

ST. BONIFACE TO DOWNTOWN WALK BIKE PROJECT

Phase 1 – Public Engagement Summary

December 2020

Background

The City of Winnipeg (the City) strives to build pedestrian and cycling infrastructure for people of all ages and abilities. This study will identify options to improve travel choices, accessibility and connectivity between the Esplanade Riel Footbridge / Provencher Bridge and the multi-use path on Archibald Street south of Nairn Avenue.

Engagement

In Phase 1, we wanted to know how Winnipeggers travel through the project area and what could be done to improve travel choices, safety, accessibility, and connectivity. This input will be used along with technical information to develop options that will be presented for further public feedback during Phase 2.

Public engagement goals for this project are to:

- Work with residents and stakeholders (businesses, schools, and organizations in the area) to ensure concerns with and aspirations for pedestrian and cycling improvements are reflected in the design
- Allow for a variety of engagement opportunities to ensure the process is open and transparent and captures the broadest range of feedback
- Provide all public engagement and communications materials in French and English
- Provide clear links between public and stakeholder feedback and decisions made

Promotion

Phase 1 public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- Postcards mailed to 2,944 area homes and businesses – September 1, 2020
- Posters shared with area businesses – September 1, 2020
- Advertisement on Facebook and Instagram - September 1, 2020 – September 22, 2020 with 296 link clicks
- Facebook posts with 26,000 followers - August 27 and 31, September 8, 15, 16, 21 and 23, 2020

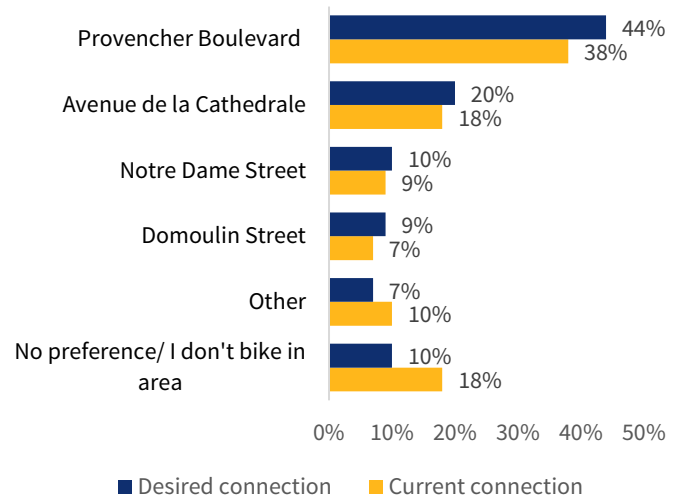
- Twitter posts to 79,500 followers from August 27 through September 23, 2020
- Earned media placement on Radio Canada, CTV, and Virgin Radio during the engagement period
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter sent September 3 and September 18, 2020

Key Findings or What We Heard

The top three priorities for an east-west walking/cycling connection through St. Boniface are:

1. Connectivity to other routes
2. Accessibility for all users
3. Connectivity to amenities

Figure 1: East/west cycling connections by current use and desired location



The project outlined four east-west routing options for deeper consideration: Provencher Boulevards, de la Cathedrale Avenue; Notre Dame Street; and Dumoulin Street. What we heard about each is outlined in the following section.

Provencher Boulevard

- 38 percent of respondents indicated that Provencher Boulevard is where they spend most of their time when

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cycling east/west through the study area. Reasons given for this are: the street has many amenities, it is faster/more direct and the street connects to other important areas such as the Esplanade Riel, The Forks, and Downtown.

- 44 percent of respondents indicated that Provencher Boulevard is where they would most like to see a formal cycling route. Respondents indicated this is because: the street already has the most amenities, it is the most direct route, and a formal route should not force cyclists to detour (as the other alignment options may).
 - Due to projected scope of this option and current budget constraints, the following disclaimer was included alongside the Provencher option: *One obvious option for alignment is Provencher Boulevard; however, the street's limited right-of-way, current traffic volumes, and high on-street parking utilization would require major reconstruction work to add the bike lane. While funding is identified for building pedestrian and cycling infrastructure through the area, the project would not be able to immediately proceed to construction if the study explored and subsequently selected Provencher Boulevard as the preferred alignment.*
- Online respondents who described their connection to the project area as a patron of an area business (75 percent) or visitor to the study area (51 percent) more often chose the Provencher Boulevard alignment option as their desired future connection. The groups who least supported Provencher Boulevard as a connection were those who travel through the study area (30 percent), and those who live in the area (40 percent).
- In discussions with stakeholders the most preferred cycling route is Provencher Boulevard so long as designated bike lanes and required connections were also put into place. Support for Provencher Boulevard was provided because of the street's direct route

between the Downtown and Transcona with many destinations along the way.

- The Provencher Biz has indicated their membership would like to add bike lanes without removing on-street parking.

de la Cathedrale Avenue

- 18 percent of respondents indicated that de la Cathedrale Avenue is where they spend most of their time when cycling east/west through the study area. Reasons given for this were: that there are fewer vehicles than on other potential routes, that Provencher Boulevard is too dangerous, and that they use it to connect to the pedestrian crossing at Tache Avenue and the Esplanade Riel.
- 20 percent of respondents indicated that de la Cathedrale is where they would most like to see a formal cycling route. Respondents indicated this is because of lower vehicle volumes, the street's scenic nature, and that connections exist to the pedestrian crossing at Tache Avenue and other paths.

Notre Dame Street

- Nine percent of respondents indicated that Notre Dame is where they spend most of their time when cycling east/west through the study area. Reasons given for this were: that there are fewer vehicles than on other potential routes, that respondents feel it is safer than Provencher Boulevard, and because it connects to Lagimodière-Gaboury Park.
- 10 percent of respondents indicated that Notre Dame Street is where they would most like to see a formal cycling route. Respondents indicated this is because of lower vehicle volumes. There was also suggestion that the next best choice would be Avenue de la Cathedrale.

Dumoulin Street

- Seven percent of respondents indicated that Dumoulin Street is where they spend most of their time when

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cycling east/west through the study area. Reasons given for this are: that it is safer than Provencher Boulevard and also the fastest route after Provencher Boulevard.

- Nine percent of respondents indicated that Dumoulin Street is where they would most like to see a formal cycling route. When asked why the top three reasons were the street makes the fastest connection after Provencher Boulevard, less vehicles and that Provencher Boulevard is too busy for bikes.

Other alignments

- 10 percent of respondents said they cycle east/west through the study area using other streets and connections. The top five locations identified were Whittier Park/ Lagimodière-Gaboury Park (six comments), Tache Avenue (five comments), Masson Street (four comments), Aubert Street (four comments), and St. Jean Baptiste Street (four comments).
- Seven percent of respondents used the “other” options to provide a variety of comments that included suggestions to educate all road users on sharing the road (two comments), improve connections to existing pathways (two comments) and that the project investment should consider the high number of cars over seasonal cycling (two comments).

Safety

Walking tour and mapping tool participants identified four primary areas with existing safety issues:

- Intersection of Provencher Boulevard and Tache Avenue
 - Difficulty for cyclists to cross at lights and a poor connection to Esplanade Riel
- Intersection of La Verendrye Street and Archibald Street
 - Some identified a preference to bike on Mission Street over Archibald Street due to the street’s high vehicle volumes, heavy vehicles and narrow widths
- Lagimodière -Gaboury Park
 - Inconsistent path lighting and maintenance issues such as delayed snow removal and blind spots due to foliage
- Provencher Boulevard
 - Cyclists feel unsafe using the road due to heavy truck traffic but also encounter conflicts when biking along the sidewalk

¹ The number of unique webpage visits by individuals to between August 28 and November 13, 2020

Date	Activity	Details
May 12-13, 2020	Check-in calls with key stakeholders	Nine one-on-one discussions about COVID-19 impacts to organization and best options to engage.
August 27 – October 31, 2020	Key stakeholder discussions	14 one-on-one discussion about project details
August 28, 2020	Webpage launch	1,600 visits ¹
August 28 – September 23, 2020	Online survey	405 respondents (390 English and 15 French)
August 28- September 23, 2020	Online mapping tool	96 pins by 28 contributors
September 15, 2020	“Tour it Tuesday” walking tour event	9 participants
September 22, 2020	“Tour it Tuesday” walking tour event	13 participants

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What We Heard	How It Was Considered*
The most preferred cycling route for travelling through and within the study area is Provencher because it has the most amenities, it is the most direct route and a formal route should not force cyclists to detour as the other alignment options may do.	The project team reconsidered its approach to Provencher Boulevard, and are now presenting it as an option for the cycling route based on public feedback and the extra wide width of the right of way, which would allow the bike lane to be added without sacrificing a full parking lane.
The top three priorities for an east-west walking/cycling connection through St. Boniface were connectivity to other routes, accessibility for all users, and connectivity to amenities.	The proposed options address these priorities. A protected bike lane on Provencher is being considered as it would provide connectivity to other routes and amenities, and would also be separated from motor vehicle traffic by a concrete curb and parking lane, and include enhanced signal phasing to promote use for all ages and abilities.
The Provencher Biz has indicated their membership like the existing streetscape but wouldn't want bike lanes to replace on-street parking.	Provencher has been reconsidered as an option for the cycling route based on public feedback and the extra wide width of the right of way allowing the bike lane to be added without sacrificing a parking lane.
Provencher is extremely busy, with heavy truck traffic, particularly on weekdays. The truck traffic can be intimidating for people who cycle.	The bike lane on Provencher would be separated from motor vehicle traffic by a concrete curb and parking lane, and would include enhanced signal phasing.
The second most preferred cycling route through and within the study area is Avenue de la Cathedrale, because there are fewer vehicles, the street is scenic and it connects to the pedestrian crossing at Tache Avenue and other paths.	This option is being considered in tandem with a route north of Provencher to provide connectivity on both sides.
The third most preferred cycling route through and within the study area is Notre Dame Street because of the connection to Lagimodière-Gaboury Park and there are fewer vehicles.	This option is being considered in tandem with de la Cathedrale Avenue south of Provencher to provide connectivity on both sides.
The fourth most preferred cycling route through and within the study area is Dumoulin Street, because it makes the fastest connection after Provencher Boulevard, there are fewer vehicles, and because Provencher Boulevard is too busy for bikes.	This option is being considered in tandem with de la Cathedrale south of Provencher to provide connectivity on both sides.
Some sidewalks are disconnected from one another, making travel difficult for people who walk in these locations, especially in the winter.	Sidewalks could be added in some locations throughout the project area. The final phase of design will consider these connections.

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Next Steps

The first phase of public engagement helped the project team understand how Winnipeggers travel through the project area and what could be done to improve travel choices, safety, accessibility, and connectivity.

What we heard in Phase 1 public engagement, along with technical information and analysis, was used to develop several route options to be presented for further public feedback in Phase 2 public engagement.

Appendices

Appendix A – Analysis

Appendix B – Mapbook

Appendix C – Walking tour event notes

Appendix D – Stakeholder discussion with the Provencher Biz

Appendix E – Summary of stakeholder discussions

Appendix F – Online survey results (English)

Appendix G – Online survey results (French)