

Bike to the Future

2012 City Committee Annual Report

General

Inclusion of cycling in the city's planning and infrastructure projects is still hit and miss. For instance, Wellington Crescent is on the City's Active Transportation Map, but no improvements were made to it when it was resurfaced this fall (it would have been an excellent candidate for a road diet). Similarly, the Charleswood Transportation Study seemed to substantially ignore the City of Winnipeg's proposed AT network. The Sturgeon Bridge project is an example where AT has been included, as will the Disraeli Overpass. IN the case of the Osborne Bridge, AT was included in the project, but decisions on the budget of the project were made without consideration of the needs of AT, which limited what could be achieved with that project. Inclusion of mandated bicycle parking in new developments seems to be dependent as much on the good will of the developer as on enforcement of the city by-laws. Plans for new sub-divisions often include excellent internal cycling facilities, but fail to connect well outside of the planning area, forcing cyclists onto busy collector streets in mixed traffic. Snow clearing is anybody's guess.

Active Transportation Advisory Committee

The City of Winnipeg wound down the AT advisory committee in May of 2012, and has yet to replace it. All indications are that the city will re-establish the AT Advisory Committee in the new year, but this committee will not follow the previous structure which had representations from various stakeholder groups (Bike to the Future, Manitoba Cycling Association, Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba, ...). Instead, the committee will be made up of individuals, and there will not be any role for organizational representation. We should consider creating an alternative advisory committee to help organize common interests amongst the City's AT and Health community.

Major Projects - Infrastructure

2012 Projects

St. Mathews Bicycle Lanes

We tried but failed to get the city to follow the plans set out for St. Mathews during the infrastructure stimulus project open houses. St. Mathews now sports dangerous bicycle lanes that are below the minimum widths recommended by the Transportation Association of Canada.

Phase II Southwest Rapid Transit

The signs have not been good, as Transit has indicated that there may not be space for any kind of bicycle facility along the rapid transit route south of Jubilee. Between Jubilee and the Georgetown Park apartment buildings on Pembina, two routes are being considered for the rapid transit route.

The Letellier option would parallel CN's Letellier rail line on the west side of Pembina. The "L" routing would follow the rail line west parallel to Parker and then south along the Hydro right of way south east back to the Letellier rail line near the Georgetown Park apartment block. Both options would follow the Letellier rail right of way south of Georgetown Park to Bison Drive.

If the Letellier option is selected, it is unlikely there would be space for both the transitway and a bicycle path. If the "L" option is selected, two options may exist for a bicycle path. A route along the "L" route through the Parker Lands and down the Hydro right of way would likely be possible, however, there would be a few tight spots, and the degree of detour off of Pembina (> 1km or 38%) would greatly reduce the attractiveness of the route and reduce the number of households within a reasonable distance of the bicycle path. A route along the Letellier rail line would be far more direct, and would provide excellent access to the west side of Pembina. While a Letellier rail with trail routing would have to overcome CN policy that prohibits trails within the right of way of an active rail line, there are many examples of rails with trails along similar rail lines.

Once past the junction of the Hydro right of way and Letellier rail line, there should be room for both the transitway and a bicycle path, although transit has said there will not be room for both. I think this is an error in transit's planning (and they admit that they haven't actually had any budget to plan this part of the route yet), as it's possible that they are not considering the possibility of placing the bicycle path in the hydro right of way south of the Georgetown Park apartments. I have asked the city to meet and discuss this many times, but have not been able to secure a meeting on the subject. One critical part of this project will be ensuring that a bicycle path and sidewalk are built into the transitway's Bishop Grandin Overpass.

Currently, there is no budget for phase II of the southwest rapid transit corridor, although the city has committed to completing it by 2016 in the city's transportation master plan. It is likely to take 6-10 years to build, with the longer time line being required for a Letellier routing.

Pembina Highway Buffered Bicycle Lanes

2012 saw the completion of the long promised buffered bicycle lanes along Pembina Highway between Chevrier/Crescent Drive and Plaza Drive. This will help cyclists connect from Plaza to the Riverside route along the east side of Pembina. For those travelling to the U of M, especially from East Fort Garry, this will be a much less stressful route than previous, and should encourage more to cycle. However, as Bike to the Future has always made clear, this should not be considered a replacement to the bicycle path that has been promised as part of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor project. Future extensions of the buffered bicycle lanes will likely be more difficult to develop, as the remaining stretches of Pembina have many more left turn lanes that narrow the median, meaning the buffered bicycle lane would need to be built into the boulevards along the curb (where drains need to be moved), or in existing traffic lanes. The stretch from Plaza to Chancellor will be very difficult to complete.

Pembina Underpass

We submitted recommendations for the Pembina Underpass rehabilitation project that included separated bicycle facilities along both the east and west sides of Pembina as well as an AT pathway included in any future extension of the southwest rapid transit corridor over Pembina Highway, and many members came out to voice their support for this option at the public open houses. The city is still looking into the land acquisition costs for the various options, and will likely report their findings in the New Year.

Osborne Bridge

The Osborne Bridge re-opened, and while we are happy to see the new half signal at the Assiniboine/Granite intersection and the new shy lanes over the bridge, it is disappointing that these shy lanes were not marked as full bicycle lanes and extended all the way to Roslyn (at least in the south bound direction). I believe that the city could have accommodated a bicycle lane to Roslyn by narrowing the through traffic lanes along Osborne to 3.00 or 3.35m. However, we will now have to wait for the Shell Station to be sold to see the shy lane extended to Roslyn, and will likely have to fight to get it done even then. We should see the completion of the Roslyn bicycle lanes between Nassau and Osborne in 2013, but we have to keep an eye on this project to make sure key items are not dropped.

Disraeli Bridge

2013 will see the construction of the Active Transportation Bridge next to the Disraeli Bridge. The piers from the old Disraeli Bridge will be lowered to land level and used as the supports for the new AT bridge, which will be 5m wide.

Upcoming Projects

Sturgeon Creek Bridge

The city is still working on land acquisition, but the result will be a rehabilitated bridge that includes pathways beneath Portage Avenue. Thanks to Ted Mann for all of his hard work representing Bike to the Future on this project.

Plessis Underpass

Kevin Miller has been representing BttF with regards to the Plessis rail underpass.

CPR Yards Functional Crossing Study

This study will look into replacements for the Arlington Bridge, which will reach the end of its life within 10 years. Options being considered are replacement, major rehabilitation, or decommissioning with enhancements to other routes. The study will look at all crossings of the rail yards between McPhillips and Main. As the CPR Yards is one of if not the biggest barriers to bicycle traffic in the city, the recommendations of this report will have significant ramifications for cycling in Winnipeg. The study is scheduled for 2013.

Major Projects – Planning

2012

Red River Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study

Kevin Champagne has been representing Bike to the Future as part of the Red River Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study. The study was looking into the feasibility of a bicycle/pedestrian crossing that would link St. Vital with Fort Garry in the vicinity of the University of Manitoba. We produced a backgrounder that looked at the relative merits of each of options presented. This project is currently in limbo.

Transportation Master Plan

We kept track of the Transportation Master Plan process, providing members with relevant information on open houses and other opportunities for public input, and submitted a set of recommendations for the Transportation Master Plan.

Charleswood Transportation Study

We submitted a series of recommendations to improve cycling facilities in the Charleswood area, and are actively lobbying for their adoption. The consultant's report will go before the Assiniboia Community Committee on December 4th.

Upcoming

Bicycle Master Plan

Terms of reference for the bicycle master plan project should come out in the New Year. Consultation will probably follow in the spring or summer. The bicycle master plan will outline the development of the city's cycling infrastructure and programming for the next 5 years, including the prioritization of projects and programs.

Submitted by Mark Cohoe, November 20, 2012