

OUR CITY. OUR FUTURE.

What we Heard

Shared Use Paths (SUP) 2023



August 2023

ST. JOHN'S

Disclaimer

This document provides a summary of what was heard from participants during this engagement process. It is not meant to reflect the specific details of each submission word-for-word, although attempts have been made to do so when possible.

The City produces a What we Heard document for every city-led public engagement project. This collected commentary is shared with the community to ensure we heard you correctly.

The City protects the privacy of those who provide feedback as per Access to Information and Privacy Legislation.

The full scope of commentary is used by city staff and Council to help inform recommendations and decisions.

Context

- Council approved the Bike Master Plan in 2019. Its vision is to create “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 Plan notes the following about SUPs: Using shared-use paths in developing the cycling network leverages investment to serve a much broader purpose in the community:
 - Asphalt paths better serve those with accessibility needs
 - Broader trails allow more daylight which improves a sense of personal security
 - More prominent and well-connected trails improve travel options by any active mode and for those who have limited access to vehicle travel
 - People out for a stroll, walking the dog, jogging or doing other activities benefit from the improved trail surface and better drainage a path
- The City has a strategic direction to be a city that moves with a goal to expand and maintain a safe and accessible active transportation network
- The City’s Healthy City Strategy speaks to the importance of active transportation options in creating healthy communities.

Background

- According to the City's Citizen Satisfaction Survey completed in Oct. 2022, 27% of City residents rate cycling infrastructure in their top 3 capital spending preferences, an increase of 6% over 2020.
- A 2022 Youth Panel survey noted that bike lanes were ranked the most important street element for neighbourhoods.
- The first project from the bike plan, Kelly's Brook, is in final design stage and scheduled to start construction in 2023. Canada Drive SUP was approved in late 2022 and construction will begin in late 2023. Elizabeth SUP will be completed in 2023.
- All projects being identified to date support the backbone network and advance the city's bike master plan. Where possible, the city is piggy-backing on other roads/rehab work to reduce overall cost and avoid future tear up.
- At the end of this round of projects, 12 km of bike trails will be added to the network, building on the 24 km already in place
- It will be important to provide updates throughout the engagement period regarding all projects whether there is engagement happening or not.

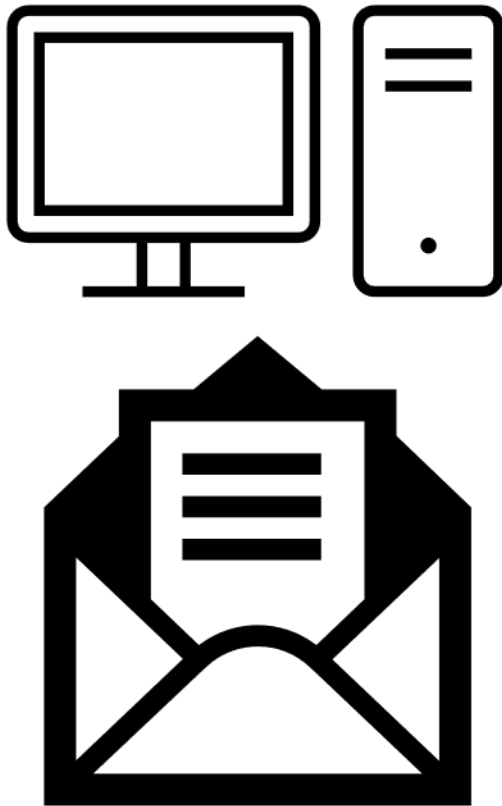
Projects Engaged On

- Canada Dr. at Columbus to Bowring Park and connecting to the T'railway
- Portugal Cove Rd. to Logy Bay Rd. through McDonald Dr. and Laurier Tupper Parks
- Airport Heights to Carrick Dr. via Penny Cres. and Torbay Rd.

Public Engagement Purpose

- Create awareness across the community about the trails being planned and those already underway or being constructed in 2023 and how they help connect and create a network; enhance knowledge and understanding of the full network
- Ensure people who live in the various areas, especially those with property adjacent to, those who use the proposed paths, and those with an interest in SUPs, trails, and the bike master plan, have a chance to provide feedback on those plans.
- Connect to all age groups and ability levels about this project.
- Create awareness and understanding of the links between SUPs and the city's strategic directions and goals, namely:
 - The goal to expand and maintain a safe and accessible active transportation network
 - How it supports directions in the Bike St John's Master Plan, Healthy Cities Strategy, Resilient St. John's, Affordable Housing Strategy, Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan and mode share targets.

Communications



- Technical Briefing with media June 5, 2023 which resulted in stories on VOCM including question of the day, CBC and NTV broadcasts as well as SaltWire.
- [News Release](#) issued on June 5, 2023, and sent to 1580 news subscribers on city website
- Project page on [EngageStJohns.ca](#) published on June 5 and closed on July 20, 2023
- Banner advertisement on VOCM from June 6-19 promoting engagement and linking to project page
- 2 newsletters sent to nearly 4000 registered users and followers of EngageStJohns.ca
- Posts cards to 17,196 households near/adjacent to projects
- Posters delivered to 50 locations near proposed trails including schools, businesses, etc. and on trails proposed
- Posts to City social media with 107,118 impressions and 1,884 engagements on these platforms
 - Facebook – 10 posts
 - Twitter - 10 posts
 - Instagram – 7 posts

Who Engaged - Stakeholders

- City committees – Environment and Sustainability Experts' Panel, Inclusion Advisory Committee, Youth Engagement Working Group, Sustainable and Active Mobility Advisory Committee, Seniors' Advisory
- Grand Concourse Authority
- Newfoundland and Labrador English School District
- Village Mall Administration
- Kenny's Pond/Tiffany Village
- Bowring Park Foundation
- Media

Who Engaged



On EngageStJohns.ca

- Total Visits: 2.3 k
- New Registrations: 21
- **Engaged Visitors** (People who posted questions/comments, mapped their feedback): 51
- **Informed Visitors** (read multiple documents): 1,062
- **Aware Visitors** (Unique visitors): 1768

Public Sessions

Virtual Session via Zoom: 27 people

3 Neighbourhood Sessions:

- 50 people attended in total

Email and phone calls:

20 submissions

Stakeholder Meetings: 5

City Committee Meetings: 5

What We heard Highlights

- There continues to be concerns about potential future projects (outside of the scope of engagement for 2023) among some people; some also expressed concerns about the lack of consultation for specific sections of the trails.
- Generally, people support moving forward with active transportation, creating safe space for biking and improving accessibility throughout the City.
- Signage, lighting, places to stop and rest, access points to neighbourhoods, are important to stakeholders and the public.
- Winter maintenance and year-round use is important
- Etiquette and public education are key to successful safe use
- Need to continue to build continuous paths that allow people to get where they need to go safely throughout the city
- Intersections and crossings must be safe; where paths end, there must be safe ways to cross/signage

What We Heard From Stakeholders

- Bowring Park Foundation
 - May need to widen entrance to east end of Bowring Park parking lot to accommodate SUP
 - Land from parking lot to the T'railway is not within Park boundaries
 - Would not like to see existing foot bridge used
 - Generally supportive of the project
 - Consider link from Cowan Avenue to the Park to connect to T'railway in future

What We Heard From Stakeholders

- Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (Portugal Cove Rd SUP)
 - Generally supportive of active transportation in and around schools
 - Some challenges with right of way and sight lines
 - Some options to redesign entry to parking lot and stay along the fence line by the soccer field
 - NLESD willing to work with City on design if this option is chosen. Easement or agreement on easement required.
 - Changes within NLESD and transition to Government of NL may slow that process

What We Heard From Stakeholders

- Village Mall Administration (Columbus Dr. SUP)
 - Generally supportive of active transportation in and around Village Mall
 - Some concerns about slowing cars during peak traffic
 - The City has an opportunity to connect neighbourhoods to the Village by way of SUP but Village would need to create the connection to their parking lot off of the SUP

What We Heard From Stakeholders

- Kenny's Pond/Tiffany Village (Portugal Cove Rd. SUP)
 - Generally supportive of active transportation and the Kenny's Pond Trail option, especially on the south side of the Pond; widths may limit the other side which would be good to maintain for walkers; options to have dedicated walking space continued would be good.
 - SUP improves access for all users in general and recreation options in senior friendly environment.
 - A safe connection to Tiffany Village is needed – connected to the existing path which would improve overall access for everyone
 - Like the connection through Tupper/Laurier as it provides more of a continuous safe route for their residents, creating longer active transportation options
 - Like the lighting option and people would benefit from it, more hours to be active
 - Crosswalk on McDonald Dr. needs to be longer to allow for someone using a walker/mobility challenged to cross safely
 - Concerns about winter maintenance – needs to be slip/ice free, concerns about salt used for this in and around the pond, concerns about wind

What We Heard From Stakeholders

- Grand Concourse Authority
 - These trails are currently maintained and within the Grand Concourse system
 - Some trails on existing SUP (Airport Heights) are tight/land issues/sharp turns
 - Grand Concourse maintains T'railway through agreement between Government of Canada and City.
 - Grand Concourse does not maintain the link from Waterford Bridge Rd. to Columbus Dr. on the side of the overpass anymore.
 - Some concerns with river crossing near Logy Bay Rd.
 - Hitting more amenities with Kenny's Pond option for Portugal Cove Rd.
 - Branding and connection to Grand Concourse going forward is important
 - Importance of signage for all trails
 - Concerns heard from walkers

What We Heard From City Committees

- Sustainable and Active Mobility Advisory Committee
 - Is it possible to use apps or beacons to help people navigate the trails to improve accessibility?
 - Wayfinding important including potential topography, challenge of the SUP
 - Importance of continuing to piggy-back on roads rehab work to find opportunities to improve safety and add active transportation, i.e., Gleneyre St.
 - Option for off ramps for Village Mall and schools – Columbus Dr. SUP
 - Neighbourhood access important including signage to direct/guide

What We Heard From City Committees

- Seniors Advisory Committee
 - Winter maintenance is key for safety
 - More trash cans are needed along trails
 - E-bikes need to be allowed as it helps seniors with mobility issues get around
 - Signage is important for both direction and safety
 - Promoting SUP etiquette will be key to safety
 - Could lines be used on the SUP?
 - Possible partnership opportunities with RNC on bike safety, seniors programming through City
 - QR codes for visually impaired/blind users

What We Heard From City Committees

- Environment and Sustainability Experts Panel
 - Barriers between SUP and roadways are essential for safety
 - Potential to consider loop off Columbus to behind Waterford Valley High
 - Kenny's Pond option preferred for Portugal Cove Rd as it links to more amenities,. E.g., CNA
 - Need to plan for future development at former Bally Hally Golf Course
 - Lighting, washrooms, wayfinding important
 - Crossings at intersections must be safe; some cities have separate pedestrian and bike priority green lights

What We Heard From City Committees

- Inclusion Advisory Committee
 - Accessible washrooms should be placed along trails; signage showing existing amenities would also be good
 - SUPs need to be fully accessible – B651 standards, Annex D
 - Seating is needed along the paths and need to be accessible, consider various types of seating including those facing each other, have seating without arms as options
 - Needs to be snow cleared yearround; lighting is great to improve access
 - Security features such as the buttons on the Memorial campus could be beneficial
 - Short distances between access/off points to neighbourhoods and amenities for both safety and connectivity
 - Garbage and recycling containers needed
 - Signage is key “Be Kind and Aware”
 - Space to pass is important

What We Heard From City Committees

- Youth Engagement Working Group
 - Feedback from this group has stressed the importance of active transportation generally through their Youth Forum
 - Winter maintenance is important; year-round paths are beneficial
 - Would be nice to see pop up events happen on the trails – creating connections
 - Public education and path etiquette will make the paths inclusive for everyone

What We Heard From the Public

- There are concerns from some members of the public about other trails noted in the bike plan along the rivers; while these projects were outside the scope of this engagement, it came up in nearly every meeting/discussion
- Some people suggested the City continue to move forward and make more existing trails SUPs
- Concerns were raised about the gaps in the proposed trails and lack of links to other neighbourhoods, e.g., Clovelly, Kilbride, Goulds
- Persons from the disability community stressed the need for asphalt and accessibility
- People stressed the importance of winter maintenance for safety and continued use regardless of season
- General support for active transportation and SUPs, importance of learning how to share the space; etiquette
- E-bikes: some people concerned about speeds; others stressing the need to allow them; some noting concerns about future motorized vehicles
- Some people generally do not support making pedestrian trails SUP, regardless of location
- Concerns about the speeds of bikes generally
- Importance of safety

What We Heard From the Public

- Concerns about cutting down trees to make space for SUPs, impacting nature, birds
- Suggestions to consider allowing parts of the trails to remain gravel for walkers
- Members of the public noted the T'railway works well as SUP now and SUPs work well in other jurisdictions they have visited; some people noted they have seen concerns with SUPs in some other cities
- Importance of monitoring ongoing use and speeds; separate the SUPs, when necessary, based on data
- Roads are not safe for biking, SUPs and active transportation generally are needed in St. John's
- Importance of intersection safety; make crossings continuous (raised) where possible
- Accessible washrooms or direction to these amenities; water fountains along trails
- Consider, and design for, wind
- Add benches, potential covered rest stops, and other beautification elements to make them attractive – but off the trail itself
- Concerns about the use of asphalt from runners and walkers
- Plan to connect to bus routes to allow people to complete their travel using active transportation in the absence of a complete network

What We Heard - Details from the Public About Routes

- Tunnel on existing SUP from Airport Heights to Penny Crescent needs some safety features
- Southern route/Kenny's Pond preferred by most for connectivity; those living on Mercers Dr. concerned about safety, super mail boxes and parking, speed of cars and potential interactions
- Mercers Dr. option has a sliding hill that is used by neighbourhood
- Those who liked Mercers Dr. option liked potential connection to College/Marine Institute
- Some expressed concern about allowing bikes in and around Kenny's Pond
- Desire to see connections in future to Pump Track, St. Paul's Junior High, Gonzaga High School
- Connect to Spruce Meadows Park
- Add covered bike racks at Paul Reynolds

What We Heard Details from the Public About Routes

- Penny Cres. to Carrick Dr.; no consensus on preferred route options; those who live on Gleneyre prefer an option that is not on street; there were also concerns about cutting down trees or moving it behind the street
- Some concerns about safety if Portugal Cove Rd. trail was to go through school areas parking lots
- Suggestion to have Columbus Dr. entry to T'railway from the west side of overpass— less steep, avoid multiple crossings

Next Steps



**Release What We
Heard**



**Council to review
What we Heard at
Committee of the
Whole**



**Staff to prepare
recommendations
on route options
and seek approval**

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