

Bike Lanes – Consultation Process and Impacts

(S.Mandel)

Recommendation:

That the March 13, 2013, Transportation Services report 2013TS0442, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report provides an update on the implementation of the 2009 Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP) and outlines the public consultation efforts that were undertaken to develop a recommended bicycle network as well as the public consultation currently underway to implement the routes for 2013.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 13, 2013, Transportation Committee meeting, Mayor S. Mandel made the following inquiry:

I have received several complaints from businesses about bike lanes and the consultation process. I would like an update on the consultation process and the impact bike lanes are having on communities as it is becoming something far more reaching than I think Council had once anticipated.

Report Council Vision for Cycling in Edmonton

The Bicycle Transportation Plan was approved by City Council in 2009 and

forms part Council's Active Transportation Policy C544. There are also a number of Goals, Objectives, and Actions in the Transportation Master Plan (*The Way We Move*) in support of cycling and Active Transportation. The vision of the Bicycle Transportation Plan is to get more Edmontonians cycling more often.

The following listing summarizes key City Council documents and decisions that support the implementation of the Bicycle Transportation Plan:

- *The Way Ahead* (2009, 2011): "Shift Edmonton's Transportation Modes"
- *The Way We Move* (2009): "Public transportation and active transportation are the preferred choice . . .", and "The City will create a cycle-friendly city."
- *Corporate Performance Measures* (2009) and *The Way We Move Progress Measures* (2010, 2012): Proportion of total planned kilometres of on-street cycling facilities implemented (10-year Target: 400 km).
- *Active Transportation Policy* (2009): "The City of Edmonton strives to be pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly."
- *The Way We Grow* (2009): "Support opportunities to reallocate existing road space for use by pedestrians, cyclists and transit service."
- *The Way We Live* (2010): "Provide and promote facilities for active transportation modes."
- *The Way We Move Implementation Plan* (2010, 2012): "The City will continue to expand active modes facilities throughout Edmonton [including] expansion of On-Street Bike Routes."

- *The Way We Green* (2011): “. . . include priority to pedestrians and bicycles over automobiles.”
- *Optimization of the Transportation System Network Policy* (2012): “. . . trade-offs will be necessary and sometimes roadway improvements will be made for one mode at the expense of another mode.”

Details of these and other Council-approved strategic plans, goals, objectives, policies, and actions can be found in Attachment 1.

The Bicycle Transportation Plan

The development of the Bicycle Transportation Plan and associated bicycle routes was based on the input of the general public and stakeholder groups following seven workshops and two open houses in 2007. Individuals who were unable to attend were provided with additional opportunities for input via email, phone, fax and mail.

The key finding from this input centered on the lack of on-street bicycle infrastructure in Edmonton and its impact on the ability to bicycle around the city. In response, the Bicycle Transportation Plan established a grid-like network of nearly 500 km of on-street and off-street bicycle facilities to provide access to a broad range of employment, education, entertainment and recreational destinations. Data from the 2005 Household Travel Survey and the 2006 Bicycle Users Survey were also used to confirm the selection of routes. Once completed, the resulting route network will mean that most citizens will be no more than a five minute ride from a “good bike road.”

Implementing the Bicycle Transportation Plan & Consultation

Implementation of the routes defined in the Bicycle Transportation Plan is often challenging, particularly on existing streets in retrofit situations. The bicycle routes are designed by applying best practices in bicycle facility design from guidelines published by the Transportation Association of Canada and the National Association of City Transportation Officials that are used throughout Canada and North America.

Where necessary, the reallocation of road space to accommodate bicycle facilities is typically accommodated in three ways:

- narrowing vehicle travel lanes where possible
- reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes where capacity allows
- removing parking; this option is a last resort and also requires analysis of parking demands and assessment of parking alternatives

The process with which this is done is very sensitive to local conditions, adjacent land uses, parking needs and traffic operations. As such, consultation is crucial to identify local intricacies. With respect to the 2013 locations, the following public consultation process was undertaken:

- January and February 2013: Series of meetings with key stakeholder groups (businesses, schools, churches, recreation facilities, and community leagues) to refine the route designs and mitigate concerns; follow-up is ongoing.

- February 12 and February 20, 2013: Public open houses to seek feedback on the bicycle route designs and identify areas where further refinement is required.
- 45,000 direct mail brochures were sent to residents and businesses within the neighbourhoods that the proposed routes would serve (other means of advertising, including on-street signage and newspaper ads were also used).
- Later this spring, pre-construction meetings are planned to provide information to the public in communities which will be impacted by the 2013 route implementation.

Majority of Edmontonians Are Cycling

A survey completed in late 2012 by Banister Research & Consulting Inc. provided a number of statistically significant insights that verify findings from other surveys completed since 2008 (see Attachment 2):

- 54% of Edmontonians are currently cycling in the summer and fall for a variety of purposes
- 51% of Edmontonians cycle at least once per month in the summer and fall, 35% do so weekly, 20% do so multiple times each week, and 3% cycle daily
- 57% of Edmontonians want to bicycle more than they are currently

These statistics are important for the understanding of bicycle travel behaviour in Edmonton. While the commute to work trip is important, it only represents 25% of trips made in a day. The remaining 75% of daily trips are made for shopping, errands, school,

visiting, recreation and other purposes. The objective of *The Way We Move* is to shift residents' transportation modes for daily trips. Therefore, the ability to get people cycling for non-commute trips is also important to the success of meeting this goal.

Success of the On-Street Bicycle Program

The implementation of the Bicycle Transportation Plan commenced in 2010; since that time, 46 km of on-street bicycle routes have been constructed. These facilities have been monitored to determine if the facilities are operating safely as expected and to determine trends in usage.

- Based on the analysis of 800 hours of video, the on-street bicycle facilities are not causing incidents or hazards for the road users.
- Comments received from residents indicate that the introduction of the bike lanes has resulted in a more orderly operation of the roadway and has seemed to slow traffic.
- 75% and 83% of respondents to the Banister survey reported a level of comfort driving along roads with shared use lanes (i.e. those marked with a sharrow) and reserved bike lanes, respectively.
- 73% and 82% of respondents reported a level of comfort cycling along roads with shared use lanes and reserved bike lanes, respectively.
- When no bicycle facilities are provided, only 12% of people indicated they are comfortable cycling on a road.
- 14% indicated they are cycling more often because of the on-street

bicycle facilities implemented since 2010.

- The number of cyclists using the 76 Avenue route and the 106 Street route has increased by 30% since the installation of the bike lanes.

Finally, work was initiated in 2012 on an education program to educate both motorists and cyclists about their responsibilities as road users. Results from the 2012 Banister survey indicated that the majority of Edmontonians are familiar with the bicycle infrastructure and what it means. The education component of the Bicycle Transportation Plan is crucial and an ongoing priority.

Bicycle Route Design Philosophy

To successfully increase the use of bicycles for transportation, it is important to understand the target market for cycling in Edmonton and which bicycle facilities this group needs in order to feel comfortable cycling (see Attachment 2). At 45%, the largest proportion of Edmontonians are within the “Interested But Concerned” category of cyclists, those that often ride recreationally but do not ride regularly due to safety concerns. This is consistent in municipalities throughout the world. This group, together with the second largest market segment interested in cycling (the “Enthusied & Confident”), have the greatest potential of attracting new regular riders because they:

- have an almost universal interest in cycling more
- live within bikeable distances to their regular destinations
- are currently cycling (68% to 74%)
- are early adopters and will create the perception of “safety in numbers”

Going Forward – Edmonton’s Bicycle Priority Network

The 2009 Bicycle Transportation Plan bicycle network includes a 500 km system of “Connector” and “City-Wide” routes. To target implementation of the key routes with the highest potential of increased ridership, the Bicycle Priority Network has been created (Attachment 3).

The Priority Bicycle Network is made up of spoke and cross-town routes that provide long, continuous bikeways (with on- and off-street segments) across the city and connect numerous neighbourhoods to important destinations. The spoke routes feed to a Central Area (Downtown, University of Alberta and Old Strathcona) which is the highest demand area for cycling and therefore is an important component of the Bicycle Priority Network. Due to constrained rights of way and frequent intersections and driveways, most of the routes in the Central Area are or will be on-street facilities in the form of bicycle boulevards, bike lanes, buffered bike lanes and cycle tracks, although some facilities within the river valley and ravines are off-street shared use paths. The 23 km of routes to be constructed in 2013 are primarily on the Priority Bicycle Network.

In future years, the Priority Bicycle Network will be used to focus future capital funding for expanding bicycle infrastructure in Edmonton, with the top five routes as follows:

- 83 Avenue - bicycle boulevard with existing high cycling demand parallel to Whyte Avenue

- 102 Avenue - cycle track from Downtown to west Edmonton
- 107 Street - bikeway connecting the river valley to MacEwan University
- 100 Avenue - bikeway through Downtown and Edmonton's highest residential density neighbourhood
- 51 Avenue - bikeway providing access to an LRT station and employment areas

Due to the complexity of the design and the type of bicycle infrastructure that is appropriate along these corridors, extensive input from the public and organizational/institutional stakeholders will be necessary. Completing these high profile routes will create a core cycling network in central Edmonton with the highest existing bicycle use.

It is important to note, however, that bike routes through neighbourhoods will still be implemented in conjunction with neighbourhood renewal; coordinating with the renewal program is a very cost-effective approach to implementing family-friendly routes within neighbourhoods with minimal impacts on parking or traffic flow.

Summary

Success in expanding use of the bicycle network in Edmonton is only possible if the network is built based on the principle of providing comfortable bicycle facilities for Edmontonians that connect them to the places they want to go. Attracting more Edmontonians to cycle and to get them cycling more often will take a coordinated and purposeful approach to building facilities, creating awareness and promoting the use of the facilities, and providing cyclist and motorist education on how to safely

operate on roads with bicycle facilities. The holistic and explicit approach to building the bicycle network to create a healthy, livable, vibrant, urban city will be the cornerstone of Edmonton's success in getting more people cycling more often.

Policy

- The Way Ahead
- The Way We Move
- The Way We Grow
- The Way We Green
- The Way We Live
- Active Transportation Policy C544
- Optimization of the Transportation System Network Policy C569
- Public Involvement Policy C513

Corporate Outcomes

- Citizens use public transit and active modes of transportation.
- The transportation system is integrated, safe and gives citizen choice to their mode of movement.

Public Consultation

The Public Involvement process undertaken to implement the Bicycle Transportation Plan is in compliance with the City's Public Involvement Policy C513.

Attachments

1. Council Approved Mandate
2. Edmonton Cycling Statistics
3. Bicycle Priority Network
4. Bicycle Priority Network Analysis and Prioritization