2.8 M
Option 3 – Neighbourhood Bikeway	\$2.1 M

Engagement

Two rounds of public engagement were completed for the project.

Round 1 identified opportunities and challenges for the corridor. It took place in Summer 2024 and included an online questionnaire with 228 responses and a public open house with 17 attendees. The majority of people were very supportive of improvements to the pedestrian realm and generally supportive of active transportation facilities.

Round 2 of engagement discussed the recommended design. It occurred in March 2025 and included an online questionnaire with 193 responses and public open house with 30 attendees. The recommended option was preferred by most residents.

Snow Clearing Impacts

Victoria Avenue is a Priority 3 street for snow grading. The existing conditions for Victoria Avenue allow for cleared snow to be stored in the parking lane after a snow event. Once the windrow reaches a large enough size it is removed.

The elimination of the parking lane for the installation of the one-way protected bike lane would prevent snow from being stored on the street and require it to be removed from both the driving lane and the bike lane on Victoria Avenue each time a snow event is declared.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total estimated cost for construction of the Connecting Victoria Avenue - Active Transportation Improvement recommended option between Taylor Street and Ruth Street is \$3,640,000. The detailed design and construction of the project is currently unfunded.

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

The current estimated cost for winter maintenance is \$38,000 annually. The estimated cost for winter maintenance with protected bike lanes on Victoria Avenue is \$225,000 annually. This cost assumes snow removal 12 times per year, including 5-6 snow events. The actual costs for winter maintenance could vary depending on the amount of snow that is received.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy or legal implications identified.

Three trees will be removed to install new sidewalks and intersection improvements at Victoria Avenue and Taylor Street. Compensation for the removed trees will be provided in accordance with Council Policy C09-011 – Trees on City Property.

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 Multi-Year 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. Apply for alternate sources of funding if applicable and available.
4. Once funding is secured and approved by City Council, construction will proceed.

APPENDICES

1. Report Background
2. Connecting Victoria Avenue Functional Report
3. Recommended Functional Design
4. Victoria Avenue Corridor
5. Victoria Avenue Photos

Report Approval

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