

Peninsula South Complete Streets Project

Phase 2 What We Heard: Institutional Stakeholder Supplementary Report

November 2022

Following the conclusion of phase 2 public and stakeholder engagement in August 2022, Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, and the Nova Scotia Health Authority completed additional internal engagement regarding the eight complete streets concepts shared during phase 2, and each institution submitted a written summary of what they heard. This supplementary report compiles the three submissions and is intended to accompany the *Phase 2: What We Heard Report* which is available for download at: shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/peninsula-south-complete-streets.

Dalhousie University

After reviewing the Peninsula South Complete Streets Concepts, Dalhousie University would prefer to see *Concept 2A – University Ave One-Way Raised Bicycle Lanes* as the successful concept approach. Below is a list of concerns the University departments have with each option.

Concept 2A: University Avenue One-Way Raised Bicycle Lanes

Office of Sustainability

- The natural environment is important to campus esthetics and biodiversity. Biomass replacement programs should be in place and as little tree removal as possible.
- Sidewalk pedestrian areas may cause conflict area with cyclists, without delineation.
- This plan does not consider the traditional cross over paths between Dalhousie buildings. Students are expected to cross over at controlled intersections.
- There are concerns with the areas where the bike lane intersects with the sidewalks. Concerns regarding visually impaired individuals and accessibility issues.
- What is the detail design for transit stops to permit blind/partially sighted persons to cross the cycling lane safely?
- Accessible parking in front of the Arts Centre. Will the bike lane interfere with loading of people in vehicles?
- Possible major conflict area at the Summer St/University Ave intersection. The concept map shows a left turn bike lane right at the entrance to a parking area. This intersection will need much work to make it safe.
- When riding east on the University Ave bike lane how would you cross to the 2-way bike lane at the start of Morris?
- We observed someone in a wheelchair not able to wheel from the Student Union building to the Kenneth Rowe building without help given the grade and sidewalk

access. Also observing people struggling with the poor surfaces, curb cuts, and lack of surface treatment. Sidewalk curb cuts and road aren't aligned in some areas.

- For the sidewalk in front of McCain and Arts Centre, the sidewalk widths shown on the concept are smaller than the online diagram that showed 3 m all the way down the north side sidewalk. We need at least 3 m for the pedestrian traffic we have now and that is increasing every year.

Facilities Management (Accessibility)

- Provides a shorter distance for people using drop off zones to reach building entrances.
- Concern the bike lane is immediately adjacent to drop off locations, presents safety concerns.
- Strongly recommend the addition of accessible curb cuts and crossings into the median at mid-way point between street intersections. This will enhance connectivity and accessibility between buildings. For example, McCain Arts & Social Science Building entrance, provide an accessible ramp and curb cut with a pedestrian crosswalk into the median and over to the Student Union Building, adjacent to the building entrance, in addition to the LeMarchant Street and Seymour Street intersections. Similarly, Dalhousie Arts Centre into the median, to the Kenneth Rowe Management Building. This will enhance the level of access for pedestrians navigating between buildings. It would reduce the travel distance required to reach destinations. This is particularly important where the concepts show the provision of public space/picnic/seating areas in the median. It is highly recommended there be multiple entry points where the median is particularly long in distance between street intersection to allow for a more accessible and easy use around the streets.

Facilities Management (Capital Planning)

- Remove general on-street parking spaces in front of the Dal Arts Centre. Accessible spaces are needed but not the three general parking spaces – indicate loading for large vehicles rather than the general parking.
- Indicate opportunity for plaza at median between McCain Building and Student Union Building
- Good on-street accessible parking at Carleton Campus
- Ensure sufficient landscape space adjacent the 'Dalhousie University' ground sign at University Avenue and Robie Street intersection. The sidewalk appears quite close to our ground sign.

Ancillary Services

- Preferred option as it has less conflicts and is safer for different users.
- Need loading spaces that accommodate 18 wheelers and curb cuts for loading with dollies.
- Design reduces pedestrian, truck, cycling and vehicle conflicts

Concept 2B: University Ave Two-Way Bikeway in Median

Office of Sustainability

- The natural environment is important to campus esthetics and biodiversity. Biomass replacement programs should be in place and as little tree removal as possible.
- Pedestrian Plaza – mixing pedestrians with cyclist may cause issues if large numbers of students hang out in these areas.
- Closed medians (Seymour/Henry/Edward/etc) may act as informal plaza areas for students which could cause issues.
- What will be the design features of the “closed median” that will allow cyclists and emergency vehicles to pass but block private vehicles?
- Cyclists will leave the bike lane part way through each median section (mid-block) to get to/from the building they work in. They may not go to each controlled intersection to cross.
- Robie Street intersection: how will the traffic lights be set up for left turn cyclist and left turn cars. Very big and confusing intersection at the best of times.
- Sight lines: trees and brush at the base of trees may impede sight lines at all intersections as well as the traffic cut through at the IWK Parkade/Forrest/ Medicine Buildings.
- Fire Truck Staging area: potential conflict with illegal left hands turns.
- Pedestrian Crossing: there are 16 bike lane/pedestrian crossings. What will be the tactile surface conditions to identify this area as multi-use area for visually impaired people?
- Informal pedestrian crossings: there area a few informal pedestrian crossings along University Ave. How will this be addressed?
- Loading Areas: lack of loading zone in front of the Student Union building. Will there be side street loading areas?

Facilities Management (Accessibility)

- Allows parking and drop of locations to remain which supports accessible options for people requiring close distance to building entrances.
- Where the median provides public space/picnic/seating areas, it is highly recommended there be multiple entry points in addition to streetcorner intersections to allow accessible and easy navigating to these public space amenity areas.

Facilities Management (Capital Planning)

- Dalhousie Facilities Management does not want option 2B.
- The median intersects with Seymour, Henry, and Edward streets and would impact our maintenance, and operations vehicle trips throughout campus. Closing of the median intersections to vehicles would necessitate burdensome and wasteful vehicle travel.
- Closing the median intersections does not make it safer for people on bikes. Experience at HRM’s bike facilities at Vernon/Coburg, Vernon/Jubilee, Quinpool/Vernon/Quingate, and Oxford/Oak suggests that people in vehicles do not

strictly abide by signage or minor deterrent physical changes. This is unsafe for people traveling on bikes. HRM's own existing facilities are evidence enough showing lack of compliance by vehicles.

- Dalhousie has considerable infrastructure under the University Ave median, including walkable tunnels with steam, condensate, IT, concrete tunnels, and other infrastructure. The exit chambers breach the surface of University Avenue. These emergency exit chambers would be impacted by this median bike lane. Should the tunnel infrastructure need full excavation and complete renewal, this will disrupt the lane and Dalhousie would bear extra unnecessary costs for replacement. Dalhousie maintains numerous HRM Easements for this tunnel infrastructure. Have the Easements been legally reviewed for this option?

Ancillary Services

- Closing side streets is problematic for traffic flow based on regular traffic and deliveries, art centre events, residence checks, in etc.
- Concerned people would turn the wrong way and still go through side streets regardless of markings which is defeating the purpose.

Concept 2C: University Ave Two-Way Bikeway North of Median

Office of Sustainability

- The natural environment is important to campus esthetics and biodiversity. Biomass replacement programs should be in place and as little tree removal as possible.
- Loading Zones: lack of identified loading zones (Arts Centre)
- Sidewalk/Pedestrian Plaza: pedestrian/cyclist interaction.
- "Stop control" on LeMarchant St. What does this mean?
- Accessible Parking: 9 spots
- Bike Lane/Driveway intersection: there are 6 driveways intersecting with the bike lane. How will these be controlled? Existing trees may interfere with sight lines.

Facilities Management (Accessibility)

- Does not provide accessible drop off locations.
- Increases the distance a pedestrian will travel to reach a building entrance immensely on the North side of the street. Particularly for buildings on University Avenue that provide services to the public and large events that require drop off locations within close proximity. There is a need for accessible seating along routes to ensure those with limited stamina adjacent to drop off locations have an accessible rest area.

Facilities Management (Capital Planning)

- Alignment with Dalhousie's 2010 Campus Master Plan
- More opportunity for on-street parking: both general parking and accessible parking. Too much general on-street parking in proximity to Dalhousie buildings. More of the parking spaces should be dedicated to loading. This was a large learning of the University Ave protected bike lane pilot project.

- On-street loading for Dalhousie buildings on the north side of University Ave must be shown on the side streets. For instance, Henry, Seymour, LeMarchant, Edward streets north of University Ave require designated loading sites to reach the buildings on the north side of University Ave.

Ancillary Services

- Closing north side (to vehicles) increases distance to access north-side buildings for loading, accessibility
- This option reduces loading space which is already actively used every day by multiple vendors
- Can foresee major traffic problems

Overall Concerns from Ancillary Services

- School bus loading in front and around the Art Centre
- A lot of passenger loading and accessibility concerns related to access to the Arts Centre - it is congested now.
- Large truck deliveries (tractor trailer) on side streets like LeMarchant and trucks in front of many buildings for Arts Centre and food services
- Deploy speed bumps and slow speed down
- Where do the scooters, skateboarders go? In bike lane?
- Before the switch to parking pay stations, the Art Centre could bag meters to allow extra space for loading for events
- Food services issues with lack of loading (Carleton Campus)
- What is the turn radius at intersections for large truck deliveries?
- Catering companies need to be educated on delivery policy. No blocking of accessible spots, walkways, etc.

There are several characteristics that help to create comfortable and desirable walking environments, including physical separation from other road users; adequate clear width to allow more than one person walking or using a mobility device to pass each other; as well as firm, smooth and even surfaces. Several times a day, thousands of Dalhousie students commute by foot or mobility device. To achieve a desirable walking environment Dalhousie University would like to have at least 3-meter-wide continuous sidewalks for areas of high pedestrian activity based on Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) standards. The current Peninsula South Concept Plans have differing sidewalk widths than the online concept map. Clarification will be needed on this important issue.

Concept 1A: Morris Street Two-way Raised Bikeway and One-way Traffic

- Adjacent to Sexton campus from Queen to Barrington:
- Clean up intersection at Queen and Barrington
- Connects to Dal's Sexton green corridor which will be reinstated this year after on-campus construction

Robie Street Concepts

- Preference for 4B (Robie Street One-way Protected Bicycle Lanes)
- Too many conflicts with commuters in Concept 4A (Robie Street Multi-Use Pathway)

Concept 3B: Cartaret Street and Oakland Road Local Street Bikeway

- Preference for Concept 3B: no tree impacts and fewer conflicts
- Slow down traffic to 40km

Concept 3A: South Street Two-Way Raised Bikeway

- Like the intersection changes at Oxford and South
- Like the new intersection at Alumni Crescent
- Add another crosswalk at Alumni Crescent and flashing lights

Saint Mary's University

Robie Street Concepts

- Strongly in favor of a Robie street cycling connection to SMU
- Concept 4A (Robie Street Multi-Use Pathway) appears better able to link to the campus and greenway. How this links up with the Halifax Urban Greenway extension is important. It cannot cut through the middle of the SMU Oakes property. The drawing depicts the bike route continuing straight at the end of Robie, but a connection to the proposed greenway extension would hug the outside of the SMU property.

University Avenue Concepts

- Concept 2B (Two-way Bikeway in Median) appears to have the greater benefit. It feels like the safest, thus possibly having greater impact on influencing more people to feel comfortable/safe switching to active transportation.
- All options presented have significant benefits over current situation

West Connection

Concept 3A: South Street Two-Way Raised Bikeway

- We see the South Street option 3A to have greater benefit
- High traffic area for bicycles
- Some larger destinations will be serviced (Dalplex, residences, etc.)

Concept 3B: Cartaret Street and Oakland Road Local Street Bikeway

- Will not help servicing larger destinations (Dalplex, residences, etc.)



September 20, 2022

Mark Nener
Active Transportation Planner
HRM Transportation & Public Works
21 Mount Hope Avenue
Dartmouth, NS

Re: Nova Scotia Health – Peninsula South Complete Streets Project Considerations – University Avenue Options 2A, B, C

Alignment with NSH Principles

The Peninsula South Complete Streets Project (Peninsula South) supports NSH's work on active transportation and overall vision of healthy people and healthy communities. NSH has been involved in a number of initiatives to improve transportation networks and promote active transportation, which has been demonstrated to prevent chronic disease, improve mental health, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce risk of traffic injuries. By providing a key east-west link in the overall cycling network, the Peninsula South project fosters ongoing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives within NSH. These initiatives aim to support employees' choice of alternate commute modes (i.e. not single occupancy vehicle travel) and reduce demand for all-day employee vehicle parking.

This project presents a significant opportunity for NSH to benefit from pedestrian, cycling, and transit infrastructure improvements and support our employees' shift to a healthier commute.

Depending on one's perspective, the three University Avenue Options (2A, B and C) have a myriad of pros/cons. Discussed below are the merits and drawbacks of the options, as they pertain to NSH Operations, Accessibility and Safety, Transportation Demand Management Collaboration and District Identity.

NSH Operations

From an operational perspective, NSH's most important consideration relates to the area in front of the MacKenzie Building (5788 University Avenue), which is used for curbside lab specimen drop off and a no-charge patient and employee shuttle that runs between the Halifax Infirmary and Victoria General sites every 20 minutes. This issue was raised during initial engagement in November, 2019, and NSH is very pleased to see that this functionality has been preserved in all three of University Avenue Options.

Another consideration related to NSH operations is parking. There is high demand for parking in the area and ongoing issues. NSH therefore prefers Options 2B and C, both of which retain all current on-street parking east of Robie Street (on-street parking is removed in Option 2A and is therefore not a viable option for NSH). On-street parking provides important short-term options for patients and families.

Accessibility and Safety

NSH applauds the inclusion of numerous accessibility and safety improvements found within all three University Avenue options: widened sidewalks; shortened road crossings for those walking and rolling; increased lighting; and new curb ramps and tactile surfaces. Option 2C has the highest 'Pedestrian Movement and Safety' score (5/5) and 2B and 2C are both rated as 4/5 for 'Bicycle Movement and Safety'. NSH has some concerns regarding the safety of Option 2B where cyclists will be entering the road from the centre of the median therefore crossing in 'unexpected' locations and possibly increasing the risk of bicycle/vehicle conflict. For this reason, we prefer Option 2C (with raised crossings at local streets and driveways). The general accessibility and safety improvements listed above coupled with Option C will



create an enhanced public realm that encourages active transportation infrastructure for all ages and abilities.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Collaboration

We look forward to continuing our work with HRM on TDM initiatives which support the use of alternate commute modes. This includes the improved active transportation infrastructure that result from this project and the newly launched EPass program for NSH employees — to which over 450 employees enrolled this summer. As University Avenue is redeveloped (particularly between Robie and South Park streets) the addition of bus shelters at all stops would support the use of transit in all kinds of weather and may attract more individuals to enroll in the program. Overall, this could foster improved employee health, further reduce employee demands on parking and help ensure availability of parking for patients and visitors who need it most.

District Identity

With a greater area and consolidation of greenspace, Option 2C has the most potential to enhance the character of the institutional district. Through planting of trees¹ and other vegetation the environmental sustainability of the site would be boosted² and respite opportunities for hospital patients, families and staff could be increased. The final design could include features which produce a park-like experience such as a seating areas and public art or interpretation with relevant themes such as the health benefits of nature and the cycle of life, for example.

Summary

NSH supports the addition of active transportation infrastructure along University Avenue which provides numerous community health benefits. NSH also recognizes the many competing priorities among stakeholders and appreciates that the primary operations concern around specimen/shuttle drop off in front of the MacKenzie Building is preserved in all three options. The maintenance of on-street parking in Options 2B and 2C is also key to hospital operations. Of Options B and C, C has the highest combined pedestrian and bicycle movement safety and offers the biggest potential for enhanced district identity and respite to NSH patients, family and staff. NSH therefore prefers adoption of Option 2C.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]
Jill Flinn
Executive Director Health Services, CZ
Nova Scotia Health Authority
Jill.flinn@nshealth.ca

[Redacted Signature]
Shelley Radford
Director, Public Health, CZ
Nova Scotia Health Authority
Shelley.radford@nshealth.ca

[Redacted Signature]
Mary Lynn Watson
Interim CZ, Medical Site Lead
Nova Scotia Health Authority
marylynn.watson@nshealth.ca

¹ NSH acknowledges that unfortunately Option 2C will result in the highest initial loss of trees (56), where Option 2A and 2B result in losses 44 and 23, respectively.

² When the site is redeveloped, rain gardens which use road runoff could be installed. An inspirational example is the new [Place Des Fleurs-de-Macadam in Montreal](#) where an old gas station was converted to an urban oasis using stormwater.