

River Heights - Fort Garry AT Primer

2009 By-election

Winter 2009

River Heights – Fort Garry to be Front & Centre for AT over the Next Few Years

Over the next few years, River Heights—Fort Garry will see major construction on a number of roadways that have the potential to play a key role in the city’s AT network. Seizing the opportunity to incorporate bicycle facilities into these reconstruction projects could reap rewards for Winnipeg’s AT network far into the future.

In recent years, the City of Winnipeg has begun to take active transportation seriously, hiring an AT coordinator, developing a map of potential routes, and increasing funding for both recreational and utilitarian bikeways. Unfortunately, the level of funding for bicycle infrastructure still pales when compared to the overall roadway budget.

At the current rate of construction, Winnipeg will not see the completion of its AT network for more than 100 years. A realistic goal that could com-



plete the AT network within 20 years would require spending of \$8M/year.

Significantly, the city recently passed a motion requiring active transportation to be included in any new construction or major rehabilitation projects.

Whoever is elected councillor for River Heights – Fort Garry on March 17th will have to

commit to developing Winnipeg’s AT network in a timely manner, and must be aware of the opportunities to include improvements to active transit facilities in upcoming roadway projects. Decisions made now must meet not only the immediate needs of the AT network, but must also accommodate future expansion and increased usage over the next 20 to 50 years.

Keys to a Successful Cycling Network

- COHESIVE
- DIRECT
- SAFE
- COMFORTABLE

Grasping Opportunity

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Winnipeg has a huge untapped demand for Cycling

- For distances under 5 km, cycling is usually the fastest mode of travel door to door.
- Cycling is often the fastest mode of transportation from door to door for distances up to 10 km in urban cores.
- Median Distance to Work in Winnipeg is just 6 km
- 65% of Manitobans would like to use bicycles more as a mode of transportation
- 90% of Manitobans support governments investing more money in active transportation
- Bicycle Counts in Winnipeg increased 25% between 2007 and 2008

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Reconstruction, Rapid Transit, Could Make Pembina/Jubilee Hub for AT



HEAVY TRAFFIC AND NARROW LANES CONSPIRE TO MAKE THE PEMBINA/JUBILEE INTERSECTION ONE OF THE WORST BARRIERS TO CYCLING IN THE CITY.

OVER THE NEXT 5-6 YEARS, 4 MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE PEMBINA-JUBILEE INTERSECTION. IF PLANNED PROPERLY, WHAT WAS ONCE A BARRIER TO CYCLING CAN BECOME ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT A.T. HUBS IN THE CITY

Long the bane of cyclists, heavy traffic and narrow lanes conspire to make the Pembina/Jubilee intersection one of the worst barriers to cycling in the city. Over the next 5-6 years, 4 major construction projects are scheduled for this intersection. If planned properly, what was once a barrier to cycling can become one of the most important AT hubs in the city.

In Phase I of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor's construction, a separated bicycle path will be built from the Forks to Jubilee. When added to existing bicycle traffic connecting to the Churchill Drive Greenway and Elm Park Bridge (Kingston Row), this new bicycle path will ensure large numbers of cyclists are funnelled through the Pembina/Jubilee intersection.

On the west side of Pembina, phase II of

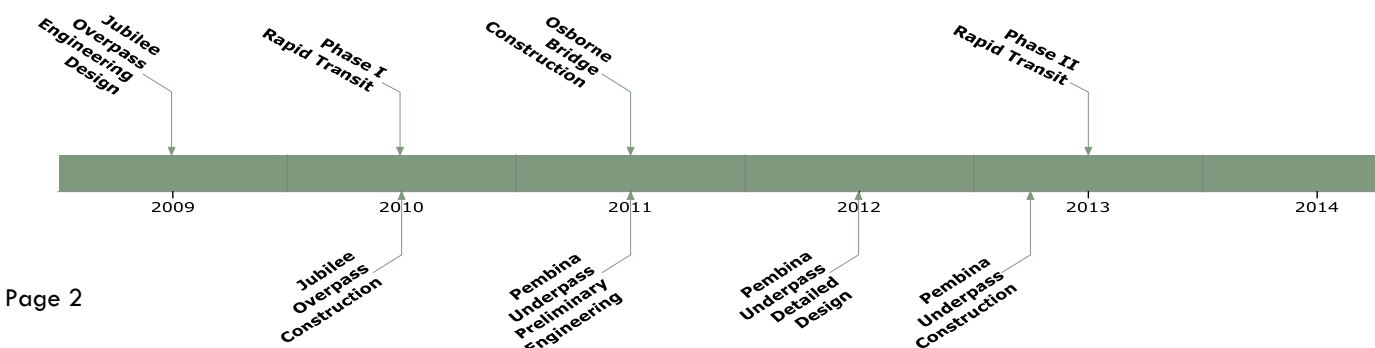
the southwest rapid transit corridor will include the construction of a separated bicycle path from Jubilee south to the University of Manitoba. This path will be connected to the path built in phase I of the rapid transit corridor by a new bridge between the existing Pembina Underpass and Jubilee Overpass, providing a comfortable crossing of Pembina.

North of the rail line, cyclists will need to connect to Taylor for access to River Heights and Polo Park, as well as to Harrow, where plans for bike lanes will greatly improve access to Wolseley, the U of W, and the Health Sciences Centre.

South of the rail line, cyclists will need to connect to Parker to connect westward towards Linden Woods and the newly announced Ikea store.

Even in its current state, bicycle traffic through this intersection currently amounts to approximately 1000 bikes per day. Experience in other cities has shown that upgrades to bicycle facilities at critical choke points like Pembina/Jubilee can lead to increases in bicycle traffic in the range of 200-300% within 5-6 years. That translates into 2000-3000 additional bike trips per day, significantly reducing motorized traffic and producing a noticeable reduction in congestion.

Such impressive benefits warrant the extra cost of including grade separated bicycle crossings on the west side of Pembina, but this important connection is currently not in the city's plans, meaning the promise of these construction projects may go unfulfilled.



Lindsay Bike Path and the Burlington Northern Rail Bridge

River Heights currently lacks bike paths, but there is tremendous potential for the creation of a bicycle path parallel to Lindsay Street between Wellington Crescent and Taylor Avenue. The route has been identified on the city's AT network, and the city owns property between Lindsay and the rail line. If built, the Lindsay bike path could form a critical north/south spine in the AT network through River Heights. To the north, the Lindsay bike path would connect residents to Polo Park and Wolseley. North of the Assiniboine River there are plans to build a similar path-



Plans for future bike paths will greatly increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the Burlington Northern rail bridge over the Assiniboine River. The current structure is substantially narrower than the minimum recommended width. Increased traffic will have to be accommodated by adding a second pathway on the west side of the bridge (see photo on the right).

way next to Empress (including a pathway over Portage), providing a prime bicycle connection to the water park planned for the Polo Park Canad Inns. To the south, cyclists will be able to connect to an existing side path along Taylor Avenue, and eventually will be able to travel all the way to the U of M and the new Bomber stadium using the bicycle path planned as part of the second phase of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor. Sadly, unless there is a significant increase in funding, this project will continue to languish on the drawing board.

Photos: Kyle Thomas and Anders Swanson

Bishop Grandin Greenway—Making a Proper East West Connection

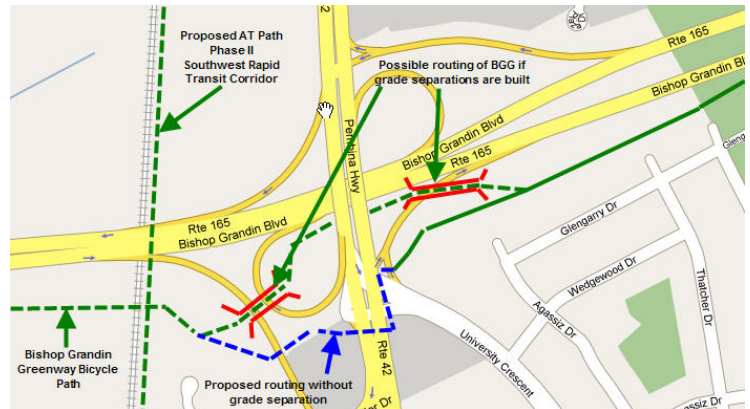
The Bishop Grandin Greenway is slowly but surely coming together and working its way west. When completed, the BGG will offer a continuous multi-use path from Lagimodiere in the east through to the intersection of Kenaston & McGillivray in the west.

The intersection of Pembina, Bishop Grandin and Univer-

sity Crescent will be a key hub along this route, as cyclists will need to be provided with connections across both Pembina and Bishop Grandin, as well as south to the University of Manitoba.

The construction of a bicycle path from Jubilee to Bison Drive included in phase II of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor will provide a major north/south connection to the BGG.

Plans for a bicycle path to the U of M through the old Southwood golf course and a bicycle/pedestrian bridge between the U of M and Henteleff Park will put further demand on this hub as it will provide a high quality connection to the University and South St. Vital. It is clear that this hub will attract considerable bicycle traffic from all



directions in the not too distant future..

As a main east/west bicycle route for southern Winnipeg, cyclists should be able to expect a level of service comparable to that granted to automobiles on Bishop Grandin. For this intersection, it seems like the solution that will best provide that level of service is to will require the construction of overpasses over the merge lanes coming off of

Pembina.

Without a grade separation at this intersection, cyclists will have to cross 14+ lanes of traffic, truly unacceptable for a major cycle route. The city is considering grade separation for this intersection, we think the benefits of a grade separated crossing will far outweigh the additional cost it requires.

Bishop Grandin Greenway Construction Schedule

- 2008—Red River to Pembina
- 2009—Pembina to Waverly
- 2010—Waverly to McGillivray
- ~2013 Phase II Rapid Transit

Kenaston Avenue Redevelopment

The city has recently unveiled plans for a Preliminary Design and Public Consultation Study for Route 90 (Kenaston Boulevard) from Taylor Avenue to Ness Avenue.

A major consideration of the study will be the incorporation of active transportation features into the project. The scope for this part of the study will extend east to west from Cambridge to Shaftesbury, and north to south from St. Mathews to the Sterling Lyon Parkway.

This project has the potential to greatly improve Winnipeg's

active transportation network by creating high quality north/south routes through the River Heights area, connected to current and future east/west routes (Kingsway, Grosvenor, Fleet) on both the north and south sides of the Assiniboine River.

A key principle for this development must be equality of service for bicycles. Cyclists should not be subjected to any more delay than would be acceptable for motorists, nor should they be expected to go out of their way to find a safe, comfortable route to their destination.

Encouraging more people to Cycle

In June 2008, Winnipeg held its inaugural Bike to Work Day. This event was a huge success, and saw 2440 cyclists register to participate, 432 of whom were cycling to work for the first time.

Encouragement programs like Bike to Work Day, International Trails Day, and the Commuter Challenge help raise awareness of cycling as a mode of transportation, and are crucial to convincing potential riders to give cycling a try.

People often perceive cycling as



Bike to Work Day 2008
Photo by Kyle Thomas

far more dangerous and demanding than it actually is, perceptions that events like Bike to Work Day can help clear up. Research in Australia has shown that up to 27% of first time riders will still be biking to work 5 months after a Bike to Work Day type event.

As Winnipeg develops its AT network, events like Bike to Work Day will be instrumental in helping residents of Winnipeg discover new bikeways and trails to connect them to their favourite destinations.

- Winnipeg's second Bike to Work Day will be held June 20, 2009.
- International Trails Day will be celebrated on June 6, 2009
- The 2009 Commuter Challenge will be held May 31 to June 6.



The city is in the midst of a major public consultation leading up to a redevelopment of the Route 90 (Kenaston) Corridor. Active Transportation will be a major component of the study.