South Park Street Bike Lane Extension & Improvements FAQ

What is the policy direction behind the project?

Halifax's Active Transportation Priorities Plan (Making Connections), adopted by Regional Council in September 2014, identifies South Park Street as a candidate bicycle route that should be considered for protected bicycle lanes.

Extending and improving the South Park Street bike lanes supports implementation of the AT Plan in the following ways:

- Building a bicycle network in the Regional Centre was identified by the public and stakeholders as their highest priority during community engagement for the Plan (South Park Street is an important north-south bicycle route in the AT Plan's network of candidate bicycle routes).
- The plan recommends developing bicycle infrastructure that is accessible for people of all ages and bicycling abilities (AAA) in order to attract new residents to cycling (this project aims to improve the comfort and safety for cyclists by increasing the level of separation from vehicle traffic and improving continuity of the bicycle lanes at intersections).

The Municipality's revised Regional Plan, adopted by Regional Council in June 2014, includes the objective to "design complete streets for all ages, abilities, and modes of travel."

What is an All Ages and Abilities ("AAA") Bicycle Facility?

All Ages and Abilities ("AAA") facilities are considered critical to increasing the number of people who choose to ride a bicycle because most people feel uncomfortable riding in mixed traffic and may only choose to ride if there's a network of low stress facilities available, including, but not limited to, local street bikeways, protected bicycle lanes and off-street Greenways. The objectives of this project include improving the comfort and safety for cyclists based on best practice bikeway design guidance.

This video illustrates the range of existing bicycling facilities in Ottawa, Canada:

What is a protected bicycle lane?

A protected bicycle lane is an exclusive bicycle facility that is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic, and distinct from the sidewalk. Methods of separation may include curbs, bollards, planters, rows of parked vehicles, or any other type of physical barrier.

What options are being considered for the South Park Bike Lanes?

Feedback gathered at the Public Open House held in April 2016 has informed the development of three options for South Park Street. Options being considered include:

Option One: Enhanced Painted Bike Lanes

- Install a painted buffer between parked vehicles and the bike lanes to help prevent "dooring"
- Continue the bike lanes south to Inglis Street from where they currently end at University/Morris.
- Extend the bike lanes up to the intersections and introduce a new type of intersection crossing pavement marking
- Change or remove some of the turning lanes for motor vehicles at the intersections
- Use a more durable type of paint for all pavement markings

Option Two: Protected Bike Lanes

- Add a barrier between the bike lanes and the vehicle lanes by:
  - On one side, move the bike lane to the curb side of the parking lane to provide cyclists a greater level of protection from motor vehicles; and,
  - On the other side, remove on-street parking and add some type of physical separation (e.g., bollards, curb, planter boxes, etc.) between the bike lane and the vehicle lane
- Continue the protected bike lanes south to Inglis Street
- Extend the bike lanes up to the intersections and introduce a new type of intersection crossing pavement marking
- Modify bus stops to prevent buses from having to stop in the bike lanes
- Change or remove some of the turning lanes for motor vehicles at the intersections
- Use a more durable type of paint for all pavement markings

Option Three: Protected Bike Lanes with Off-Street Variation

- Move the south-bound bike lane off street to the space between the curb and sidewalk from Sackville Street to Spring Garden Road and/or from Spring Garden Road to University Avenue
- Other potential changes are the same as the Protected Bike Lane (option two above)

What are the potential changes to the street?

Potential changes to other street uses resulting from the bike lane extension and improvements include:

Option One: Enhanced Painted Bike Lanes

- South Street to Inglis Street: removal of 30 on-street parking spaces from one side of the street
- Sackville to Morris/University Avenue: removal of 7 on-street parking spaces
- Morris Street/University Avenue to South Street: removal of 3 on-street parking spaces
- Relocation of 1 taxi stand (5 spaces)

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Option Two: Protected Bike Lanes

- Sackville Street to University Avenue: removal of 37 on-street parking spaces
- University Avenue to South Street: no net change in number of on-street parking spaces
- South Street to Inglis Street: removal of 28 on-street parking spaces from one side of the street
- Relocation of 4 taxi stands (14 spaces)
- Relocation/reconfiguration of 4 accessible parking spaces

Option Three: Protected Bike Lanes with Off-Street Variation

- Sackville Street to Spring Garden Road: removal of 3 on-street parking spaces
- Spring Garden Road to University Avenue: removal of 5 on-street parking spaces
- University Avenue to South Street: no net change in number of on-street parking spaces
- South Street to Inglis Street: removal of 28 on-street parking spaces from one side of the street
- Relocation of 2 taxi stands (6 spaces)
- Relocation/reconfiguration of 4 accessible parking spaces

Other potential changes **common to all options** include:

- Removal of turn lanes at the Spring Garden Road and Morris/University Avenue intersections
- Some changes to on-street parking regulations on side streets in the blocks south of South Street would be considered to facilitate improved availability of parking for residents, visitors and customers

For the protected bike lane options, what types of physical barriers are being considered to separate the bike lanes from the parking lanes and/or vehicle lanes?

A variety of possible physical barriers would be considered during the detailed design phase of the project. Two of the options being considered would use parked vehicles as the barrier on one side of the street.

Factors that would be considered when selecting the physical barrier include:

- Level of safety & comfort provided to cyclists
- Effectiveness in reducing vehicle encroachment of the bike lanes
- Durability and ease of maintenance
- Visual appeal

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Is consideration being given to reducing or eliminating the need for buses and cyclists to interact at bus stops?

Yes. Several bike lane/bus stop configurations that are new to Nova Scotia are being explored that could eliminate the need for buses and bikes to mix in the space next to the curb. These concepts will be presented at the public meeting on January 31st and will be available online at Shape Your City (add link) beginning February 1st. Staff are conducting further research on the effectiveness of these types of facilities in other cities and legislative amendments that may be required to enable their use in Halifax.

One of the options includes an off-street bike path through Victoria Park. How feasible is this option?

Before detailed design of this option could proceed, further engagement with the Municipality's Parks and Recreation staff would be required to ensure that an off-street bicycle facility would be compatible with the various elements and functions of Victoria Park and the plaza at the north end of the park.

Is the off-street bicycle path also being considered for the block between Sackville Street and Spring Garden Road?

Yes, an off-street south-bound bike path is being considered for this block. Before detailed design of this option could proceed, careful consideration would have to be given to potential impacts to the pedestrian environment and street trees. Further engagement with the Municipality's Parks and Recreation staff would also be required.

How will you evaluate the different options?

To evaluate which option would best achieve the project's objectives, the following criteria will be considered:

- cycling safety
- comfort and convenience;
- intersection safety and comfort;
- bus stop safety and comfort;
- connections to the broader cycling network;
- continuity and consistency of the bike facility to Inglis Street;
- impact to pedestrians; impact to transit; impact to motor vehicles;
- public and stakeholder feedback;
- impact to commercial or residential parking;
- impact to accessible parking;
- impact to taxi stands;
- impact to loading;
- impact to green space and the urban forest;
- maintenance considerations;

- capital cost

What is the current project timeline?

This project is in the functional design stage. The extension and improvements will have to be approved by Regional Council. Staff's goal is to proceed with detailed design and a recommendation to Council in 2017 to implement the preferred option in 2018 (pending budget approval and co-ordination with street repaving and adjacent projects under construction).

How can I provide feedback?

A Public Engagement Session is scheduled for January 31, 2017 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Halifax Central Library and a survey will go live on Shape Your City the following day.

If you have questions or comments on this project, please contact Mark Nener at nenerm@halifax.ca