



Ironworkers Memorial Second Narrows Crossing: Recommendations for Improved Access for Cyclists and Pedestrians

The Ironworkers Memorial Bridge (IWMB) is a critical route for an increasing number of cyclists and pedestrians in the Lower Mainland. Currently, it presents considerable safety and access challenges to non-vehicular traffic. HUB: Your Cycling Connection and the British Columbia Cycling Coalition (BCCC) are pleased that the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) is considering upgrades to the bridge, including widened sidewalks as well as improvements to the bridge access paths. We appreciate being asked to provide feedback in terms of improved access to the bridge.

The City of Vancouver (CoV) has provided us with details of planned cycling infrastructure projects which will improve cycling near the IWMB. This information will be forwarded to MOTI in a separate email. These projects will serve to leverage any improvements done by MoTI on the access paths at the south end of the bridge since the combination of MoTI, CoV and District of North Vancouver improvements will serve to encourage many more people to cycle over the IWMB.

We reference the IWMB Upgrade Feasibility Study (UFS) and the Review of Cycling Issues Around the IWMB (RCI) below where appropriate.

General Improvements

- All new or improved cycling facilities should be suitable for cyclists of all ages and abilities and should be wheelchair accessible.
- All paths should be widened to at least 3 m (4 desired) as per current standards.
- Surface of all paths should be smooth.
- Clear and consistent signage should be installed at all key decision points.
- All paths should be adequately lit.

Access improvements to south end of bridge

1. **Connection between east and west side - Provide new cycle overpass crossing freeway**
(UFS Page 3.3 Option 5)

We agree with this option – a highway overpass connecting the east and west sides. Ideally, this would connect to the top of the retaining wall on the east side. We further suggest that this connection be built prior to any work being done on the bridge as this will facilitate access to the side of the bridge which is free of construction. The overpass is preferred over an underpass for personal security reasons and to make wayfinding easier.

The following should help minimize costs:

- Minimize elevation loss by connecting the overpass to MUP on east side of TCH. As the MUP is lower than Fellows Street and thus require a shorter approach on the west side, this would be less expensive than the option detailed in the Cost Estimate in the UFS.
- A width of 4m is suitable. The UFS Cost Estimate specified a width of 5.5m which likely resulted in a higher estimate

2. Connection between west side of bridge and Bridgeway - Develop a cycling and pedestrian path along McGill Street off-ramp

(UFS Page 3-4 Option 9)

We prefer a two-way MUP in the same alignment as UFS Option 9 following the McGill Street off-ramp to Bridgeway Street. This would essentially combine the trips served by UFS Option 9 and UFS Option 8, Widen McGill Street off-ramp shoulder (between Vancouver and TCH). This option will connect directly to the Greenway connection along Bridgeway to Hastings Park and to improvements to the Portside Greenway that the City of Vancouver has committed to implement as part of the Hasting Park Master Plan.

A similar design was proposed by the CoV and agreed to by the Ministry of Transport in 1992. The CoV still recommends this option as being the preferred option. This design calls for a two way path between the south end of the bridge and Bridgeway parallel to the McGill off-ramp. We are pleased that the CoV has maintained the right of way so that this option is still possible. Please see the accompanying email for more information and a map displaying this option.

This option is much preferred over RCI options 4A and 4B which suggest upgrades to the existing switchback path.

3. Add bike lane at TCH level to avoid incline on east side of bridge north bound.

At the present, the northbound bike way rises up from the highway from the point the vehicle merge lane ends and comes down again before the bridge, only to rise again on the bridge deck. We suggest putting a barrier between the vehicle lanes and the emergency lane to create an at-grade bike option. It enhances visibility for cyclists who prefer not to cycle on off-road paths in the dark and reduces the effort to cycle over the bridge. A short stretch of vehicle lane can be maintained at the south end for emergency vehicles, or the cycle path could be made permeable to accommodate emergency access.

Access improvements at north end of bridge

1. Connection between Barrow Street and IWMB

(RCI Page 4-2 Options 2A, 2B or 2C)

Option 2C ("Widen Main Street sidewalk") is the preferred improvement. If this improvement is not feasible in the near future, Option 2A ("Bicycle path between the gravel and paved parking lots") is our preferred interim improvement.

2. Crossing of IWMB southbound on ramp at Main Street.

We suggest that the current configuration is a hazard to cyclists and pedestrians because there are two traffic lanes at the crosswalk and there are sightline issues as a result. Vehicle drivers are merging rather than looking for pedestrians & cyclists crossing. We suggest that a pedestrian/cyclist controlled traffic signal be installed at this location. Alternatively, the lane merge could be moved to be well before the crossing location.

In addition, there is presently no proper way for cyclists (who mostly arrive east-bound on Main St) to access the sidewalk at Mountain Hwy. A curb cut is needed 5 m west of the existing entrance to the car wash.

3. Access between east side of bridge and Main Street

(RCI Page 4-2 Option 3A - 3D)

We choose option 3A ("Move crosswalk to the east and improve sightlines") as the best one, however we disagree with the recommendation to "Install an advance warning pedestrian/cyclist flasher."

We suggest instead that pedestrian/cyclist style traffic signals be installed in order to control this crossing. As mentioned in RCI Page 3-6 Option 3-5, we agree that:

"For cyclists using the crosswalk and then heading WB on the bicycle path, there is a bump in the path that may have to be levelled out in order to improve convenience for cyclists."

The width of the path between the end of the bridge and the crosswalk needs to be widened to TAC standards - it is shared by pedestrians and cyclists and should be at least 3 m in width.

Conclusion

It is essential that the sidewalks on the IWMB be widened in order to make the bridge safer for a steadily increasing number of cyclists. Building the TCH overpass on the south side prior to the sidewalk widening project will facilitate access to the side of the bridge which remains open during construction. Improving overall cycling access to the bridge at this time will make the approaches safer and more convenient and will leverage investments in the sidewalk widening project.

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