



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

# Portage Bridge Cycling Improvements

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

## I — Project Description

### *Background*

The Portage Bridge crosses the Ottawa River to connect the cities of Gatineau, Quebec and Ottawa, Ontario. The bridge links Laurier Street, Alexander-Taché Boulevard, and Maisonneuve Boulevard in Gatineau with Wellington Street and the Sir John A. MacDonald Parkway in Ottawa. The Portage Bridge was built by the National Capital Commission (NCC) and opened in 1973.

The Portage Bridge forms part of Confederation Boulevard, which is designated by the NCC as the Capital's ceremonial route to connect sites and symbols of national significance, and is also part of the City of Ottawa's Cross-town Bikeway Route #1. The Portage Bridge currently includes four general traffic lanes, two bus / high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, and sidewalks. The bridge also includes a 2.5m wide bi-directional cycle track on its east side.

The NCC, with the assistance of WSP Canada, developed an asphalt improvement plan that includes proposals for possible changes to the existing bidirectional cycle track on the Portage Bridge. The construction work is currently scheduled to begin in summer 2018. Following an analysis of the cycling facility, three alternative cycling improvements were put forward to members of the public with a view to soliciting user and community feedback on the proposed changes:

**Option 1** – enhancements to the existing bidirectional cycle track through *widening* the area between the cycle track and motor vehicle lanes;

**Option 2** – enhancements to the existing bidirectional cycle track through the installation of a *barrier* between the cycle track and motor vehicle lanes; or

**Option 3** – construction of a southbound cycle track on the west side of the bridge, and conversion of the existing bidirectional cycle track to a northbound-only cycle track.

### *Objective*

The objective of the public consultation was to receive input on each of the three alternatives and use these comments to assist the NCC in selecting a preferred design to present to the NCC Board of directors for approval in early spring 2018.

## II — Stakeholder Consultation

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the NCC organized consultation meetings at the Urbanism Lab in NCC Head Offices, 40 Elgin Street, Ottawa. There were two meetings: the first was for municipal partners and the second was for interest group stakeholders.

The format of each meeting included a presentation on the alternatives analyzed and evaluated, which highlighted the key opportunities and challenges with each

alternative. Following the presentation the floor was opened to the comments whereby the groups discussed their preferences. Attendees were also asked to provide written comments two weeks following the meeting.

### **Municipal Partners**

The following groups were invited to the municipal partners meeting:

- City of Ottawa
  - Planning, *attended*
  - Traffic Services, *attended*
  - Traffic Operations, *attended*
  - Maintenance Operations, *attended*
  - Fire Services
  - Paramedic Services
- OC Transpo, *attended*
- Ottawa Police, *attended*
- City of Gatineau
  - Planning, *attended*
  - Traffic Operations
- STO, *provided comments at a later time*
- Gatineau Police, *attended*

### **Municipal Feedback**

Feedback expressed during the meeting, and through written comments following the meeting, are summarized in **Table 1**.

**Table 1. Municipal Partners Feedback**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Option 1 (Widening)	<p><b>City of Gatineau (Planning)</b> – Preferred option</p> <p><b>OC Transpo</b> – Widening the cycling facility will only improve the <i>perception</i> of safety if bus mirrors are encroaching on the cycling space.</p>
Option 2 (Barrier)	<p><b>Ottawa Police</b> – Preference for barrier to increase safety and protection from cars.</p> <p><b>City of Gatineau (Planning)</b> – While widening preferred, barrier would also provide an improvement to the existing facility.</p>

Subject	Comments
Option 3 (Unidirectional)	<p>General agreement among attendees that unidirectional options were undesirable.</p> <p><b>Ottawa Police</b> – Not supportive of the unidirectional options due to the large potential for cyclists to travel the wrong-way or utilize sidewalks.</p> <p><b>City of Gatineau (Planning)</b> – Prefer bidirectional, but the addition of a unidirectional facility could be feasible in the long term.</p>
Lane Widths	<p><b>City of Ottawa (Planning)</b> – Encouraged exploration of options that reduced the vehicle lanes to the minimum width (3.0m) shown in the design criteria.</p> <p><b>City of Ottawa (Traffic Services)</b> – Eastbound lanes on Wellington Street on the approach to Bay Street were reduced to 3.0m during the modifications to the Portage and Wellington intersection and the installation of the westbound protected bike lane.</p> <p><b>STO</b> – Agreed with the HOV lane width reduction from 3.5 to 3.3 m.</p>
Snow Clearing & Maintenance	<p><b>City of Ottawa (Maintenance Operations)</b> – Indicated that snow storage will be an issue with any alternatives, but particularly if a barrier is installed.</p> <p><b>City of Gatineau (Planning)</b> – Cycle track should be at sidewalk level for ease of winter maintenance.</p>

### **Interest Group Stakeholders**

The following groups were invited to the interest group stakeholder meeting:

- Action Vélo Outaouais (AVO), *attended*
- Association des résidents de l'Île-de-Hull
- Bike Ottawa (Citizens for Safe Cycling), *attended*
- Club Vélo Plaisirs
- Conseil régional de l'environnement et du développement durable de l'Outaouais (CREDDO)
- Kanata Nepean Bicycle Club
- Ottawa Bicycle Club (OBC), *attended*
- Ottawa Voyageurs d'Ottawa Walking Club
- Pathway Patrol
- RentABike Ottawa, *attended*
- Réseau Vélo Boulot

- Responsible Cycling Coalition (RCC)
- Vélo-Services

### Interest Group Feedback

Feedback expressed during the meeting, and through written comments following the meeting, are summarized in **Table 2**.

*Table 2. Interest Group Stakeholder Feedback*

Subject	Comments
Option 1 (Widening)	<b>Bike Ottawa</b> – Would not support widening only
Option 2 (Barrier)	<b>Bike Ottawa</b> – Preferred facility
Option 3 (Unidirectional)	<p><b>Action vélo Outaouais</b> - Initially preferred unidirectional cycle tracks or lanes on the Portage Bridge, but later changed their position based on the context of the Portage Bridge (see combination)</p> <p><b>Ottawa Bicycle Club</b> – In general, OBC prefers unidirectional lanes only. This was their initial preference for the Portage Bridge.</p>
Combination Option	<p><b>Action vélo Outaouais, Bike Ottawa, and Ottawa Bicycle Club</b> – While initially in disagreement during the meeting, each interest group’s written feedback agreed on a single preferred option. Their ideal scenario would include maintaining the bidirectional cycle track on the east side of the bridge and installing the proposed barrier wall (as in Option 2), while also building a southbound cycle track on the west side of the bridge to reduce congestion on the bidirectional cycle track and accommodate commuters. The cycling advocacy groups also expressed a desire to further narrow the vehicle lanes to provide additional width for the bidirectional cycle track, if possible.</p>
Connectivity Improvements	<p><b>Bike Ottawa</b> – Improve the connection to the Ottawa River Pathway</p> <p><b>Bike Ottawa</b> – Extend the bidirectional cycle track on the north side of Wellington Street as soon as possible, and extend the bidirectional cycle track to Laurier Street in Gatineau</p> <p><b>Action vélo Outaouais</b> – Improve the ability for westbound cyclists on Wellington Street to access the Sir John A. Macdonald</p>

Subject	Comments
	<p>Parkway and the Ottawa River Pathway.</p> <p><b>Action vélo Outaouais</b> – In regards to the new southbound cycle track, improve connectivity from the Voyageurs Pathway in Gatineau, and to the Ottawa River Pathway in Ottawa.</p> <p><b>Action vélo Outaouais</b> – Concerned about how eastbound cyclists on Wellington will cross Lyon with future STO buses turning right.</p>
Wayfinding	<p><b>Action vélo Outaouais &amp; RentABike</b> – Confusing area, improved wayfinding required.</p>
Pedestrian-Cyclist Separation	<p><b>Action vélo Outaouais</b> –Preference would be to maintain vertical separation (difference in curb) between bicyclists and pedestrians.</p>
Winter Maintenance	<p><b>Bike Ottawa</b> – As one of the few segregated cycling links between Ottawa and Gatineau, the ability to maintain the facility in the winter should be considered.</p>
Construction Staging	<p><b>Bike Ottawa</b> – Care must be taken to ensure that cycling access across the bridge is maintained at all times during construction.</p>

### III — Public Consultation Process

A public survey for the Portage Bridge Cycling Improvements was available on the NCC's project website:



The NCC has retained WSP Canada to develop an asphalt improvement plan and propose possible changes to the existing bidirectional cycle track on the Portage Bridge. The construction work is currently scheduled to begin in summer 2018.



#### About the project

Following an analysis of the cycling facility, possible cycling improvements include the following:

- enhancements to the existing bidirectional cycle track through widening the area between the cycle track and motor vehicle lanes;
- enhancements to the existing bidirectional cycle track through the installation of a barrier between the cycle track and motor vehicle lanes; or
- construction of a southbound cycle track on the west side of the bridge, and conversion of the existing bidirectional cycle track to a northbound-only cycle track.

Any changes to the cycle track are considered temporary until the full rehabilitation of the bridge structure, which will be required in 10 to 15 years. During a full bridge rehabilitation, additional improvements to the cycle track and connections may be possible. It is noted for all options that consideration is being given to reducing the posted speed limit on the bridge to 50 km/h.

#### Public Consultation

Let us know what you think of the proposed options to improve the existing cycle track, by completing the following survey by midnight on February 1, 2018. Your comments will be reviewed and will contribute to the selection of the best option. To finalize the selection, the option needs to be approved by the NCC Board of Directors in winter 2018.

**Figure 1. Survey Link on the NCC's Portage Bridge Cycling Improvements Project Website**

**Date and Time:**

The online survey was available from January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

**Format:**

The online survey included 11 questions in total: three were closed-questions that collected information on how the survey respondents used the facility, three were open-ended, and five were a mix of closed (yes / no), with a dynamic open-ended response if the respondent answered 'no'.

***Invitations and Promotion***

The consultation was advertised through social media messages and a mail out to the Public Affairs database.

***Participation***

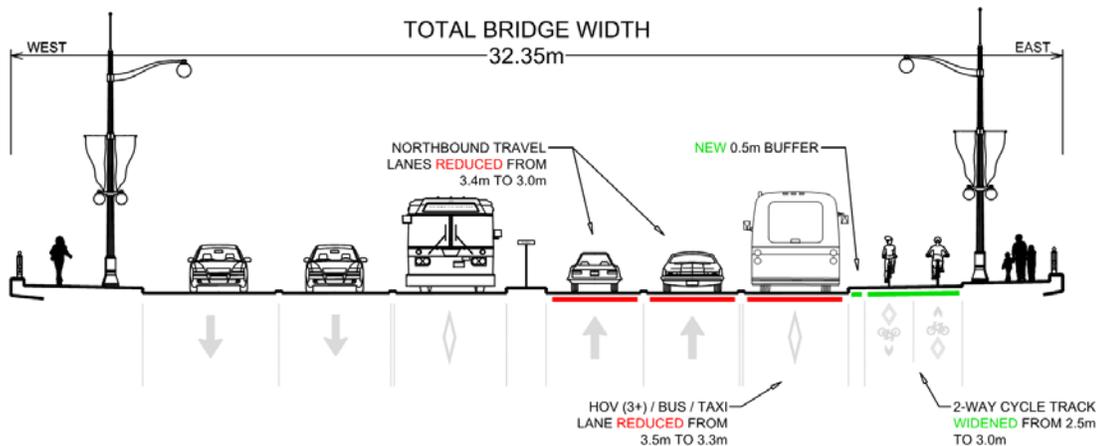
1321 people started the online survey, 1167 completed the first question, and 986 completed the entire survey. Of those who completed the survey, 64% completed in English while 36% completed in French.

## **IV — Public Consultation Highlights**

Survey respondents were primarily cyclists, with 82% of respondents reporting they currently cycle on the Portage Bridge. The majority (73%) of respondents typically access the Portage Bridge from the NCC pathway network, while a minority (27%) access the bridge from the road network.

***Option 1: Widened Two-Way Cycle Track***

Option 1 was a widening of the existing bidirectional cycle track from 2.5 metres to 3 metres, plus an additional 0.5 metre buffer between the cycle track and the vehicle lanes. The space for this widened facility is gained by narrowing the existing northbound vehicle lanes from 3.4 metres to 3 metres, and narrowing the existing HOV/bus lane from 3.5 metres to 3.3 metres. See **Figure 2** for a cross-section of Option 1.



**Figure 2. Cross-section of Option 1: bidirectional cycle track widened to 3 metres with an additional 0.5-metre buffer**

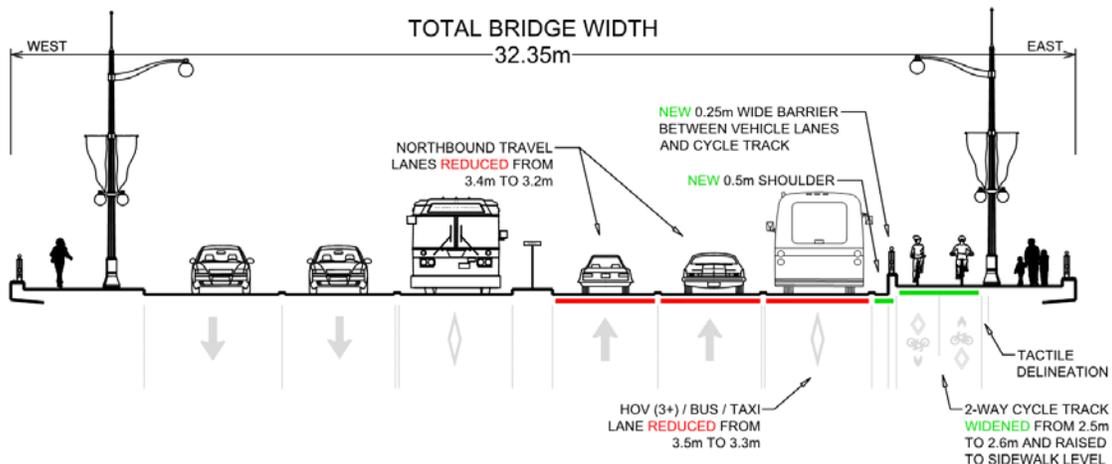
Survey respondents were generally supportive of Option 1, with 66% of respondents indicating that they would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge with a widened two-way cycle track. However, many cyclists indicated that Option 1 would only be a marginal improvement over existing conditions. A number of respondents commented that they would remain uncomfortable without a barrier, stating the proximity to buses, wind drafts, and a fear of falling into the vehicle lane as the reasons. Others commented that they generally dislike bidirectional cycle tracks and would prefer unidirectional cycle tracks (Option 3).

Additional comments received focussed on ways to improve Option 1:

- Pave the cycle track in asphalt rather than concrete.
- Make the division between the cycle track and the sidewalk a 45° slope to allow cyclists to exit the cycle track when necessary.
- Add the reflective plastic pole lane dividers on the buffer between the cycle track and vehicle lanes.

### **Option 2: Physical Barrier between Cycle Track and Motor Vehicles**

Option 2 was a widening of the existing bidirectional cycle track from 2.5 metres to 2.6 metres and provides an additional 0.25-metre-wide vertical barrier and a 0.5 metre-wide shoulder between the cycle track and motor vehicle lanes. The cycle track would be raised to the same level as the sidewalk with a surface delineation (tactile strip) to separate cyclists and pedestrians. The existing northbound vehicle lanes are narrowed from 3.4 metres to 3.2 metres, and the existing HOV/bus lane is narrowed from 3.5 metres to 3.3 metres. See **Figure 3** for a cross-section of Option 2.



**Figure 3. Cross-section of Option 2: bidirectional cycle track widened to 2.6 metres, with an additional 0.25-metre-wide barrier and new 0.5-metre shoulder**

Respondents were equally supportive of Option 2 as they were of Option 1, with 66% of respondents indicating that they would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge with a barrier between the vehicle lanes and cycle track. Many were enthusiastic about the safety improvements that a barrier would bring to the cycle track, and stressed that Option 2 would make it easier for tourists and families to use the facility.

Some respondents expressed concerns about specific aspects of Option 2. These included comments about the existing cycle track feeling too narrow, prompting concern that a new barrier without widening would make it feel even narrower. A related concern was the new risk of hitting a bicycle’s handlebars on the barrier. Other respondents did not like that the new cycle track would be at the same level as the sidewalk, which they felt would increase the potential for cyclist-pedestrian conflicts on the bridge. While not opposed to Option 2, some respondents were unsure why the vehicle lanes could not be narrowed to 3.0m to both widen the cycle track *and* provide a barrier.

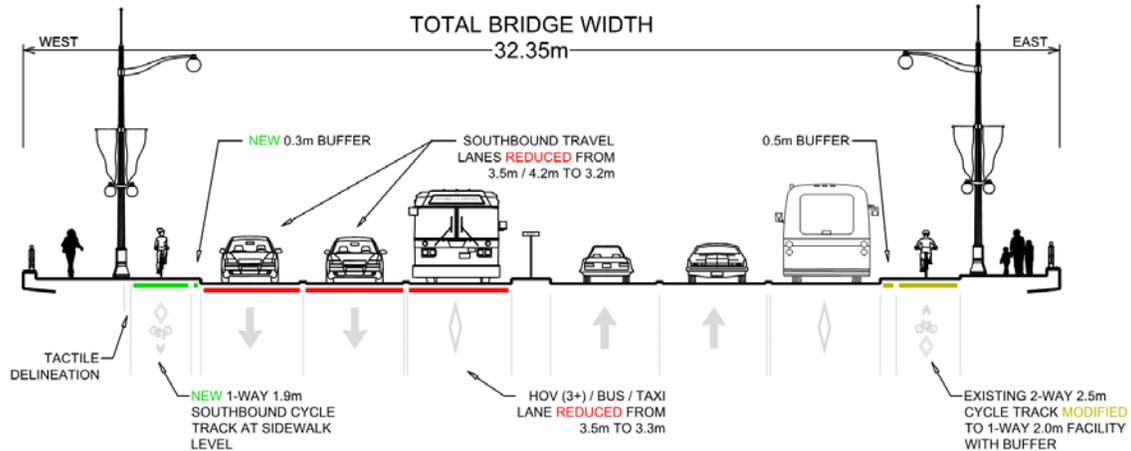
Additional comments received highlighted ways to improve Option 2:

- Ensure the barrier is tall enough such that cyclists do not fall over it into vehicle lanes.
- Ensure the barrier is an adequate distance away from the cycle track at handlebar height.

**Option 3: Unidirectional Cycle Tracks on Both Sides of the Bridge**

Option 3 modifies the existing bidirectional cycle track to a 2-metre-wide northbound cycle track with a 0.5-metre buffer and provides a new 1.9m wide southbound cycle track with a 0.3m buffer on the west side of the Portage Bridge. The new southbound cycle track is at sidewalk level with a surface delineation separating pedestrians and cyclists. Additional space for the new southbound cycle

track is obtained by narrowing the existing southbound vehicle lanes from 3.5 metres / 4.2 metres to 3.2 metres, and narrowing the existing HOV/bus lane from 3.5 metres to 3.3 metres. See **Figure 4** for a cross-section of Option 3.



**Figure 4. Cross-section of Option 3: unidirectional cycle tracks**

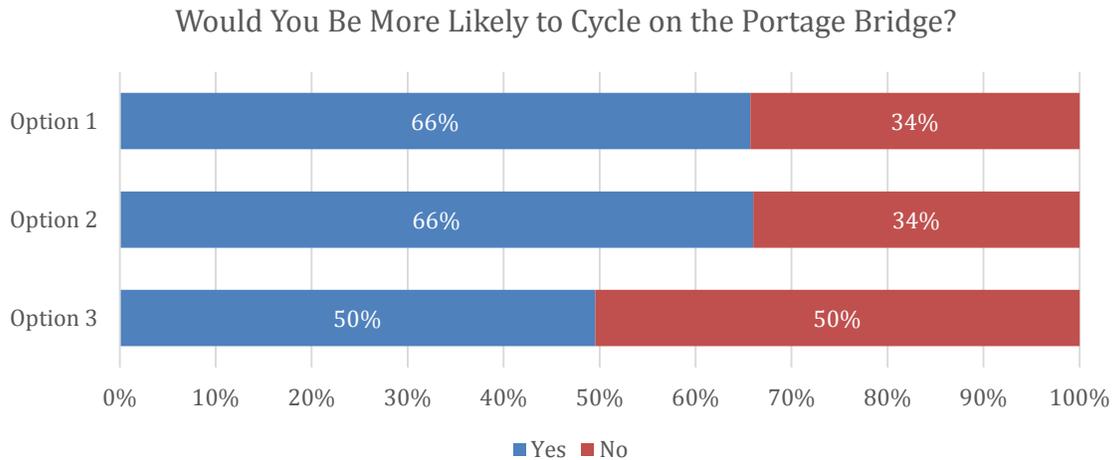
Option 3 received less support than either Option 1 or Option 2, with only 50% of respondents indicating that they would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge with unidirectional cycle tracks. Option 3 enjoyed strong support from commuter cyclists and frequent users of the bridge, many of whom indicated they already cycle southbound on the west side of the bridge (either in the vehicle lanes or on the west sidewalk). The main concern of respondents regarding Option 3 was how connections would be made to the pathway network. Several respondents indicated that their support for Option 3 was contingent upon the improvement of connections on both sides of the bridge.

Additional comments received highlighted ways to improve Option 3:

- Make the cycle track on the west side of the bridge bidirectional from Victoria Island to Gatineau.
- Add a barrier to both unidirectional cycle tracks.
- Add a connection from the Voyageurs Pathway to the proposed southbound cycle track on the west side of the Portage Bridge.
- Replace the path with stairs near the Mill Street Brew Pub with a bicycle friendly ramp for southbound cyclists.

### Comparative Summary

Respondents were asked if they would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge given the improvements proposed by Option 1, Option 2, and Option 3. Results are summarized in **Figure 5**.

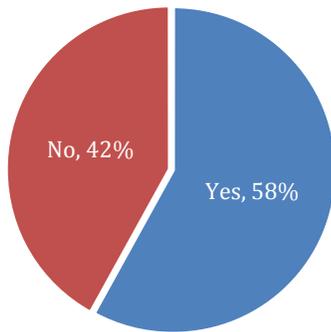


**Figure 5. Proportion of respondents who would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge given the three proposed options**

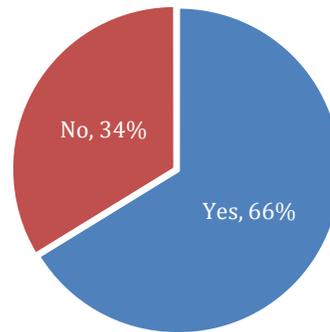
Comparing respondents indicated preference, a greater number of respondents indicated that they would prefer Option 2 (barrier), refer to **Figure 6**. It is notable that when asked if they would prefer Option 1, even with no barrier, respondents had not yet seen Option 2. In contrast, when asked if they would prefer Option 2, even with a narrower cycle track, respondents had seen both Option 1 and Option 2.

When asked if they would prefer a wider cycle track, even without a physical barrier between cyclists and traffic, 58% of respondents answered in the affirmative. Conversely, when asked if they would prefer a physical barrier between cyclist and traffic, even with a narrower cycle track, 66% of respondents answered in the affirmative.

Prefer Option 1 (Even if No Barrier)



Prefer Option 2 (Even with Narrower Cycle Track)



**Figure 6. Proportion of respondents who prefer Option 1, versus prefer Option 2**

A number of respondents expressed a preference for some combination of all three options, as illustrated by the following comment:

- *“Suggesting it has to be either/or is wrong. Good cycling infrastructure actually requires all 3 proposals - wider track, high barrier and new track on the other side of the bridge.”*

However, **Figure 5** clearly demonstrates that a bidirectional facility is preferred to a unidirectional one for its superior pathway connections, while **Figure 6** shows that, when presented with a trade-off, there was a higher degree of preference for the features outlined in Option 2 (barrier) than those outlined in Option 1 (wider track).

## V — Detailed Feedback Analysis

The following section summarizes the public consultation feedback by survey question.

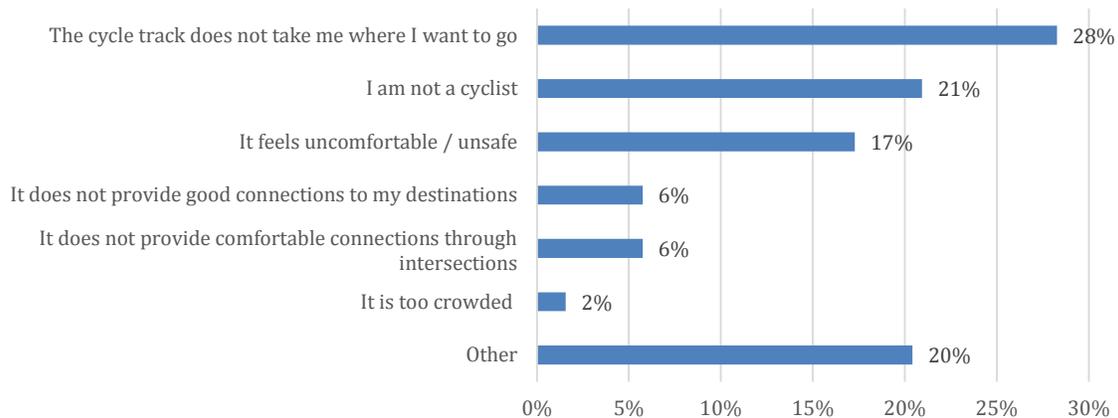
### **Question 1: Do you currently cycle on the Portage Bridge cycle track?**

A majority (82%) of survey respondents currently cycle on the Portage Bridge cycle track, while the remainder (18%) do not.

### **Question 2: If No, Why Not?**

Respondents who do not currently cycle on the Portage Bridge cycle track were also asked to specify why not. Respondents were given six pre-selected options, or alternatively could specify their own ‘other’ response. The most frequent response was “the cycle track does not take me where I want to go” (28%), followed by “I am not a cyclist” (21%), and “it feels uncomfortable / unsafe” (17%). See **Figure 7** for a complete summary of responses.

### Why Don't You Cycle on the Portage Bridge Cycle Track?



**Figure 7. Reasons why respondents don't cycle on the Portage Bridge cycle track**

### Question 3: When using the Portage Bridge cycle track, would you typically be coming from / going to the pathways or coming from / going to the road network?

The Portage Bridge cycle track functions as both a connection between the NCC pathway network (Ottawa River Pathway in Ottawa and Voyageurs Pathway in Gatineau) and as a connection between the road network in Ottawa and Gatineau. The majority (73%) of respondents indicated that they typically access the Portage Bridge from the NCC pathway network, while a minority (27%) said that they usually access the bridge from the road network.

### Question 4: Would you prefer [Option 1], even if it means no physical barrier from vehicle traffic?

When participants were asked “would you prefer a wider cycle track, even if it means no physical barrier from traffic?”, 58% of respondents answered yes, while 42% answered no.

#### If no, why?

Those who answered no were given an opportunity to explain why they would not prefer a wider cycle track without a physical barrier. The answers have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 4 (Would you prefer Option 1, even if it means no physical barrier from traffic lanes?)**

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Prefer Barrier (over	208	“I'm generally comfortable with the width of

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Widening)		the pathway. Physical separation from traffic is more important to me.” “BARRIER OR BUST. The traffic volume, wind, roadway splash and speed makes a barrier the only safe solution.”
Buses	81	“The wind speed from the buses is still too high. A fall into the bus lane still results in death.”
Speed	38	“Unless speeds are reduced, the risk of collision with a bus remains high.”
Prefer Existing / Improvements Not Required	32	“It's fine as it is, there are far worse bike lanes in Ottawa that should be addressed first.”
No Effect – Still Too Unsafe	32	“Not safe enough”

Note:

Of 1070 responses to Question 4, there were 449 ‘no’ responses, 386 of which made comments.

Other frequently mentioned items include a preference for unidirectional cycle tracks (30 comments), and a fear of falling into the vehicle lane or of collisions with vehicles (27 comments).

### **Question 5: Would [Option 1] make you more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge?**

66% of respondents indicated they would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge with a widened two-way cycle track, while 34% indicated they would not. See **Figure 5** in **IV — Public Consultation Highlights** (starting on page 7) for a comparison with the responses to the equivalent questions asked about Option 2 and Option 3.

#### **If no, why?**

Those who indicated they would not be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge were given an opportunity to explain why. The answers have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 4** below.

**Table 4. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 5 (Would Option 1 make you more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge?)**

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
No Effect – Will Continue to Use Facility	138	<p>“This question does not apply to the many hundreds of cyclist commuters or serious cyclists who use the bridge lane already... I cycled 8,000 km in 2017. I and these types of cyclists use it as it currently is constructed, good or bad as that may be.”</p> <p>“I use the path in its current state. I'm not going to use it more.”</p>
Prefer Unidirectional (over Bidirectional) Cycle Tracks	31	“I prefer one-way cycle track on both sides, one going north, the other south.”
Prefer Barrier (over Widening)	30	“A barrier between cyclists and traffic would make me more likely to cycle the track as I would feel safer.”
No Effect – Still Too Unsafe	29	“I don't feel it will make enough difference to how safe I feel.”
Prefer Existing / Improvements Not Required	27	“The change would be unremarkable, except for the years you would close the path to make the change.”

Note:

Of 1056 responses to Question 5, there were 362 ‘no’ responses; 284 of which made comments

It is interesting to note that while 208 comments indicated a preference for a barrier over cycle track widening, only 30 comments indicated the reason they would not cycle on the portage bridge more is that they prefer a barrier (over widening). In other words, while many respondents would prefer a barrier, the widened cycle track would still contribute to cyclists using the facility more or continue using the facility.

**Question 6: Do you have any other comments on [Option 1]?**

The answers to Question 6 have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 6** below.

**Table 5. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 6 (Do you have any other comments on Option 1?)**

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Prefer Barrier (over Widening)	84	<p>“A protective buffer or barrier is critical to making this safe, all-ages infrastructure.”</p> <p>“I don't recommend the two way cycle track. If you need to go this way, I would recommend a serious barrier between cars and cyclists.”</p> <p>“A physical barrier is essential!!! I often ride with my children and am TERRIFIED that they will fall in front of a vehicle and be crushed to death.”</p>
Prefer Widening (over Barrier)	40	<p>“I'm an avid cyclist, and I find the existing path is too narrow, especially if an inexperienced cyclist is coming in the other direction. Widening the lane is really the only improvement that would make a difference for me, personally.”</p>
Prefer Existing / Improvements not Required	33	<p>“I'd rather see money spent on safer cycling tracks across the other Ottawa-Gatineau bridges than on the portage which is already decent.”</p>
Winter / Snow	32	<p>“I commute by bicycle daily, and year-round. The NCC does not currently remove snow and debris from the two-way cycle track on a regular basis. Any improvements, widening or otherwise, should factor for year-round operations and maintenance.”</p>
Buses	31	<p>“I like the idea of a widened track, but the lane is still right beside a lane of oncoming speeding buses, and therefore extremely dangerous.”</p>

Note:  
335 comments were recorded for Question 6.

Other frequently mentioned items include suggestions to improve connections and intersection crossings at either end of the Portage Bridge (29 comments), a preference for both a barrier and widening (29 comments), and a preference for unidirectional cycle tracks over the bidirectional cycle track (26 comments).

A number of respondents used Question 6 as an opportunity to propose unique ideas on how to improve cycling on the Portage Bridge:

- Pave the cycle track with asphalt rather than concrete.
- Decrease the waiting time to cross at the Wellington Street and Portage Bridge intersection.
- Improve the area where westbound / northbound cyclists mount the cycle track at the Wellington Street and Portage intersection. This area is bumpy, at a bad angle for cyclist to mount the cycle track, and southbound cyclists sometimes do not yield to northbound cyclists.
- Improve lighting on the bridge.
- Make the division between the cycle track and the sidewalk a 45° slope to allow cyclists to exit the cycle track when necessary.
- Add the reflective plastic pole lane dividers on the buffer between the cycle track and vehicle lanes.
- Build a dedicated cycling and pedestrian bridge between the Chaudière Bridge and Portage Bridge.

**Question 7: Would you prefer [Option 2], even if it means a narrower cycle track?**

When participants were asked “would you prefer a physical barrier from traffic, even if it means a narrower cycle track?” approximately 66% of respondents answered yes, while 34% answered no.

**If no, why?**

Those who answered no were given an opportunity to explain why they would not prefer a physical barrier from traffic, even if it means a narrower cycle track. The answers have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 6** below.

*Table 6. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 7 (Would you prefer Option 2, even if it means a narrower cycle track?)*

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Too Narrow	102	<p>“Prefer a barrier but cycle path is too narrow currently.”</p> <p>“Presence of a physical barrier effectively narrows the cycle track due to handlebar buffer.”</p>

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Restricts Maneuverability / Passing / Evasion	70	<p>“More dangerous when passing slow cyclists; your handlebar can clip the barrier when there is not a lot of room.”</p> <p>“I prefer more wiggle room for passing slower bicyclists and gives me more room for comfort.”</p>
Prefer Existing / Improvements not Required	45	“No demonstrated need for this, the accident stats do not indicate an issue here.”
Prefer Widening (over Barrier)	42	“Since the cycle path is already raised I feel that a barrier is less important than widening, but would be happy with either.”
Prefer Barrier & Widening	26	“It's not fair to make cyclists choose between a wider cycle track and safety. I, and I think most cyclists would prefer both an effective physical barrier and wider cycling lanes.”

Note:

Of 1013 responses to Question 7, there were 342 ‘no’ responses; 263 of which made comments.

Other frequently mentioned items include a concern that the barrier will not increase safety or that it will make the cycle track more dangerous (24 comments), and a concern that pedestrian-cyclist interactions will increase if the cycle track and sidewalk are at the same level (22 comments).

### **Question 8: Would [Option 2] make you more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge?**

66% of respondents indicated that they would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge with a physical barrier between the cycle track and motor vehicle lanes, while 34% indicated they would not. See **Figure 5** in **IV — Public Consultation Highlights** for a comparison with the responses to the equivalent questions asked about Option 1 and Option 3.

#### **If no, why?**

Those who indicated they would not be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge were given an opportunity to further explain why. The answers have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 7** below.

**Table 7. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 8 (Would Option 2 make you more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge?)**

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
No Effect – Will Continue to Use Facility	111	<p>“I would feel more comfortable with a physical barrier, but the lack of a barrier does not make me avoid Portage Bridge.”</p> <p>“There’s literally no other way to cross the river near here. I have to use it. I already use it. Make it better because it’s the right thing to do, not because of ridership targets or other nonsense.”</p>
Too Narrow	29	<p>“I really worry that the narrowed track is too narrow and the barrier makes it feel even narrower. Winter maintenance would likely be affected.”</p>
Prefer Existing / Improvements Not Required	25	<p>“I don't see the current configuration as being problematic, other than not enough people using it whole year round.”</p>
Prefer Existing / Improvements not Required	22	<p>“Because barriers hinder my riding freedom.”</p>
No Effect – Still Too Unsafe	16	<p>“I still would not feel safe if the actual cycling track is narrower. There is always the issue of cyclists trying to pass, many without using a bell to warn other cyclists. I have always felt nervous about cyclists coming up behind me without enough warning.”</p>

Note:

Of 1000 responses to Question 8, there were 340 ‘no’ responses; 224 of which made comments.

**Question 9: Do you have any other comments on [Option 2]?**

The answers to Question 9 have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 8** below.

**Table 8. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 9 (Do you have any other comments on Option 2?)**

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Prefer Barrier (over Widening)	175	<p>“I prefer the physical barrier option.”</p> <p>“This is a better option than a wider lane with no barrier.”</p> <p>“This is a perfect plan, especially for ‘Sunday’ cyclists with kids who want to be separated from the traffic.”</p> <p>“Physical barrier is the best option for safety.”</p>
Prefer Barrier & Widening	42	<p>“Do it! AND widen the cycle track to 3m -- people will love this!!”</p> <p>“I honestly believe that a &gt;3m cycle track with barrier could be built if the planners really tried.”</p>
Winter / Snow	29	<p>“Must be winter-maintained. The physical barrier on Mackenzie, for example, is very safe -- but apparently impossible to maintain in the winter. There's no point to the barrier if it's going to block ridership year-round.”</p>
Pedestrian-Cyclist Interaction	28	<p>“Even if the surface would look different, I am concerned about the bike path and the sidewalk being level . . . I've had issues on other paths that have the [same] level, such as the Alexandra Bridge. I've narrowly avoided collision with careless pedestrians several times. Clear demarcation between the sidewalk and the path is critical.”</p>
Prefer Widening (over Barrier)	19	<p>“It shouldn't be necessary if the space available for cyclists is adequate with a buffer zone.”</p>

Note:

316 comments were recorded for Question 9.

Several respondents used Question 9 as an opportunity to propose unique ideas on how to improve cycling on the Portage Bridge:

- Ensure that the barrier is tall enough to prevent cyclists from falling over it.
- Consider limiting foot traffic to one side of the bridge.
- Consider a barrier or delineator between the cycle track and the sidewalk.

- Implement the bidirectional cycle track on the north side of Wellington Street as soon as possible.

**Question 10: Would [Option 3] make you more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge?**

50% of respondents indicated that they would be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge with unidirectional cycle tracks. See **Figure 5** in **IV — Public Consultation Highlights** for a comparison with the responses to the equivalent questions asked about Option 1 and Option 2.

**If no, why?**

Those who indicated they would not be more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge were given an opportunity to explain why. The answers have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 9** below.

**Table 9. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 10 (Would Option 3 make you more likely to cycle on the Portage Bridge?)**

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Street Crossings / Connectivity / Wayfinding	212	<p>“This would make it harder to get one and off the bike lanes from the bridge to the connected pathways. The less crossing the street the better. This will also make it easy for cyclists to go the wrong direction on the path.”</p> <p>“I don't see how I would get where I'm going since the southbound lanes don't seem to connect to anything.”</p> <p>“The 'poor connections' indicated in the analysis would negate any potential benefits.”</p>
No Effect – Will Continue to Use Facility	46	<p>“I already cycle daily; however, this option would make my commute much safer because I currently cycle home in the southbound road lane rather than in the bidirectional bike lane because it saves me time.”</p>
Restricts Maneuverability / Passing / Evasion	31	<p>“Inability to pass a slower cyclist likely to be problematic, both for the slower and faster cyclists.”</p>

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Prefer Existing / Improvements not Required	26	"I prefer the status quo because it is more convenient. To get over from the east side to the west to use the southbound path involves crossing six lanes, only then to have to cross back again to get to the downtown core."
Prefer Barrier	26	"The option with the barrier is critical for family friendly biking!"

Note:

Of 989 responses to Question 10, there were 499 'no' responses; 364 of which made comments.

### Question 11: Do you have any other comments on [Option 3]?

The answers to Question 11 have been categorized based on frequently occurring themes among the concerns or preferences expressed by respondents. Answers can include multiple concerns or preferences and therefore be associated with multiple categories. The top five categories are shown in **Table 10** below.

**Table 10. Top Five Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns or Preferences regarding Question 11 (Do you have any other comments on Option 3?)**

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
Street Crossings / Connectivity / Wayfinding	144	"Make sure that there are proper connections to the pathway i.e. avoid crosswalks where the cyclist has to disembark, awkward turns or poor signage."  "The lack of connections to routes at either end of the bridge make this less useful."
Prefer Unidirectional (over Bidirectional) Cycle Tracks	130	"I prefer this option - under the condition that access from the MUPs on the north and south of Portage bridge be improved to have clearly signed links to the new southbound track"  "Two unidirectional cycle tracks is BY FAR the best solution but the buffers are too small — 0.3m is not nearly enough."
Winter / Snow	31	"One thing this survey does not cover is snow removal from the path, which is critical as a winter [cyclist]. I am forced to take the sidewalk during winter for my commute which is a danger to both myself and [pedestrian]"

Category	Freq.	Sample Comment
		traffic. Snow removal is so infrequent as to render the path functionally unusable during winter months despite Portage bridge being a key link to Ottawa for many seeking to head to and from the downtown core by bike in winter.”
Pedestrian-Cyclist Interaction	26	“I don't like it as I think cyclists will be more likely to cycle on the northbound sidewalk, which is inconvenient/unsafe for pedestrians.”
Prefer Bidirectional (over Unidirectional) Cycle Tracks	26	“The current bi-directional path is a better option -- but the real issue is the intersections at both ends.”

Note:  
500 comments were recorded for Question 11.

Other frequently mentioned items included a concern that cyclists would travel the wrong way on the cycle tracks (22 comments), and a preference for both a bidirectional and a unidirectional cycle or two bidirectional cycle tracks (22 comments).

Many respondents used Question 11 as an opportunity to propose unique ideas on how to improve cycling on the Portage Bridge:

- Add a bidirectional cycle track on the west side of the Portage Bridge from Victoria Island to Gatineau.
- Add a connection from the Voyageurs Pathway to the proposed southbound cycle track on the west side of the Portage Bridge.
- Replace the path with stairs near the Mill Street Brew Pub with a bicycle friendly ramp for southbound cyclists.
- Improve signage and wayfinding.
- Provide buttons to activate traffic signals that are easily accessible to cyclists, to increase compliance.

## VI — Integration of Results

Feedback from public and stakeholder consultation has clarified that, in general, the cycling community desires two distinct but compatible cycling improvements:

1. A barrier installed between the existing bidirectional cycle track and the northbound vehicle lanes. This modification was perceived by respondents

as a means to increase the safety of cyclists on the bidirectional cycle track, and survey results suggest that it will encourage otherwise hesitant cyclists to use the bridge.

2. A new southbound cycle track on the west side of the bridge to reduce congestion on the bidirectional cycle track and accommodate commuter cyclists. This desire is, however, contingent on improving the connectivity to a new southbound cycling facility.

Respondents also indicated that they would like to see various connectivity improvements around the Portage Bridge, including extensions of the existing bidirectional facility, improved wayfinding and signage, and improved accommodation for cyclists at intersections on the north and south ends of the bridge. Finally, a number of respondents commented on the need to better maintain both existing and future cycling facilities on the Portage Bridge during the winter season.

## **VII — Next Steps**

The results of the stakeholder and public consultation were taken into consideration as part of the design selection process. The preferred design included a barrier and was presented to the NCC board of directors for approval in early spring, 2018.