

Bikeway Connector Project – FAQs

This is called the "Bikeway Connector Project" but there seems to be a wide area included within the scope. What streets are we talking about?

The specific focus areas are:

Macdonald Bridge Connections

- Enhancements at the Wyse Road / Nantucket intersections
- Access directly from bikeway to Lyle and Dickson Streets
- Flyover to ultimately connect to bicycle lanes on North Street
- Option a: Flyover Ramp to Lorne Terrace and Bikeway to Gottingen
- Option b: Flyover Ramp to North Street and Bikeway to Gottingen

Bikeways

- A bicycle facility on Wyse Road between Nantucket Avenue and Thistle Street to connect to paths on Dartmouth Common
- A bicycle facility on Wyse Road between Faulkner Street and Albro Lake Road including consideration of a bicycle crossing of Wyse Road at Faulkner Street
- A two-way local street bikeway on Faulkner Street, Lyle Street and Shore Drive
- A bicycle facility on North Street from the end of the flyover to Agricola Street

What is the policy direction behind the project?

Recommendation #19 of the Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan 2014 – 2019 that “The Municipality should continue to explore solutions to improving connections of the Macdonald Bridge Bikeway on both sides of the bridge, and aim to implement a solution on the Halifax side concurrent with the end of the re-decking project.”

On September 9, 2014, Regional Council approved Making Connections: 2014-19 Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan. The options proposed in this report support the implementation of this plan in the following ways:

- Improving access to the Macdonald Bridge Bikeway was identified by the public and stakeholders as their second highest priority project during community engagement for the Plan. (Developing a bicycle network in the Regional Centre was their top priority.)
- The plan identifies the proposed bicycle routes that would connect to the Macdonald Bridge on the Dartmouth and Halifax sides
- The plan recommends the development of bicycle infrastructure that is accessible for people of all ages and bicycling abilities (AAA). Currently neither side of the bridge can be considered AAA

Bikeway Connector Project – FAQs

The project will also complete a key link in both the national Trans Canada Trail network and in the provincial Blue Route bicycling network.

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

All Ages and Abilities (AAA) facilities are designed to making cycling safe, comfortable and fun for riders of a variety of ages and comfort levels, including families with small children, seniors and new cyclists. They are considered critical to increasing the number of people who chose to ride a bicycle because most people feel uncomfortable riding in mixed traffic and may only choose to ride if there is a network of low stress facilities available.

Hasn't the topic of fixing the bikeway structure on the Halifax side been studied numerous times before? Why is it being studied again?

Yes. Since installation of the bikeway and recognition that the access presented challenges, there have been three studies to consider how to improve access. These studies all focused on the Halifax side of the bridge and none fully considered connections from the bridge bikeway to the proposed on-road bicycle route network and adjacent neighbourhoods or business districts.

The issue of improving access to the Macdonald Bridge Bikeway was considered at the September 22, 2015 Halifax Regional Council Meeting. The meeting included specific direction to develop a “flyover ramp” option that would also incorporate enhancements to the intersection of Gottingen and North Streets to facilitate access to the street network and origins and destinations in the north, west, and south. The report also included direction to consider improved connectivity on the Dartmouth side of the bridge.

There is already a way to access the bridge via bicycle on the Halifax side. Why not maintain it?

The current access will be maintained to provide access to the Barrington Street Greenway and HMC Dockyard. However, this access is not convenient or easy to navigate. Steep grades coupled with the need to share a busy road makes the existing connection suitable only for experienced, confident bicyclists. Currently, the bikeway is also connected to downtown Halifax via the Barrington Active Transportation (AT) Greenway. It is envisioned that future enhancements would retain and improve this existing route.

What are the opportunities for improvement to the existing access point on the Halifax side?

Improvements could include designating the existing sidewalk leading to the bikeway as a multi-use facility and providing more space for Halifax Transit passengers at the bus stop under the bridge. There could also be improved wayfinding signage at this location.

The existing route provides access to HMC Dockyard, and the Barrington AT Greenway trail connection to downtown Halifax. The Barrington Greenway is a designated Trans Canada Trail route and is very likely to be a candidate for the provincial Blue Route bicycling network.

Bikeway Connector Project – FAQs

Is an at-grade solution on the Halifax side an option?

No. The options being studied for this project aim to minimize conflicts and develop a bikeway connection that is as convenient and safe as possible for all users.

An at-grade option would likely involve opening up the fence that currently separates the bikeway and the right-turn slip lane off of the Macdonald Bridge and installing some type of a crossing treatment. There are a number of challenges with this option, including: sightlines and distances; the fact that this area is already very complex and busy with right-turning vehicles; a bus stop; and, an entrance to the CFB Stadacona.

On the Halifax side, where are we trying to connect cyclists to?

The goal is to develop a solution that facilitates connections in all directions. Enhancements are required to the intersection of Gottingen and North Streets (with proposed bike lanes on North Street) to facilitate access to the north, west, and south ends of Halifax. The Barrington Greenway and Brunswick Street are also important connections.

This is the first time the Dartmouth side of the bridgehead is being studied. Have certain parameters been set for this area?

While there have been a number of studies to consider how to improve access to the Macdonald Bridge bikeway on the Halifax side, there has been little attention to the Dartmouth side. In Dartmouth, the bikeway currently begins/ ends on a sidewalk at the busy intersection of Wyse Rd., Nantucket Ave. and the Macdonald Bridge toll plaza without any facilities or guidance for accessing the road network or key destinations. The primary objective of any solution should be to make it easier for people on bicycles (of all ages and abilities) to navigate through or around this busy intersection to access all parts of Dartmouth: north, south and east.

As per direction from Regional Council, two options are to be developed:

- An access directly from the bikeway to Lyle and Dickson Streets which would connect with proposed bicycle routes into downtown Dartmouth and north end Dartmouth
- Enhancements at the Wyse Road and the Nantucket intersection to facilitate improved access from the bridge bikeway to the street network and to a planned bicycle route through the Dartmouth Common to communities east of the bridge

How does this project relate to the Sportsplex and Dartmouth Common?

The 2014 Active Transportation Plan envisions a bike route ultimately connecting the Bridge Bikeway to Shubie Park making use of a mix of greenway trails and local streets. The first steps in achieving this connection would require some assessment of the Wyse/ Nantucket intersection.

Then, a new greenway trail along the Sportsplex property from Nantucket Avenue to Thistle Street would connect to existing greenway trails in the Dartmouth Common. These greenway trails connect to the proposed local street network east of Victoria Road (e.g. Dahlia Street)

Bikeway Connector Project – FAQs

which is in turn connected to existing Greenway Trails around Sullivan's Pond and Lake Banook heading to Shubie Park.

How will you evaluate the different options available?

Criteria include: Cycling Safety, Comfort and Convenience; Timing and Construction; Bridge Interaction; Land Ownership / Property Acquisition / Private Property Impacts; Capital Cost; Lifecycle Cost; Public and Stakeholder perspectives; Impact to Pedestrians; Impact to Transit; Impact to Motor Vehicles; Impact to Bikes; Intersection Safety/Comfort; Environmental Impact; Impact on On-Street Parking.

How do pedestrians benefit from this project?

Potential gains for pedestrians could include but are not limited to improved crossings of roadways, additional pedestrian space in the form of new greenways (shared with cyclists), slower vehicle speeds adjacent to pedestrian space and reduction of cyclists on sidewalks. This project includes a requirement to consider the impact on changes to all road users (multi-modal analysis).

How do transit riders benefit from this project?

The Macdonald Bridge is a critical corridor for Halifax Transit. As this project is being planned, a key goal is to understand and implement improvements for Halifax Transit users at the same time. For example, opportunities to enhance bus stops and the pedestrian network connected to those stops are being explored. This project includes a requirement to consider the impact on changes to all road users (multi-modal analysis).

How do motor vehicle drivers benefit from this project?

Potential gains for motor vehicle drivers include, but are not limited to safety (reduction in weaving and lower speeds), improved sight lines at intersections specific to pedestrian/cyclist crossings, and in some locations, a separated space for cyclists to travel. Additionally, the options being considered should not have an impact on vehicle travel times. This project includes a requirement to consider the impact on changes to all road users (multi-modal analysis).

Are designated bike signals an option?

In the majority of cases, specialized signal displays to bicycles are not required. However, situations do occur in which specific information must be provided to cyclists to coordinate movements which are separate from those of the regular vehicular and pedestrian traffic streams. There may be a need for bicycle signals as part of this project.

To communicate bicycle-specific information to cyclists at signalized intersections, a form of traditional red-amber-green traffic signal may be used with appropriate signing. This is achieved by using a traffic signal head with a bicycle silhouette and/or a sign with the words "Bicycle Signal". This tool is not currently an option Nova Scotia, however there is an initiative underway to ask the Province to enable such signals.

What is a protected bicycle lane?

A protected bicycle lane is an exclusive bicycle facility that is physically separated from

Bikeway Connector Project – FAQs

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 is a local street bikeway?

Local street bikeways provide designated routes for cyclists that are optimized for convenience, comfort, and connectivity for the broadest range of cycling abilities and ages. Motor vehicles and bicycles share the right-of-way on local street bikeways. The lower motor vehicle speeds and volumes on local streets facilitate the safe sharing of the road and, depending on the characteristics of the route, traffic control features may be added to facilitate increased safety and convenience (e.g. traffic calming features such as speed humps, curb extensions or refuge medians).

What is an Active Transportation Greenway?

Greenways are three to four metre wide paved or crusher dust trails that form part of a network intended for walking, cycling, and other active modes. To serve a broad range of users, greenways should be at least three metres wide and surfaced with asphalt (if winter maintenance is desired) or crusher dust (where no winter maintenance is required). Where not prohibitively costly to build due to existing terrain, they should also be wheelchair accessible (maximum grade of 5% or up to 8% if appropriately designed rest areas are provided).

Why was the bikeway access not improved when the bridge was being re-decked?

In 2013-14, as part of discussions related to the Macdonald Bridge re-decking project and direction from the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Livable Community, staff began to consider how to improve access on the Halifax side, with a view to potentially implementing a solution that could align with the re-opening of the bridge bikeway in late 2016. However, the timeline proposed in this report does not tie the implementation of improvements to bikeway access to the re-decking project. This is because additional planning work would be needed before a recommendation could be developed for Regional Council that pushed this project beyond the timeframe for the re-decking project.

It was also determined that there are no project integration efficiencies to be realized by coordinating bikeway access improvements with the re-decking project. In fact, the location of re-decking project work sites and shuttle locations may have delayed bikeway access improvements until the re-decking project is complete.

Will the bikeway be closed again during construction?

There is the potential for the bikeway on the bridge to be closed intermittently during construction of these improvements. The extent of the closure is dependent on the option selected. It is also dependent on the tie-in point on the bridge. However, the current options do not propose any physical changes to the existing bikeway, only options that would connect to it.

For all modes, construction staging and traffic control is more complex when there is a need to cross over live traffic.

Bikeway Connector Project – FAQs

What is the timeline for construction of these bikeway connections and crossings?

Following the completion of the planning process already underway, a report will be prepared for Regional Council seeking future direction in 2017. This report would present a multi-year implementation timeline.

What is the estimated cost of the project?

In the [September 22, 2015 Halifax Regional Council Meeting](#), information is provided on cost estimates available to date. This project includes Class D cost estimates for the solutions at the two bridgeheads. For the bikeways, some sections may be implemented as part of larger resurfacing projects (i.e., North Street) while others could be incorporated into future road/reconstruction projects (e.g., Wyse between Nantucket and Thistle).

A key deliverable of this current planning process is to develop cost estimates for the recommended options.

How do I get involved and ensure my input is heard?

Contact the Project Manager at cycling@halifax.ca and check halifax.ca for opportunities to share feedback and attend engagement sessions.

Following completion of the Bikeway Connector Project will cyclists continue to travel on one side of the bridge and pedestrians on the other?

Yes. Halifax Harbour Bridges has set a parameter for this project that the configuration for cyclists and pedestrians on the bridge is not to be changed. Maintaining the bikeway on the north side of the bridge is also an advantage when considering a direct bicycling connection up to Gottingen Street. This is due to the available greenspace between North Street and the CFB Stadacona wall in this area.

The Wyse/ Nantucket intersection is already at a capacity. How can cyclists be accommodated in this intersection without making it worse?

A number of conceptual options were considered to integrate cyclists safely into this intersection. However, as these options were considered, the potential for a more comprehensive change to this intersection in the next number of years was identified by stakeholders. These changes may result in significant improvements that benefit all modes and improve aesthetics.

The timeline for these changes is in the range of three to seven years. Therefore, the concept for cycling improvements are being considered as a two stage process, with an interim stage that meets the goal of improved all ages and cycling abilities (AAA) access – and an ultimate stage where bicycling facilities are integrated into a rebuilt Wyse/ Nantucket/ bridgehead intersection.