



Bike Winnipeg 2022 IRPW Budget Submission

December 4, 2021

Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works

Re: Item No. 15 Preliminary 2022 Operating and Capital Budget

Dear Councillors,

First off, I want to thank the committee and the city administration for the efforts they put in to maintain the Enhanced Summer Bike Route program over the spring, summer, and fall as the city worked to cope with the continuing fallout from the COVID-19 epidemic. Likewise, we want to thank the city for its ongoing work on the Neighbourhood Greenway Reduced Speed Pilot and continuing work on the Road Safety Strategic Action Plan. We look forward to recommendations from these studies and strategies in the new year.

Proposed Funding for Pedestrian and Cycling Improvements Falls Far Short

With regard to the Preliminary 2022 Operating and Capital Budget, we note that the amount budgeted towards improving the city's Pedestrian and Cycling networks continues to fall far short of the amount needed to meet council approved policy goals from the 2018 Climate Action Plan and the 2015 Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies.

Despite a recommendation in the Climate Action Plan to accelerate development of the pedestrian and cycling networks, the amount budgeted for these improvements in 2022 is less than half the annual amount recommended to meet even the moderate networks recommended within the 2015 Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies. Similarly, instead of accelerating/increasing funding for Active Transportation as recommended in the 2018 Climate Action Plan, this budget provides barely half the funding that was allocated in 2018.

Worse still, funding for improvements to the walking and cycling networks is forecast to drop dramatically beyond 2022. At this level of funding, we will have no chance of meeting our mode shift and greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets, and will never be able to attain even a modestly connected cycling network.

The Preliminary 2022 Budget grows the city’s active transportation deficit beyond \$63 million in 2022 and pushes that deficit past \$80 million by 2023.

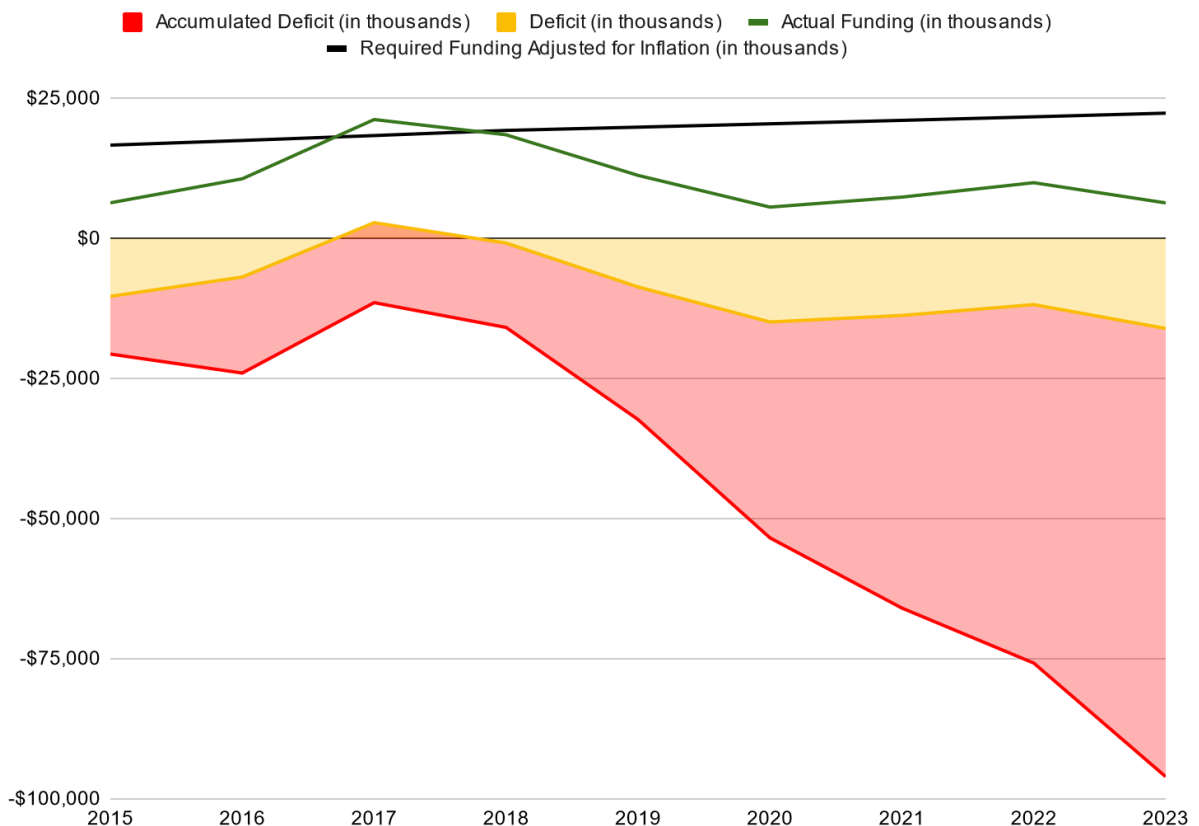


Table 1: Historic funding of the Pedestrian and Cycling Program, 2015-2023 - Funding for walking and cycling continues to fall short of levels recommended in the 20145 Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies.

Certainly, there are some welcome additions to the 2022 budget. We’re happy to see the addition of \$2.388 million for Active Transportation Infrastructure in the Regional Road Renewals program.

This line item could be useful as a means to ensure that there is funding to extend pedestrian and cycling facilities beyond the bounds of a given project in which similar walking and cycling improvements are being incorporated (and funded through the regional road renewal project). This should not be considered as a substitute for funding of walking and cycling improvements within planned regional road renewal projects. We need to continue planning and budgeting for improvements to the walking and

cycling networks as a routine part of the local and regional road renewals program. In fact, we should be including improvements to walking and cycling as a default position in all of these projects.

A second potentially useful application of the funds would be to allow a minor road rehabilitation project such as a mill and fill operation to include walking and cycling improvements.

We see the addition of the Active Transportation Infrastructure line item as a positive enhancement to the city's road renewals program. However, the funding going into this line item needs to be in addition to the city's ongoing commitment to include walking and cycling improvements where renewal projects overlap the planned network (or make logical connections), and it needs to be more than just a one-off funding supplement.

It is concerning that this is a one-time line item based on a one-off doubling of the Federal Canada Community Building Fund (formerly known as the gas tax) that was meant as a way to ease the financial burdens stemming from the COVID crisis.

All Regional Road Renewals Must Include Pedestrian & Cycling Improvements by Default

We need to make improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure the default condition for all regional roadway renewal projects, not just a special case where the given roadway segment is part of the proposed cycling network. This is our best hope to complete a connected and comfortable cycling network within a meaningful timeframe, and the best hope for us to meet our climate action targets.

- Any decision to exclude walking and cycling improvements should require council approval.
- Walking and cycling improvements should be incorporated into the prioritization, scoping, and budgeting process used by the road renewals program.

Including improvements to the walking and cycling network as a routine part of roadway renewals has many advantages:

- Long term costs are reduced as work to improve walking and cycling facilities can be combined with work on roadway surfaces that are also needed.
- Combining the need to improve walking and cycling facilitates along with needed roadway repairs means roadways do not need to be disrupted multiple times to achieve each individual goal, it all gets done at once.

Road Renewal Projects Continue to Overlook Pedestrian and Cycling Network Plan

Plans for roadway renewals on roads included within the current proposed bike network continue to lack any plans for improved walking or cycling facilities. (see Partridge Ave, for example). We feel that this is a failure to match policy to the budget. Excluding needed (and proposed) improvements to the walking and/or cycling network in regional road renewal projects means the city will end up paying more for these improvements than is necessary. Beyond increased costs, residents and users will also be subjected to multiple disruptions in service if roadway renewals and walking and cycling improvements are implemented through separate projects.

Despite direction 1B.x in the 2015 Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies, which calls on the city to “Ensure that bicycle requirements be addressed in all new and renewal road projects that are part of the bicycle network or where the road provides connectivity or support to the bicycle network”, this has been a long term failing in city planning.

We recommend a number of changes to allow the city administration to make better use of road renewal opportunities than seems to be in place at present:

- Update the road renewals budgeting procedure to identify road renewal projects with needed walking and cycling improvements far earlier in the planning process.
- Update the Benefit Evaluation Procedure so that improvements to walking and cycling are no longer considered as a mere enhancement to Level of Service and the low level of weighting (7% compared to 31% weighting to maintain level of service) that this categorization contributes to a project's prioritization.
 - Matching the safety requirements of vulnerable road users expected to operate in mixed traffic to best practices should not be considered an enhanced level of service, it should be considered as a requirement to meet the basic level of service.

Include Walking & Cycling Improvements in Primary Transit Network Infrastructure Projects

Our final request is that walking and cycling improvements be included as part of the Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design and Primary Transit Network Infrastructure projects, as per the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies Direction 1B.xii - Continue to provide, where appropriate and where suitable opportunities exist, bicycle infrastructure in conjunction with transit infrastructure such as rapid transit corridors.