

Backgrounder

Bike St. John's Master Plan

In September 2019 City staff and a consulting team began developing the Bike St. John's Master Plan in collaboration with the Bike St. John's Advisory Committee and the general public. The proposed plan, including details, supporting documents and maps can be found at engagestjohns.ca.

Public Engagement

More than 1,000 people helped guide the plan by sharing experiences and feedback through public questionnaire forms, stakeholder meetings, public open houses, classroom visits, and drop-in sessions. Common themes and messages from the public 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

Vision

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.*

Actions to Support the Plan

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.

Policy - Adopting policies and a legal framework that support a vibrant cycling environment.

Evaluation - Monitor and assess progress of network implementation against key targets:

- Increase the number of people choosing to cycle in the community.
- 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).

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The Cycling Network presented in the plan represents a set of comfortable, connected, convenient, and attractive 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 routes that are priority to the City and is shown in Figure 13 of the Bike St. John's Master Plan, attached. Three catalyst projects recommended for early implementation are:

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.

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.

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.

Active Transportation: Inclusive and Welcoming

The bike 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 all modes of transportation:

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

Budget

Council has allocated \$150,000 from the 2019 Capital Budget to begin work. These funds are anticipated to cover final design of the three catalyst projects.

Additional funding will be required and projects will be completed over many years.