



## Sudbury Cyclists Union

March 24, 2014

### **Re: Second Avenue 2014 Road Reconstruction Project**

The Sudbury Cyclists Union (SCU) has serious concerns about the currently proposed cycling infrastructure scheduled for Second Avenue, and the lack of consultation during the development of the project plans.

**The SCU is therefore asking Council to direct staff to bring back an amended proposal that incorporates safe cycling infrastructure, and that connects to the Bancroft cycling routes, prior to tender. It also asks Council to direct staff to meet with community stakeholders to agree on the best safe cycling infrastructure and to provide community stakeholders with an opportunity to review the amended proposal prior to it being approved by Council and going to tender.**

It is the City of Greater Sudbury's responsibility to ensure the liveability of all of its neighbourhoods. This includes the right of all residents to safely use their roads, no matter the mode of transportation or the age or ability of the residents. Council has in numerous previous meetings and motions indicated that it is time that we stop just talking about implementing safe cycling – and that we do it. Not doing it properly now on Second Avenue will be a lost opportunity that will be of significant cost to later correct.

***We ask Council and the staff of Greater Sudbury to provide leadership and to honour its responsibilities to make Minnow Lake more liveable.***

Transportation is about moving people, not cars. Yet the vast majority of our roads projects focus primarily on the automobile, and not on people. The losers are pedestrians and cyclists.

From its past and recent activities, the City still appears to design with a car-centric approach that does not treat cycling as an integral part of its transportation strategy - but rather as a secondary afterthought to its priority of moving automobiles.

A case in point is the Minnow Lake neighbourhood, whose liveability has been eroded as more and more traffic uses Second Avenue as a way to traverse the city. Mr. Shelsted states that the reason that bike lanes were not included in the design was because there was no room for them. There is plenty of expanded room for cars, but none for the residents of Greater Sudbury who wish to safely use their bikes on this road.

A number of residents and citizens who use this cycling corridor have expressed their dissatisfaction with the cycling infrastructure that will be built. At the open house on March 19th, many stated that they would not ride on Second Avenue, even with sharrows, because they feel threatened by the amount and speed of traffic on that road. In fact, "many studies have shown that the number one reason people do not ride bicycles is because they are not comfortable riding on the roadway with motorized vehicles."<sup>1</sup> The same infrastructure was recently built on Regent Street which has arguably done little for increased safety and usage for the general population.

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18 – Bicycle Facilities, p. 12.

***We ask that the needs of all residents be addressed by the scope of this project.***

We are spending \$5 million dollars to provide enhancements to Second Avenue. That's a lot of tax dollars. We need to do it right without the ongoing problematic of missed opportunities. Infrastructure improvements should serve all Greater Sudbury residents whether they drive or not.

In accordance with the principles in the newly-released Ministry of Transportation's *Ontario Traffic Manual Book 18 – Cycling Facilities* guidelines, we believe that Second Avenue merits **designated cycling operating space**, due to the speed and volume of traffic, and to the nature of the neighbourhood that includes a school, a playground, a small mall with a convenience store, houses and apartments, and soon, a seniors residence.

There are several options that could provide that operating space, including bike lanes or cycle tracks. Sharrows are not a proper choice for this road.

***It is absolutely imperative that the reconstruction of Second Avenue considers a solution that adequately meets the needs of all cyclists, no matter the age or ability. There have simply been too many missed opportunities with previous projects like the \$9M Lasalle/Notre Dame intersection construction last year, and it is no longer acceptable.***

The project as it stands does not allow for connectivity. There is no safe transition at the corner of Second and Donna. The infrastructure starts and stops abruptly, like the other sharrows implemented on Regent Street, and does not connect to the bike lanes on Bancroft Drive.

In its 2014 budget presentation to Council, the SCU asked that a minimum of 1% of the roads capital budget be allocated to priority cycling infrastructure that is not part of scheduled road works. We asked that this money be clearly identified as a line item in the capital budget, similar to the line item for traffic calming. City staff did not recommend any options for funding special cycling projects other than recommending a budget add-on, again demonstrating that they see cycling needs as an "extra".

If the City had approved this direction, funds could have been allocated to a cycling infrastructure project that would connect the retrofitted section with Bancroft Drive, thus providing a contiguous cycling corridor along the main Minnow Lake roads. We can still do this – where there is a will, there is a way.

***We ask that you provide a contiguous cycling route between Bancroft Drive and Second Avenue, that you look at safe cycling turning infrastructure at the corner of Second Avenue and Donna Drive, and that you look at the possibility of extending the cycling infrastructure to the intersection of Second Avenue and the Kingsway.***

It is unfortunate that true consultation was not undertaken with residents and with the cycling community prior to unveiling plans that we are told will now see very little change, no matter the feedback. The currently planned infrastructure does very little to benefit the general cycling community and is not money well spent.

The current roads practice of telling residents what will be implemented, along with the message that it's "too late" to make major changes, even if people object to the plans, must change. Consultation should be a constructive process to identify the best solution and to make the best use of available funds.

***We propose that staff meet with cyclist stakeholders to openly discuss options for providing designated cycling space on Second Avenue, and that you commit to ensuring that this space gets implemented.***

The City says that it is using Complete Streets principles to guide road design, but there are no guidelines in place to ensure that the proper choices are applied. It says that the delayed Transportation Master Plan and its resulting Active Transportation Network will drive all future active transportation implementations, but these have been a work in progress for over 3 years, has resulted in continuous missed opportunities, and may not be in place for more years to come. In the absence of such tools, the SCU, as well as other groups including the Sustainable Mobility Advisory Panel, has asked the City to consult when planning road works. This has not happened.

The result is designs that do not meet the needs of our cyclists in Sudbury, that do not encourage sustainable mobility, and even worse, that create safety hazards for our cyclists. Several recent projects like the Attlee traffic calming curb extensions and the sharrows being planned for the Lasalle/Notre dame intersection clearly demonstrate that safe cycling requirements are not integral to our planning processes.

***We ask the City to engage in true consultation with all stakeholders when developing plans for expensive road projects, using a meaningful two-way dialogue that will engage the groups, organizations, and citizens who wish to safely cycle on OUR roads.***

As tax payers who care about the liveability of our great city, we respectfully ask that staff organize meetings with the major cycling stakeholders in the city to discuss how we as a community will properly implement cycling infrastructure on Second Avenue, and that this be done prior to finalizing all plans and proceeding to tender.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Niemela  
Chair, Sudbury Cyclists Union