
Title:	Bike St. John's Master Plan – Final Report
Date of Meeting:	June 10, 2019
Report To:	His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council
Councillor/Theme:	Dave Lane – Bike St. John's Advisory Committee
Ward:	n/a

Decision/Direction Required:

Decision is required to adopt the attached Bike St John's Master Plan and direct staff to undertake select actions identified.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

In September of 2019 the City staff and a consulting team including Trace, Stantec, and The Planning Partnership began developing the Bike St. John's Master Plan in collaboration with the Bike St. John's Advisory Committee and the general public. More than 1,000 people helped guide this plan by sharing their experiences and feedback through public questionnaire forms, stakeholder meetings, public open houses, classroom visits, and drop-in sessions.

Clear feedback from the public during this engagement include:

- Safety is paramount
- Off-street trails through natural areas are preferred by most
- Riding a bike needs to be comfortable and convenient for more people to do it

A vision for the future of cycling in St John's was then refined by the City of St. John's Bike Advisory committee. This vision states that the City of St. John's is committed to enabling and encouraging more people to ride a bicycle by developing:

A safe, inclusive, and convenient cycling network that is well-connected, attractive and reflective of the City's unique topography and climate. As part of an integrated mobility network, this is supported by policies and programs that promote a cycling friendly culture.

The Bike St. John's Master Plan provides a number of actions that contribute to realization of this vision. These actions can be summarized into four major themes:

- Infrastructure: Building and maintaining cycling infrastructure that is inviting for people of all ages and abilities. This includes identifying a cycling network to be developed over time.
- Programs: Developing a cycling-friendly culture with encouragement, education and enforcement.

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- Policy: Adopting policies and a legal framework that support a vibrant cycling environment.
- Evaluation: Monitor and assess progress of network implementation against the following key targets:
 - Increase the number of people choosing to cycle in the City of St. John's.
 - Create a cycling environment that is welcoming to all, so that the people choosing to cycle are proportionally representative of city demographics (i.e., age groups, genders, and incomes).
 - Implement new sections of planned infrastructure each year (i.e., kms of new facilities constructed).

Also included is an action plan that summarizes the actions identified and includes specific commentary on key considerations such as public engagement and funding. Within the action plan three "Catalyst Projects" are identified as the best cycling infrastructure for early implementation. All actions are categorized into the four groups identified below:

- **Primary Actions:** these actions can be undertaken in the short term using current resources. Additional funding is required before construction of the Catalyst Projects and other cycling facilities can proceed.
- **Secondary Actions:** these actions reflect a long list of work that can be completed to support cycling in St. John's. Unlike for Primary Actions, additional resources and/or commitment is required to deliver on these tasks. Most require funding from the operating budget to occur and/or significant dedication of staff time.
- **Ongoing Actions:** these actions represent practices to be adopted at the staff level to ensure cycling is supported in accordance with this plan.
- **External Actions:** these actions are recommendations for external organizations to consider that would support cycling in the City of St. John's. The City will need to advocate for these actions and work with the relevant organizations.

The cycling network developed with this plan represents a set of comfortable, connected, convenient, and attractive bicycle routes that serve the vision. Within this network a subset of key routes is identified as part of a "Backbone Network". This backbone network includes the routes that are of highest value to the City and is shown in Figure 3 of the Bike St. John's Master Plan, attached. The three catalyst projects are part of this backbone network and are described below:

1. **Kelly's Brook Trail:** A trail from Kings Bridge Road to Columbus Drive, that is largely in place as a granular trail today, will be upgraded to an asphalt shared-use path. This shared-use path will link several neighbourhoods through an important east-west greenway that largely parallels Empire Avenue.

2. **Rennie's River Trail:** This project upgrades the existing walking trail to an asphalt shared-use path connecting the proposed Kelly's Brook shared-use path (Catalyst Project #1) at Portugal Cove Road to Prince Philip Drive. The existing trail sits within a beautiful greenway adjacent to Rennie's River.
3. **Virginia River Trail:** This project connects several neighbourhoods and important destinations along an existing greenway that extends from Quidi Vidi Lake to Penny Crescent. The existing walking trail will be upgraded to an asphalt shared-use path.

This plan specifies asphalt shared-use paths in many locations, such as the catalyst projects above. Asphalt paths, as opposed to a granular surface, are important to ensure that the path serves as many people as possible. An asphalt path serves not just cyclists but:

- People walking enjoy a cleaner surface with fewer puddles.
- The smooth surface is a great improvement for people using strollers, scooters, skateboards, etc.
- People who rely on mobility assistive devices can take advantage of asphalt shared-use paths.
- A more inviting and useful path attracts more users which leads to greater personal security.

The plan envisions a cycling-friendly culture in which St. John's is a welcoming place to ride a bike. The plan also recognizes that City investments in cycling will need support from both public and private efforts in order to achieve this culture shift.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications

Council has allocated \$150,000 from the 2019 Capital Budget to begin work on this master plan. These funds are anticipated to cover final design of the three catalyst projects outlined in the plan. Preliminary construction cost estimates for the catalyst projects are:

- Kelly's Brook Trail: \$2.0M for 4.8km
- Rennie's River Trail: \$1.2M for 2.0km
- Virginia River Trail: \$2.0M for 5.0km

Additional funding will be required for construction of other cycling facilities. Some secondary actions and ongoing actions identified in the plan also require additional funding if they are to be undertaken.

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders

The Grand Concourse Authority was consulted in the early stages of this project and was given the opportunity to comment on draft versions of the report.

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans

This initiative falls under the City's Strategic Direction of "A City That Moves" and delivers on Goal M3.1 "Complete the Bike St. John's Master Plan to support cycling in the city, review and prioritize recommendations".

Tasks identified in the plan will be incorporated into future City Strategic Action Plans supporting the City's Goal M3 "Expand and maintain a safe and accessible active transportation network".

4. Legal or Policy Implications

An amendment to the Park By-Law is identified as a primary action to allow bicycles on designated shared-use paths.

The master plan identifies a number of secondary actions that require City policies and By-Laws to be reviewed and updated to support the vision.

5. Privacy Implications

n/a

6. Engagement and Communications Considerations

It is important that affected residents and stakeholders are aware and engaged prior to the construction of new bicycle routes. The master plan commits to ongoing neighbourhood engagement as routes are implemented to provide people the opportunity for input.

7. Human Resource Implications

Primary actions identified in the plan can be undertaken with available staff resources.

Some secondary actions and ongoing actions identified in the plan require additional and/or significant dedication of staff time.

8. Procurement Implications

Project work will be tendered as the City moves forward with individual actions.

9. Information Technology Implications

Incorporating the content of bikestjohns.ca into the primary City website is under consideration.

10. Other Implications

n/a

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Council adopt the Bike St. John's Master Plan and direct staff to undertake primary actions and ongoing actions. All infrastructure projects identified as a primary action referred to capital budget for consideration. Other actions are to be undertaken as direction is received and resources are allocated.

Prepared by:

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Signature: _____

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Signature: _____

Approved by:

Garrett Donaher, Manager - Transportation Engineering

Signature: _____

Attachments:

[Bike St. John's Master Plan, 2019](#)

[Preliminary Alignment – Kelly's Brook Trail](#)

[Preliminary Alignment – Rennie's River Trail](#)

[Preliminary Alignment – Virginia River Trail](#)