



Bike to the Future

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River East Trail Committee Meeting

December 5th, 2006

Don English's notes

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Re-Cap/debrief of Nov 15, Community Consultation Meeting
- Herald Article
- Planned meeting with John Buhler re: Marconi Trail and Winnipeg Foundation
- Phase 1 – Douglas Ave Corridor/Trans Canada Trail – next steps
- Immediate Next Steps
- Other business/information sharing
- Next Meeting Date
- Close

There were 12 people in attendance (sorry I didn't know about half the people attending). Participants that I did know included the RETC – NENN Chair Vince (sorry don't know his last name), Janice Lukes, Phillip Roadley (Bikes & Beyond), Kevin Nixon, Anders Swanson and Don English.

I'm just going to highlight the issues that I thought important.

- Councillor Browati has been named the Chairman of the City's Environment Committee
- RETC-NENN is having a meeting with John Buhler Thursday Dec. 7th to discuss the Marconi Line, Nairn to Perimeter. They want to ask his opinion on what he would like to see in the proposed trail and discuss his \$150,000 contribution in completing trail. Also they will discuss naming rights and future fundraising. A possible grant request to Winnipeg Foundation was mentioned as a new source of funding.
- Kevin Nixon advised the group that, unlike the Forks-Pembina path, the Marconi Path has no money set aside for Consultant Firm, Community Input and Design Specs. Marconi is not part of WinSmart. Kevin said that Forks-Pembina design specs must be ready by Spring 2007. Community Input Cmte for Forks-Pembina will likely be composed and begin working before end of December this year. It was left up in the air how actual construction and design would be carried out for Marconi.
- There was some discussion on what was required to complete Marconi Path. Janice Lukes advised that she needs a clear plan about Marconi in order to prepare fundraising program. Kevin Nixon advised group that City was prepared to cover 50% of path costs. He wasn't sure what the upper limit might be but he advised that in his discussions with City Officials they

thought that unpaved paths would be too “cheap” and were looking “positively” at asphalt. There seemed to be consensus that the RETC-NENN group would go for the “Cadillac” plan of 12ft asphalt where feasible. As far as the seven crossings were concerned Kevin advised it would be up to the City Public Works to decide how that would be done.

- I also advised group that CP Rail, as a matter of policy, would not be looking into BTTF’s proposed Marconi-Mission St Connection until after CP-Buhler-City deal finalized in March 2007.
- There were several comments about how quickly cycling infrastructure initiatives are progressing and that we have to work fast to ensure our input is taken into account. Kevin Nixon says he’s never seen anything like it in all his years with the City.

The next meeting of RETC-NENN will be Tuesday December 19th. The main item will be discussing design specs for the Marconi path from Nairn to Perimeter, so that Janice can put together a fundraising plan. BTTF has again been invited to participate.

We (BTTF) will have our work cut out for us in the next few months, that’s for sure.

Thanks,

Don English

Anders Swanson's notes

Don and I both attended the River East Neighbourhood Network -- Trail Committee meeting.

I was introduced as an artist, responsible for the Marconi Connection images. Don was introduced as a spokesperson for BTTF, and a CP Rail employee.

The purpose of the meeting was, essentially, to create a stewardship group that would help guide the Marconi project. (similar to the meeting I attended last week RE: the creation of a stewardship group for the Bishop Grandin Greenway West project.)

The 10-15 person group does not yet have an official mandate from City Hall. At this point, it is a group of concerned citizens. Those present are, however, a very well-connected, passionate and experienced group of concerned citizens. For example, a delegation is slated to meet with John Buhler in the next few days to get his opinion on a vision for the trail. There are experienced grant-writers in the mix who are applying for funding from various levels of government and organizations. (At this point, the city has only committed to 50 percent of the funding). RENN-TC is also considering making a phased proposal that could become a catalyst for further route development throughout the city once this project goes through. We are gathering again in two weeks for a strategic-planning meeting similar to BTTF's meeting early last month. We are going to report back with our personal visions, and come up with a consensus-based picture of what it is we want.

After much discussion, we did manage to establish an interim vision that would limit and guide what we bring to the table. That is: we are looking into a paved multi-use trail extending from downtown to the perimeter. We also agreed to try and set the agenda by envisioning the best path possible. That meant a 12' wide asphalt path running the length of the trail with as few stoppages/intersections as possible along the route.

Now, before we get too many replies on the above, I want to acknowledge a very good points that people made.

- that a 20 Km, 6 foot wide route is better than a 12 foot wide 10 Km route, assuming you have the same amount of money.

- All of us at tonight's meeting acknowledged and expressed the rationale of this statement. In the end, however, we thought it better to let others be responsible for watering down the vision. At every turn people will try and do less, for less. We might as well start by envisioning something with high quality. There is also evidence to support the necessity of this width. Janice Lukes was responsible for overseeing the development of the new 9' wide Cloutier Trail in Fort Richmond and now that she's seen the popularity of the trail amongst pedestrians and cyclists, expresses regret for not having insisted on a 12' width.
- We recognize that currently, there may only be so much money to go around. However, there is a lot of money in the world, and a fair share of it is in this city. Getting more spending allocated to address our concerns is only a matter of having the will and having people look at their priorities. I'm speaking for myself here now, but I think we all feel that the best way to get people to change their priorities is to create the best possible showcase, and allow the domino effect to topple the rest of the city. Marconi does very well have the potential to do that.

Using the above-mentioned line of thinking, we decided to pursue grants and lay the groundwork for fundraising, but to proceed as though it was assumed that it is government responsibility to pay for all of it.

The reality is, no one had to fundraise for the new Maryland Bridge. No one suggested that we put less lanes in on the Maryland Bridge because we need bridges elsewhere.

We all also agreed that from a safety perspective and from a practical perspective, the connection to downtown should be a priority. The route has so much more power and potential if it is safely and efficiently connected to downtown.

From BTTF's perspective, I believe that this meeting was highly successful.

Thanks for your time,

Anders