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44 Avenue cycling lane project, Delta.

Report by Neil Pope, co-chair, HUB Cycling TFN Delta Local Committee

We congratulate Delta staff and Mayor and Council for both the design of the proposed cycling facilities and for the very comprehensive public consultation.

This project on 44 Avenue, from Arthur Drive to Dugald Morrison Park, is **an essential network link** between:

- Ladner Elementary / Crombie Park and
City services, museum discovery centre and recreation centre, and health facilities
- Delta resident commuters in neighbourhoods west and north (via 53 St bike route) and the Ladner Transit Exchange
- Arthur Drive (south) bike lanes from Tsawwassen and
the Millennium Trail via 57A St and Crescent Drive to Deas Island Park and beyond to North Delta via River Road
- Tsawwassen, Ladner and
East Ladner via ped/bike overpass bridges across Highway 17A at Ladner Trunk Road

We at HUB Cycling fully recognise Council's need to consider public opinion before proceeding with projects such as what was proposed on 44 Ave. The initial 'in person' public consultation was well attended by public and staff. Letters were also subsequently sent to all residents who live on the affected area on 44 Ave. Understandably, some of the affected residents did not want to lose any street parking. Delta subsequently offered to consider 'pull outs' which would have maintained a portion of parking on the south side of 44 Ave.

We would not characterise the opposition from the affected residents as 'significant.' We stand to be corrected but we were at the initial public consultation from its beginning to its completion. We believe the far majority of those in attendance were in favor of this project. One would think that if there was significant local resident concern, more residents would have made the short trip to city hall to voice their opinion.

Residents on 44 Ave then had further time to comment directly to staff or council. In addition, after the public consultation, eighty households on the parking affected area of 44 Ave were mailed a survey letter. It asked, "if they were in favored (or not) of this project". Only thirty-two of the eighty households responded. Twenty-seven were 'against' and five were for 'in favor.' Thus, the majority of affected residents did not return the survey letter they received. And just one third of the affected residents indicated their concern. Personally, we would have assumed more opposition, than occurred.

To frame this another way, imagine if Council did extensive public opinion gathering on whether streets such as 8A or English Bluff should lose existing cycling lanes, in favor of street parking.

We believe the negative public response would be significantly more than what Delta received by the affected residents on 44 Ave.

This past Sunday, I cycled down 44 Ave at 11AM. There were just six cars parked on the side of the street that would lose parking. All but one household had lots of space in their driveway to park the single vehicle that was parked in front of each of those six houses. And as always is the case on 44 Ave, there was significant parking space on the other side of the street. If need be, there are also side roads that vehicles can park on.

I have heard the argument posed by some residents on 44 Ave that it is “too dangerous to park on the other side of the street as they will need to “walk across the road”. I would counter that ‘danger’ to cyclists riding down 44 Ave is significantly greater.

As streets in general (as we all know) are Delta - and not resident property - we encourage Council to consider this very worthy and well-designed project. This portion of 44 Ave was an excellent portion of road to consider for cycling facilities, given the proximity to schools, parks, transit and numerous public buildings. It has the road width to safely accommodate cycling and pedestrian needs.

Here is one last thought. There will of course always be some opposition to cycling facilities by residents who will lose a portion of street parking. But to proceed as fast as possible towards improving active, accessible, and safe cycling conditions, adding cycling lanes in the manner that staff has proposed is we feel the best way to proceed in most cases - from both an impact and cost standpoint. Multi Use Paths, while beneficial and applicable on certain streets, are not always the best way to proceed due to their high cost and due to closer cyclist proximity to driveways and cross streets. Instead, simply removing a bit of street parking on busier actively used roads is not only greatly beneficial but is also very cost effective. Should council proceed down this path, we believe that within as little as five years, we would see a material increase in both cyclists’ usage and cyclist safety.

Examples from cities all over the world clearly indicate “build it and they come.” I would add that we at HUB have seen a huge increase in cycling over the past few years in Delta. We credit Council for the cycling improvements done thus far, which has contributed to this increase in cycling.

We at HUB appreciate Council's willingness to discuss our thoughts on this project.

Thank you.

Neil Pope

Co-chair, HUB Cycling TFN Delta Local Committee