

# Disraeli Bridges

## REHABILITATION

Public Consultation

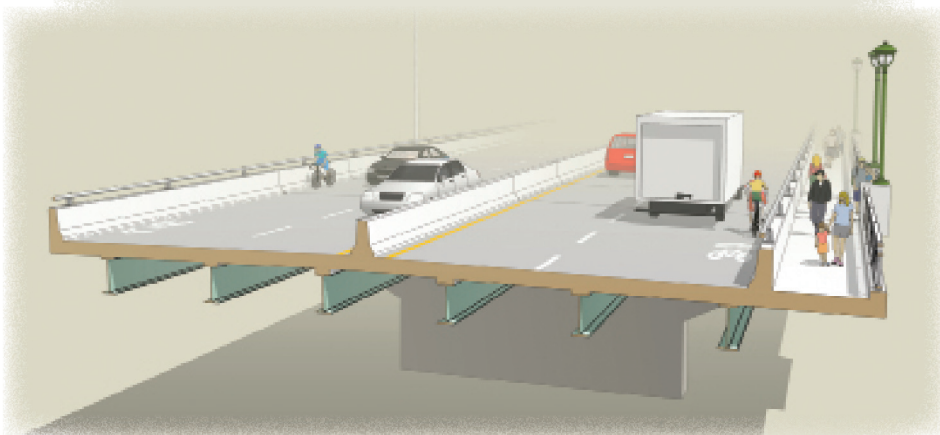
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## Council reaches decision on rehabilitation plans for Disraeli Bridges

In September, City Council approved a plan for the design, construction, financing and maintenance of upgrades to the Disraeli overpass spanning the CPR mainline, the Disraeli bridge crossing the Red River, and the approach streets, all of which form a vital link between the downtown and northeast Winnipeg. The design concept features four vehicular lanes that include two shared vehicle and cyclist curb lanes, one sidewalk (on the east side) and a separate cycling/pedestrian bridge at an estimated cost of \$140 million. The east side sidewalk is maintained, because that portion of the bridge structure cannot bear the weight of vehicular traffic. It would cost an estimated \$25M to switch the sidewalk to the west side.

This plan is believed to be the most cost-effective, while providing for future widening and offering the best overall alternative for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The Disraeli Bridges Project road system is approximately 2 kilometres in length, extending from Main Street to Hespeler Avenue.



Disraeli Bridges Project - conceptual image



Cycling and Pedestrian Bridge - conceptual image

## How was this decision reached?

At the end of June, the Public Works Department completed a comprehensive public consultation process that examined three preliminary design concepts for a four lane bridge rehabilitation. These concepts were developed in consultation with a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) representing area residents, businesses and city-wide organizations affected by the project.

After analysis of existing and projected traffic volumes, a six-lane option was ruled out. Additional bridge lanes would not help accommodate more traffic because the intersections at each end of the freeway have limited traffic capacity. Increasing capacity at those intersections would be very costly, and would require buying large amounts of property that is mostly unavailable.

The public consultation process included a newsletter, display ads in the Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg Sun and The Herald, a phone survey of area residents and businesses, and public open houses to provide project information and gain feedback. Public input was positive about investing in additional amenities to better serve cyclists and pedestrians, but there wasn't a clear majority on which option would best accomplish that, as no single concept combined those needs. Also, preferences on the options varied, depending on which neighbourhood the respondents live in, how close they live to the bridges and whether they walk, cycle, drive, or take the bus.

Through the process, an alternative was put forward following specific input from cycling advocacy group *Bike to the Future*, which featured a standard rehabilitation of the existing bridges with an adjacent cycling/pedestrian bridge. This solution provides separate amenities for cyclists and pedestrians, and addresses commonly-expressed concerns about user safety. It also creates connections with active transportation corridors on both sides of the river. Access is still maintained on the existing bridges for users wanting to keep to their usual route.

## Why is the project being done as a Public Private Partnership – Design, Build, Finance, Maintain (DBFM) – and what does this mean?

A Design Build Finance Maintain (DBFM) model for capital projects provides more benefits to the public purse, compared to conventional methods. Those benefits include transfer of up-front financing costs and of risk to the private sector, reliability of overall project cost, and transfer of maintenance cost risks (such as unexpected price increases) to the private sector partner for the term of the contract.

The model brings together the City's experienced staff with external engineering and contractor experience, to generate the best design and construction solutions for refurbishment of the bridges.

The DBFM model has two key stages: a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) followed by a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFQ was issued in August 2008, which identified a selection of three qualified respondents to advance to the RFP process. In December the RFP was issued, and the City has now completed the first two steps in the procurement process for its largest-ever bridge project.

Along with cost, an important evaluation measure is the private partner's capacity to complete construction in the shortest possible time, with the least possible disruption to affected businesses and the travelling public. Companies bidding on this project will present traffic management plans as part of their proposals. Aesthetics will also be part of the evaluation criteria.

The cycling/pedestrian bridge is included in the DBFM process, providing the opportunity for proponents to put forward creative solutions that meet all users' needs. To be successful in meeting City of Winnipeg evaluative criteria, their proposals must reflect input received from interested and affected stakeholders.

## Will the Disraeli Bridges be closed during construction?

Traffic management is a key planning component. To protect the structural integrity of the bridge, keep the construction schedule as efficient as possible, and maintain the budget, the bridge will very likely be closed during construction. Proponents bidding on the Disraeli Bridges Project will be encouraged to offer creative alternatives for traffic management that might not have been considered yet. Once construction begins, traffic flows will be monitored continuously, and any identified "hot spot" locations mitigated. Traffic modeling, a technology employed by transportation authorities throughout North America, shows that if a full closure is required, travel times along main routes in peak periods would only increase by approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

Various improvements are being considered to ease traffic congestion including:

- Enhanced traffic signal coordination and timing
- Transit improvements (Park & Ride and Diamond Lanes)
- a merge metering system at the Redwood Bridge
- public education and communication
- implementing longer peak period parking restrictions and other parking modifications along key alternate routes
- pedestrian shuttles and enhancements for cyclists
- tow trucks on call at the Redwood and Louise Bridges
- strategies to address potential shortcutting in specific neighbourhoods

Many of the traffic management improvements being considered will remain in place following construction.

## What about access to area businesses affected by construction?

The City will provide information to assist people travelling through the local area and accessing businesses. Business sector representatives will have input into development of the plan. Some specific measures that will be considered are:

- way finding signage
- additional parking to serve businesses
- maps showing alternate traffic routes
- a marketing/promotion budget for area businesses

## How will the plan for the cycling/pedestrian bridge be developed?

The final location of the bridge has yet to be determined; it may be added to the Disraeli Bridge, or designed and built as a new, separate, lower elevation bridge across the Red River. A collaborative planning and public consultation process will result in a conceptual plan for the bridge. A committee is being formed with community and City representatives, including the City's Active Transportation Committee, which will study connectivity with the Northeast Pioneers Greenway, Brazier St., Annabella and Waterfront Drive. How the bridge connects with communities on each side will be carefully considered. Improvements to riverbank access along Rover Avenue and to Rover Avenue itself will be investigated as part of the study to determine the best location.

Connectivity improvements can be carried out over the next two construction seasons (2009 & 2010), so the final route is in place when the bridge is complete. A new cycling/pedestrian bridge will require that a formal environmental assessment be conducted before construction can start.

As well, the City will incorporate public art in the project. It has not yet been determined whether this will be included in the DBFM or handled separately.

## How will we learn about progress on the project?

The RFP will be issued in late 2008. Construction of the Disraeli Bridges Project is expected to begin in early 2010.

Public communication will continue throughout the project. As well, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be asked to continue liaising with their respective constituency groups. Similar to the Charleswood Bridge Project, it is expected the design will be presented to the public for input at Open Houses, once a DBFM consortium is chosen.

More detailed descriptions of the evolution and components of the project are provided on the project website at: <http://www.winnipeg.ca/PublicWorks/MajorProjects/DisraeliBridges/>

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