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Executive Policy Committee
Special Meeting 2014 City of Winnipeg Budget
December 12, 2014

Osborne Underpass

Bike Winnipeg strongly opposes the decision to push back conceptual and preliminary design of the Osborne Street Underpass rehabilitation project from 2015 to 2019. If this decision is upheld, it will mean that completion of this critical rehabilitation will no longer fall within medium term (by 2021) time frame laid out by the Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan, adopted in 2011. Failure to include active transportation in the Fort Rouge Yards tunnel in the first phase of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor means that the Osborne Underpass remains a critical barrier for cyclists trying to connect between the River Osborne/MacMillan/Earl Grey and Lord Roberts/Riverview neighbourhoods. Cyclists riding through Osborne Underpass are currently forced to share a narrow lane with a poor surface and bad drainage with an average of 33,500 vehicles per day. Needless to say, many people choose not to ride through this underpass, further exacerbating traffic congestion in Osborne Village. Given that the City is currently completing secondary plans for the Corydon-Osborne area that envisage a more walkable, bicycle friendly neighbourhood, and plans to develop the area around the Osborne Street Transit Station using the principles of Transit Oriented Development, it should be expected that demand for adequate walking and cycling facilities beneath the tracks will continue to grow.

It appears that the Osborne Underpass project has been pushed back in favour of moving forward the extension of the Chief Peguis Trail between McPhillips Street and Route 90 and the extension of the William R. Clement Parkway from McGillivray to Wilkes. As the Osborne Underpass project had a projected budget of $70 million and the Chief Peguis Trail and William R. Clement Parkway extensions have projected budgets of $130 million and $100 million respectively, it seems obvious that a decision to move these projects forward will require postponement of more than just the Osborne Underpass project.

Sherbrook Street Rehabilitation Project

A second concern with the 2014 budget is the $130K budget for AT included within the Sherbrook Street rehabilitation. As this is an extremely important corridor for city cyclists (currently more than 2,000 cyclists cross the Maryland bridges on an average summer day), the planned painted bike lane is grossly inadequate to meet the expected demand along Sherbrook, and we urge the city to budget funds to provide a fully separated cycle track for Sherbrook. Before/after studies have repeatedly shown dramatic results where cycle tracks have been installed. For instance:

8th and 9th Avenue Cycle Tracks, NYC

- 35-56% decrease in injuries to all street users (8th and 9th Avenues)
- Up to 49% in retail sales *(Locally-based businesses on 9th Ave from23rd to 31st Sts., comparedto 3% borough-wide)*

Laurier Avenue in Ottawa

- 224% increase in riders following installation of separated bicycle lanes

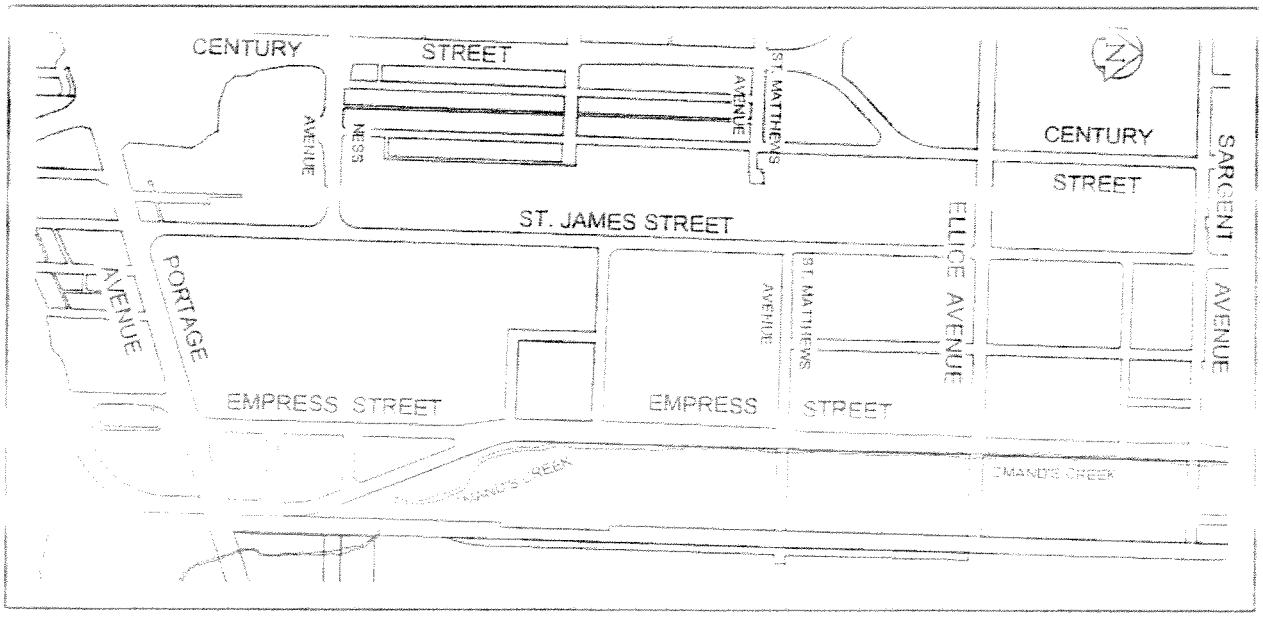
Long Beach, California

- 2 one way parking protected cycle tracks on the left hand side of a one way couplet
  - 1 mile in length
  - Temporary, utilizing planters
  - Generally use signalized intersections with separate phases for cyclists, left turns
  - $800,000 cost
- Results after 1 ½ years
  - 33% increase in cyclists
  - 15% increase in pedestrians
  - 80% decrease in bicycle related collisions
  - 45% decrease in motor vehicle collisions
  - 50% decrease in sidewalk cycling

Research conducted as part of the ongoing pedestrian and cycling strategies further backs this up. A telephone survey has shown that the provision of a separated bicycle lane would encourage 27% of those surveyed to cycle much more often, and another 20% to cycle more often.

Polo Park

We have reviewed the plans for Polo Park infrastructure improvements and while we are pleased to see that accommodations for cyclists are part of the plan for the rehabilitation and extension of St. Mathews, we are disappointed to see that other important AT routes in the Polo Park area such as Empress and Ellice have been left out of the project. While Empress is outside the defined scope of the project as presented in the open house, it is well within the bounds of the project presented in the 2013 capital budget as shown below.



Empress is a key north/south route in the City's proposed Bicycle Network acting as a parallel alternative to St. James Street, which will be rehabilitated as part of this project, but without any improvements benefitting people choosing to travel on their bicycles. An infrastructure project of this magnitude ($40 million) represents an opportunity to "connect the dots" and make the overall network more useful and complete. It would be a shame if the opportunity to move forward on the City of Winnipeg's commitment to "a transportation system that supports active, accessible and healthy

lifestyle options"[1] were lost because of an administrative decision to limit the scope of this important project only to options dictated by the demands of motor vehicle drivers.

Planning

While Complete Communities lists the Active Transportation Action Plan as a guiding document that has been endorsed by council (pg. 9), in practice this plan has often been ignored in the planning and development of the city's new and transformative communities (e.g. Charleswood Transportation Study, Devonshire Village) as well as its roadways (e.g. Wellington Crescent Resurfacing, Mission Resurfacing, Des Meurons rehabilitation which included no funding for alternative routing for cyclists). We feel that if the city is sincere in its stated desire to make its decision making transparent, and to incorporate AT facilities into any reconstruction or rehabilitation of infrastructure identified as an Active Transportation facility in the Proposed Active Transportation Network, it must substantially increase funding for the human resources necessary to oversee the implementation of its bicycle and pedestrian strategies, and commit to substantial public consultation to ensure decision making is transparent. We feel that expenditures in planning will yield substantial savings over the long term by taking advantage of opportunities to incorporate required AT facilities within the scope of ongoing maintenance and development projects that are currently being missed.

Infrastructure Priorities

Phase II Southwest Rapid Transit

We are thrilled to see that the City and Province have agreed to fund the second phase of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor. It is imperative that planning for the second phase of the southwest rapid transit corridor undertake a full analysis of existing, planned, or potential cycling routes along the Parker routing, the Letellier right of way, and along Pembina itself. This analysis should consider connectivity to adjacent neighbourhoods, destinations along Pembina, major redevelopment sites, the Chevrier and Buffalo industrial sites, the U of M, and potential extensions to the north and south.

- Do not repeat the mistakes of the first phase of the rapid transit corridor, where the needs of cyclists were tacked on as an afterthought rather than being integrated into the planning and development of the system. This resulted in substantial gaps (underneath the Fort Rouge Yards, the Warsaw/Jessie connection, #3 Donald)
- By providing quality cycling routes to rapid transit stations, the effective catchment area for the station can be increased to 9 times that expected from just walking.
- Connectivity is the key
- Utilize the Letellier Corridor by engaging Federal officials in the discussions
- Maintain Sommerville/Seal connection
- Ensure that AT is included in the overpass of the Letellier line near the Georgetown Apartments.
    - Start working now to acquire parking spaces and easements to ensure that this is possible.
- Ensure that AT is included in the overpass of Pembina Highway
- Ensure that AT is included in the overpass of Bishop Grandin
- Plan for a connection into St. Norbert

[1] Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan; City of Winnipeg, pg. 9. 2011

Pembina Underpass

- As with the SWRT, we are thrilled to see funding for this project moving forward.

Disraeli Connections

The new Disraeli AT Bridge connecting Point Douglas to Elmwood is a critical new link in Winnipeg's cycling network, and all efforts should be undertaken to ensure that it is fully connected into the city cycling network. To this end, critical gaps on the Elmwood end of the bridge need to be closed. In particular, the Midwinter side path needs to be extended to Brazier, and the intersections of Riverton with Stadacona and Watt need to be upgraded to allow for safe passage of cyclists.

Kingsbury Neighbourhood Greenway

A neighbourhood greenway (bike boulevard) along Kingsbury would be fairly easy to accommodate, as traffic lights or pedestrian corridors already exist to help cyclists cross the major roadways intersected by Kingsbury between Main Street and McPhillips.

Winter Maintenance

While the 2011 Transportation Master Plan calls for "AT networks to be planned, designed, implemented and maintained to address year-round access", implementation of this policy has been inconsistent. Bike Winnipeg calls for the following policies to be adopted to ensure that Winnipeg's snow clearing policy is aligned with the direction set out in the city's Transportation Master Plan.

- All AT routes should be moved up to priority #1 or priority #2 routes. Bike boulevards may be exceptions if they are not currently on snow routes. (See below for their treatment.)
- Where bike lanes are present, roadways should have priority #1 street clearing, and they should be cleared curb to curb, down to the pavement.
- Where bike lanes are next to parking, effort should be made to clear the boulevard so that car doors can be opened. (If car doors cannot be opened, cars will encroach on the bike lanes.) It was noted that Grosvenor Ave was a good example of where this had been done in previous years.
- Bike Boulevards: Where it is not a priority #1 or #2 roadway, we would want to see more frequent checking of the roads so that ruts could be removed and more frequent sanding. This may mean these roads are cleared outside of a city-wide clearing.
- Snow should be removed from shy lanes on bridges within 48 hours of cessation of the snow event. A benefit of this is that all users of the bridge will be safer, as snow removal protects against the ramp effect. We would also like to see the shy lanes cleared of debris on a regular basis in summer as accumulation is a problem. Bridges that were specified as highest priority were: Osborne, St. Vital, Chief Peguis, Slaw Rebchuck, Mayland/Sherbrook, Norwood, Charleswood, Fort Garry, and Louise (sidewalks) Bridges.
- There should be extra funding to conduct snow clearing of bike paths on an ad hoc basis as required between snow events in the case of ice build-up, particularly ice ridges. Ice buildup occurs on bike paths as a result of freeze/thaw events that pool melt water on the paths. Regular inspections can be used to determine when such measures are necessary.

Community Based Travel Marketing

Bike Winnipeg would like to see the city move forward on its commitments to transportation demand management made in the 2011 Transportation Master Plan. Research has shown that when coupled with individualized marketing programs such as the community based travel marketing pilot program undertaken as part of the WinSmart project, shifts to sustainable modes of transportation have been far higher than would otherwise have been realized (for instance, a Portland study showed that areas targeted for individualized marketing after installation of a new rapid transit line saw four times the reduction in driving trips compared to areas that were not targeted by individualized travel marketing).

Cycling Skills Education Programming

Bike Winnipeg would like to see the city commit to financial support for a program of cycling skills courses that would provide subsidized courses to both students and adults that would be available over a broad range of dates throughout the city. It is expected that with matching funding provided by the province, federal government and MPI, the city contribution would amount to less than $20.000/year, with the expectation that up to 1,000 students would benefit from education on safe cycling habits each year. The city commitment would be in line with its commitment in the Transportation Master Plan to "support community stakeholders in the development and implementation of TDM initiatives", and would also fulfill recommendations from the 2005 Active Transportation Study that call for the City to work with non-governmental organizations to provide cycling education to people of all ages.

Sincerely

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bikewinnipeg

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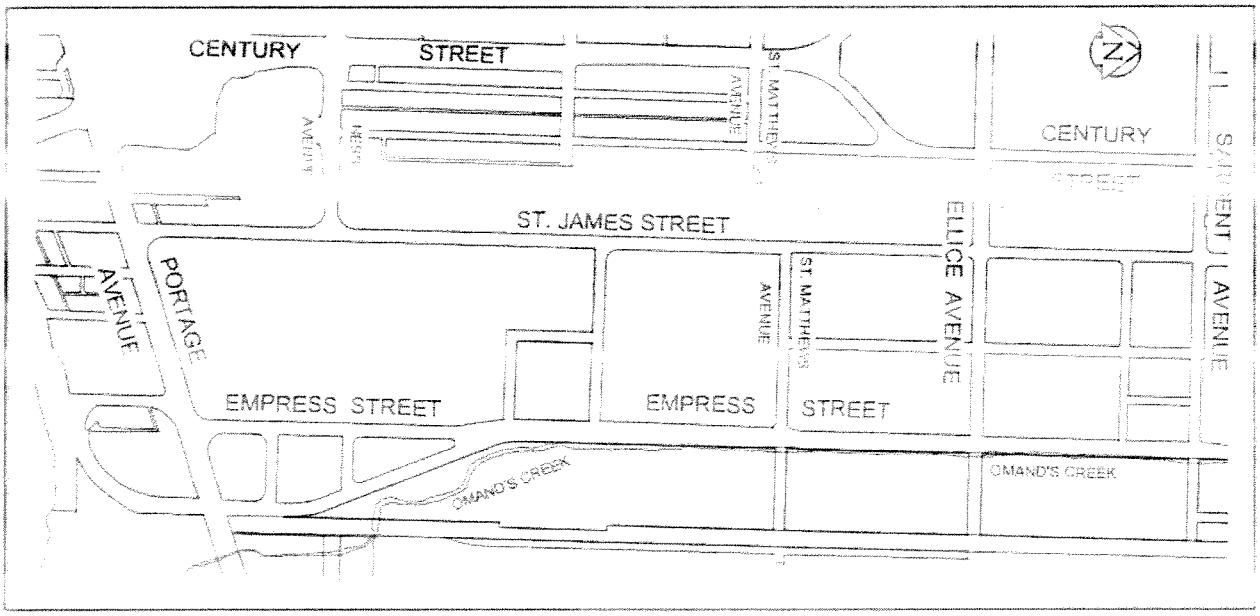
Comments on Proposed Polo Park Infrastructure Improvements
Bike Winnipeg, Nov. 29, 2013

We have reviewed the plans for Polo Park infrastructure improvements and while we are pleased to see that accommodations for cyclists are part of the plan for the rehabilitation and extension of St. Mathews, we are disappointed to see that other important AT routes in the Polo Park area such as Empress and Ellice have been left out of the project. While Empress is outside the defined scope of the project as presented in the open house, it is well within the bounds of the project presented in the 2013 capital budget as shown below.



Empress is a key north/south route in the City's proposed Bicycle Network acting as a parallel alternative to St. James Street, which will be rehabilitated as part of this project, but without any improvements benefitting people choosing to travel on their bicycles. An infrastructure project of this magnitude ($30 million) represents an opportunity to "connect the dots" and make the overall network more useful and complete. It would be a shame if the opportunity to move forward on the City of Winnipeg's commitment to "a transportation system that supports active, accessible and healthy lifestyle options"[1] were lost because of an administrative decision to limit the scope of this important project only to options dictated by the demands of increasing motorized traffic.

We would like to emphasize a few points that we feel are crucial to successfully improving the bikeability and walkability of the Polo Park area and convincing more people to walk or bike to or through the Polo Park area, thereby reducing car congestion.

[1] Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan; City of Winnipeg, pg. 9. 2011

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Improving and Connecting St. Matthews

The project will provide an opportunity to provide for cyclists along St. Matthews, making sure that AT connections are established both to the east, across the CPR tracks, and to the west across Century. Because of the high volume of traffic the bicycle facilities on this route need to be separated from car traffic by building them at a higher level than the main roadway (above grade) but lower than the adjacent sidewalks. We notice that the diagram presented at the open house does not provide for grade separation for the bicycle lane or track. We also notice that the connection to the west is provision, based on acquisition of land between St. James Ave and Century. We would emphasize that even if it is not possible to acquire this land, a completed bike track should be built for the full length of St. Matthews within the project area.

Empress as the North-South Bicycle Route

Given that there will not be a provision for a bike path on St. James, another route is required to provide a bicycle connection to Wolseley and to River Heights to the south. This will also provide an alternate means of connecting to the west on the south side of Portage Ave., allowing cyclists to use the route underneath the route 90 bridge. What is needed is a two way bicycle track on the east side of Empress from Ellice to Portage Ave. The existing walking path is inadequate for shared bicycle and pedestrian traffic in two directions, and the west side of Empress would not be appropriate for a bicycle track because of the many intersections and entrances to Polo Park.

Critical Intersections

All of the intersections along St. Matthews are critical for cyclists. To reduce the risk of crashes bicycle paths or tracks through the intersections should be clearly identified with green pavement. In addition, provisions such as bike signals or bike boxes should be installed to provide cyclists with safe, convenient options to facilitate turns onto or off of the proposed Empress bikeway.

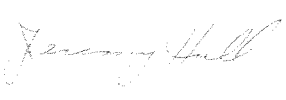
Sidewalks on St. Matthews

The sidewalks on St. Matthews should be extended across the CPR tracks to the east to facilitate pedestrians traveling between the West End and Polo Park.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Provide grade separated bicycle tracks on the rehabilitated sections of St. Matthews.
2. Ensure that St. Matthews is connected to continuations east and west of the project area.
3. Provide a two-way separated north-south bicycle track on the east side of Empress.
4. Provide bicycle signals and "bike boxes" to facilitate cyclists making left turns from all four directions at the St. Matthews – Empress intersection.
5. Use coloured pavement to visually identify bike lanes through intersections.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Hull, Co-Chair
Bike Winnipeg

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