



Railway Greenway Lighting Engagement

Project Background

At the October 19, 2022, Public Works and Transportation Committee meeting, a delegation presented concerns about user safety after dark along the Railway Greenway. A petition to install lighting and explore opportunities for safety enhancements was also submitted. In 2023, Parks staff studied lighting options and their associated cost implications, and made a recommendation for a community engagement process to determine preferences for lighting along the Railway Greenway, which was endorsed by Council.

Currently, lighting in City parks is limited to sites where it is deemed necessary to ensure safe passage or access to amenities that operate after dark, such as sports fields and community facilities. In these cases, lights typically operate on a movement sensor or timer from dusk to dawn.

The Railway Greenway is unique in Richmond: it provides important ecosystem services as an ecological corridor while offering a multi-use path (MUP) for various modes of active transportation. The MUP serves as one of Richmond's busiest cycling routes. Data from 2020 and 2021 indicated average daily cycling trips ranging from approximately 700 to 1,000 for the months of April through August. Public amenities, such as community gardens, are also located along the Railway Greenway.



Current conditions along the Railway Greenway - view facing north



Current conditions along the Railway Greenway - view facing south

There is an existing on-road bicycle lane on each side of Railway Avenue that runs parallel to the Railway Greenway between Granville Avenue and Garry Street, along with a City sidewalk on the east side of the street. Both of these transportation facilities are illuminated by roadway lighting.

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Ecological Impact

The Railway Greenway serves as an ecological corridor that provides ecosystem services including rainwater storage and filtration, cooling, and food sources and habitat for birds and insects. It is an important part of the City's Ecological Network. Some forms of lighting may have detrimental impacts on plants and animals within the Railway Greenway. Potential strategies to reduce these impacts include specifying lights that are movement sensor or timer-operated.



Railway Greenway ecological and active transportation corridor

Active Transportation

The Railway Greenway also serves as an important active transportation corridor in the City's network. A 4-metre wide multi-use path (MUP) accommodates mixed modes of transportation (e.g., walking and rolling) and is one of the busiest cycling routes in the City. While there are no lights within the greenway at present, some sections, especially those with proximity to intersections and Railway Avenue, receive light spillage from streetlights. The sidewalk and bike lanes along Railway Avenue are illuminated by existing streetlights, offering an alternative path of travel.

Impact on Adjacent Residences

As the City contemplates the prospect of lighting along the Railway Greenway, avoiding any negative impacts for adjacent residents is a top priority. Should the broader Richmond community indicate support for lighting, City staff would develop an implementation strategy that is sensitive to adjacent residences and employs measures to avoid increased late night activity and light trespass (e.g., by employing lights operated on movement sensors or timers and outfitted with shields).

Lighting Strategies and Cost Implications

In 2023, City staff procured the services of a qualified electrical engineer to complete a Railway Greenway lighting study. Since the City does not have established light standards for parks, the City's Engineering Design Specifications for Roadway Lighting were used. These specifications are based on Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standards and can be applied to off-street pathways in addition to roadways. The findings of the lighting study demonstrated that the majority of the Railway Greenway MUP does not meet City standards, with the exception of areas in close proximity (less than 30 metres) to lit intersections.