

BIKE CALGARY

Historic City Hall (Sandstone Building)
700 Macleod Trail S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

October 10, 2014



Bike Calgary Comments Pertaining to the MacLeod Trail Corridor Study

Attention Councillor Keating, Chair SPC Transportation & Transit

Dear Councillor Keating,

Bike Calgary is pleased to submit this letter in support of the MacLeod Trail Corridor Study. We, along with many Calgarians, recognize that MacLeod Trail is an unsightly road, and one that offers up a particularly inhospitable environment for those walking and cycling. Decades of autodependent planning policies and poor land-use planning have left the Trail as a space that people do not want to be in, and cannot safely and efficiently move through. The Corridor Study before you represents an ambitious plan to massively improve MacLeod Trail for all users, and make it a space that Calgarians can once again be proud of.

While there are many elements of the Corridor Study that we cannot speak to, Bike Calgary would comment on the elements of the plan that impact active transportation.

CTrain Right-of-Way Bikeway

Independent of the MacLeod Trail cycling facilities, Transportation staff have recommended the creation of a Bikeway utilising the CTrain corridor Right-of-Way. Generally, Bike Calgary is in favour of the inclusion of cycling infrastructure along CTrain lines, as a cost-effective way to provide cycling access to communities, activity centres and, of course, transit stations. This particular route would provide access to a wide-variety of origins and destinations, including numerous communities, three CTrain stations, Chinook Centre, the Manchester Industrial parks, the Calgary Stampede Grounds and the Centre City.

Since the MacLeod Trail Corridor redevelopment is decades in the future, and there is a need to create cycling access in the area today, this bikeway should be approved by Council now, and built as soon as possible.

Sidewalks

Though walking is not explicitly part of Bike Calgary's mandate, we recognize that improved pedestrian infrastructure and walking environments benefit all Calgarians, regardless of their travel mode. It is very encouraging to see that sidewalks would generally be enhanced along MacLeod Trail, and be promoted as a primary access point for destinations along the corridor. The current standard of parking lots being the main access points for destinations serves to create an unsightly, uninviting and less safe environment along the roadway. Higher quality sidewalks and destinations that are accessed directly from the sidewalk would significantly improve MacLeod Trail.

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New Walking and Cycling Bridges/Overpasses

Access for walking and cycling at various points along MacLeod Trail would be very much improved with the implementation of new active transportation bridges/overpasses. This is particularly true for the intersection at Glenmore Trail, which may be one of the least hospitable spaces for walking and cycling in the city.

Greenspace

Presently, MacLeod Trail is largely devoid of greenspace, presenting an environment that is less conducive to cycling and walking. The inclusion of trees, shrubberies, grasses and other green features will serve to improve the environment and attractiveness of MacLeod Trail, as well as encourage the success of investments in cycling and walking infrastructure.

Cycling Infrastructure

The current design of MacLeod Trail promotes an inhospitable and unsafe cycling environment. To meet the goals of the corridor becoming attractive, safe, vibrant and better connected to the surrounding communities, cycling infrastructure should be integrated into the redesign. This is also consistent with the City's Complete Streets Guide, which ensures all new and retrofit streets are safe and accessible to all modes of travel.

Bike Calgary is impressed with the plan to construct high-quality cycling infrastructure along the corridor, and recognizes that a higher level of separation is required for such a complex roadway. We are encouraged that Transportation staff and their consultants have recognized this as well. Though we understand that this work is largely conceptual in nature, we do have concerns/comments with some of the cycling elements outlined in the report. We trust that Transportation staff will consider these comments and engage Bike Calgary in further design conversations.

- ✦ The terminology used to refer to the cycling infrastructure is inconsistent in the report. "Cycle tracks", "bikeways", "bike paths" and "multi-use pathways" are all used to refer to the proposed cycling infrastructure, but care has not been taken to define these terms, and they often seem to represent the same type of facility. Since these are all different concepts, clarity is needed.
- ✦ Generally, there is a lack of information on how cycling is accommodated at intersections. While the South Section appears to utilise crossrides, it does not adequately explain how the cycle tracks transition across the channelized turn lanes at Glenmore Trail, Southland Drive and at Heritage Drive. While presumably separate signal phasing would be included along the length of MacLeod Trail, this is not adequately explored at this time. There is even less detail on the North Section in relation to intersection access and signalization.
- ✦ More information is required on why some of the cycling infrastructure is bidirectional and some is unidirectional. Bidirectional facilities will require more complex signalization and may create inconsistent expectations amongst road users where there are transitions back to unidirectional facilities. There is also an inadequate explanation for how the unidirectional facilities transition to the bidirectional facilities.
- ✦ The lack of cycling facilities along the Cemetery Hill Section hampers connectivity, and should result in a high-quality connection along Spiller Road.

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- ♦ The current lack of a facility to connect from the Cemetery Hill Section into the Centre City would hamper the effectiveness of the cycling facilities on MacLeod Trail. A quality on-street cycling route should be developed, with 1 Street SE being an excellent candidate.

General

Though the desire to reinvigorate life into MacLeod Trail will likely not be realized for some time, it is essential that a plan be put into place now, in order to minimize delays, costs and headaches in the future. Cycling, walking and greenspaces must all be included in such a plan, and this report presents an extremely encouraging, though incomplete, vision for doing so.

We respectfully ask that the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council adopt the MacLeod Trail Corridor Study proposals, and if this is not presently possible, at least approve the plan to develop a bikeway along the CTrain right-of-Way.

Sincerely,

<signed>

Kimberley Nelson
(President, Bike Calgary)

<signed>

Dale Calkins
(Director, Bike Calgary)