

APPROVED BY:



Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

APPROVAL DATE: May 12, 2023

SUBJECT: Briefing Note - Almon Street AAA Bikeway Extension Options – Impact of Revisiting 2020 Functional Plan

ORIGIN

The April 27, 2023, Transportation Standing Committee (Item 12.1.2):

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Cuttell.

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee defer Item 12.1.2 Extension Options for Almon Street Bikeway and direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a briefing note on the implications of initiating a functional planning process to further develop and evaluate options to extend the approved Almon Street protected bicycle lanes west of Windsor Street to Connaught Street and return to the Transportation Standing Committee with recommended options.

RECOMMENDATION

None required for the briefing note, information only, as recommendation was provided in staff report.

BACKGROUND

HRM conducted a functional planning process in 2019/20 that considered the preferred connection for a safer, "All Ages and Abilities" east-west bikeway between Windsor Street and George Dauphinee Avenue. Routing options that were considered included Almon Street, Liverpool Street, or another parallel local street in the immediate area. In 2020, Council approved the Liverpool Street corridor. Tactical implementation of the Liverpool Street corridor is in progress, as well as a permanent intersection treatment at Dublin Street. A new pedestrian crossing of Windsor Street at Liverpool as well as enhancement of the Windsor Street bike lane are planned for 2024.

DISCUSSION

Revisiting the West End Bikeways functional plan would require staff in the Active Transportation group and the Transportation Planning group (Planning and Development) to delay other projects. The Transportation Planning group is involved as one of the options considered would require conversion of Almon Street (between Windsor Street and George Dauphinee Avenue) to one-way for vehicle traffic. This requires a broader analysis of the impact on vehicle movements to help understand the impact of this change to the overall vehicle network (e.g., how would the diversion of traffic, resulting from the one-way conversion, impact other streets, including parallel local streets? What would be the network-level impact of the change?)

To revisit this planning process in 2023/24, the Active Transportation group would postpone functional planning of safety enhancements to the Windsor Street bike lane and would suspend the “request a rack” bike parking program. There would also likely be a further delay in planning the Mid-Town AAA project. As well, there would be consideration of postponing construction of the new crossing of Windsor Street at Liverpool given the potential change in Council direction. There is already significant pressure on the Active Transportation group due to staffing vacancies (three of six AT Planner positions will be vacant starting May 15 and one AT Planner is working about 20% time due to illness).

Revisiting the functional planning work to include the Almon Street one-way conversion would require a network-level traffic analysis to develop an understanding of how vehicular traffic would be reassigned to the road network in the area, and the operational impacts of such a traffic reassignment. Staff in the Transportation Planning group have the capabilities to complete this work; however, it is estimated that it would take approximately six weeks to complete, during which time ongoing work being completed by assigned staff would be delayed. This would impact areas of work including:

- Ongoing planning & design projects for Portland Street, Bedford Highway, and Main Street,
- Infrastructure planning support for major development projects,
- Ongoing work with the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (Regional Transportation Master Plan, Transportation Demand Model rebuild), and
- Various reports due to the Transportation Standing Committee and Regional Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications related to this briefing note. There would be no impact to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program funding agreement to support bikeways in the Regional Centre.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant risks associated with this briefing note, including risks to infrastructure funding. However, the discussion section outlines some of the delays to project completion that will be impacted should the Transportation Standing Committee decide to revisit the West End Bikeways functional plan.

ENVIROMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The environmental implications were considered and described in the staff report.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments

Report Prepared by: David Maclsaac, Manager Active Transportation, Project Planning & Asset Management
902.240.7852
