



Fixing Saskatoon's Missing Sidewalks

Mike Winter on behalf of Walking Saskatoon

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SUMMARY

Federal and Provincial Government Money is Available NOW for Sidewalk Construction

Under the Green Infrastructure Tranche of the Federal Government's Investing in Canada infrastructure plan, municipalities get 2/3rds matching funding for projects providing an environmental benefit. The City of Saskatoon has already identified \$5 million dollars of new sidewalk construction projects eligible for this funding stream, of which only 1/3rd (\$1.65 million) need be provided by the city.

Sidewalk Construction Meets the Goals of the Green Infrastructure Fund

The city has so far mostly proposed using the Green Infrastructure Fund money for flood control projects. However, two of the primary goals of the Green Infrastructure Fund: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10 mT nationally and increasing the modal share of active transportation and public transit by 25%. Failure of the city to undertake projects that meet the goals of the fund may jeopardize the matching dollars available for all projects for this or future funding tranches. Building sidewalks to increase active transportation mode share meets the environmental goals of the Green Infrastructure Fund.

Why new sidewalks? Lower Taxes and Social Equity/Reconciliation.

Increasing the mode share of pedestrian trips is one of the most effective measures the City can take to reduce transportation spending. Per a Government of Canada study In 2019, every kilometre in travel that can be moved from automotive use to active transportation saves 3 cents in ongoing roadway infrastructure and traffic control costs. This is a substantial and lasting cost savings for the city.

Traffic violence disproportionately affects low-income and minority communities. One of the main reasons is structural disinvestment in low-income communities whose residents are more likely to walk or bike than wealthier neighbourhoods. This is very much true in Saskatoon where pedestrian deaths and injuries are concentrated in less-wealthy neighbourhoods that also have the worst pedestrian infrastructure.

REQUEST

Walking Saskatoon is asking council to spend \$825,000 from the existing road maintenance budget in each of the next two years on sidewalk construction and apply for matching dollars from the Green Infrastructure Fund for a total expenditure of \$5,000,000 of new sidewalk construction. There are many blocks in the city in need of sidewalks that have been identified in the Active Transportation Plan as well as various Neighbourhood Traffic Reviews that can be immediately improved without waiting for any further study from city administration.
