

September 30, 2021

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

CC **Honourable Selina Robinson**, Minister Of Finance
Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure
Honourable Bowinn Ma, Minister of State for Infrastructure
Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation. Public Stakeholder Engagement Lead for StrongerBC
Jesse Skulmoski, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Active Transportation Grants, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Kate Berniaz, Manager, Transportation Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Re: Submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services's Pre-Budget Consultations 2022

I am writing to you today with our submission to the 2022 pre-budget consultations.

First off, I want to thank the Government of British Columbia for its recent commitment to providing cycling skills and safety education to 2,700 students from 27 schools across Greater Victoria, Metro Vancouver, Squamish and the Sunshine Coast.

In our pre-budget submission below, we urge the government to:

1. Make a long-term commitment to funding active transportation infrastructure across the province so that communities have connected cycling networks comfortable for most people. #UnGapTheMap

Invest \$100 million annually in active transportation infrastructure.

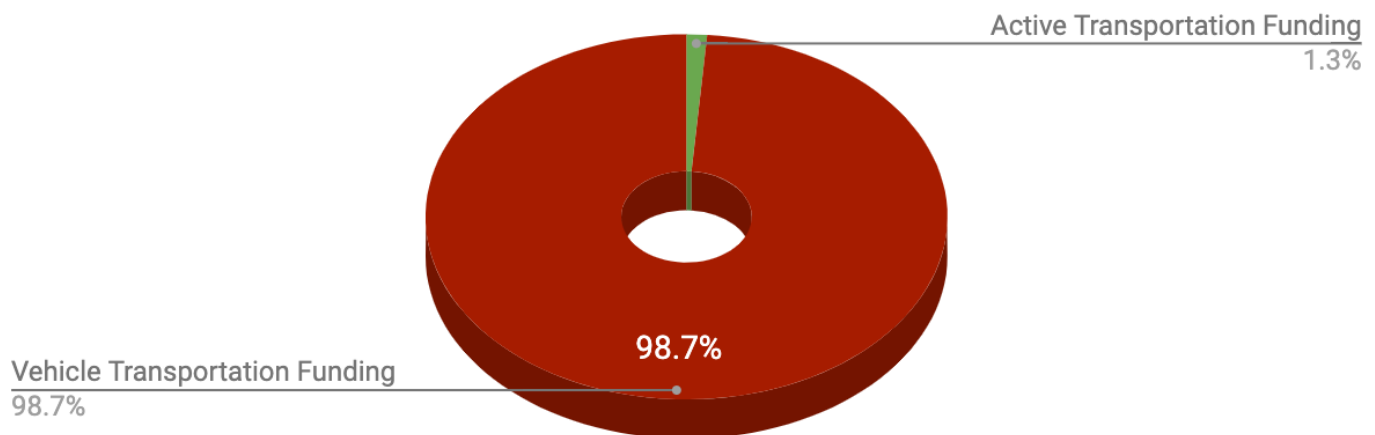
The fall in the number of public transport journeys during the COVID-19 pandemic has elevated the need to build and promote active transportation options. There has been a positive behavioural change over the past couple of years. More people are now opting to walk and cycle to their destination. These new travel habits, established after the pandemic, must be reinforced with efficient, safe and attractive active transportation

options. Many people want to cycle for transportation, but are held back by fears of unsafe infrastructure.

Provincial governments have a critical role to play to build a more sustainable and inclusive transportation network. Making investments in connected active transportation networks while recovering from a global health emergency is too big a challenge for municipal governments and Indigenous communities to handle on their own. Through the BC Active Transportation Infrastructure grants, the Province of BC funds projects in municipalities across B.C. but past funding has been inadequate. Cycling networks remain woefully incomplete, dropping people into unsafe situations, or preventing them from feeling safe enough to get on their bikes at all.

The Province of BC has committed to investing only \$36 million over three years to Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant projects¹. It represents a mere 1.26% of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's Service Plan² projections for the same period (2021/22 – 2023/24).

Active Transportation Funding Vs Vehicle Transportation Funding



Cycling infrastructure is vastly more affordable than motor vehicle and public transit infrastructure; however, it still does not receive its fair share of funding to complete cycling networks so that people can safely and conveniently travel by bicycle. For example, the City of Portland calculated that the city's entire bicycle network, consisting of over 300 miles (482 km) of bikeways would cost \$60 million US to replace (2008 dollars), whereas the same investment would yield just one mile of a four-lane urban freeway).³

¹ [Communities to receive new cycling and walking pathways, connections](#)

² [Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, 2021/22 – 2023/24 Service Plan](#)

³ [City of Portland Bureau of Transportation, "How Portland Benefits from Bicycle Transportation."](#)

If the Government of BC truly aspires to double the percentage of trips taken with active transportation, it must dramatically increase the active transportation infrastructure cost-share funding for municipalities to at least \$100 million annually.

2. Put people first and build stronger communities.

Invest at least \$2/capita/year in research, promotion, enabling and education for active transportation.

Providing promotion, enabling and education to increase British Columbians confidence and comfort using active transportation will leverage all investments for building infrastructure. They should be done in tandem for the best return on investment.

Putting people first and building stronger communities are the two key pillars of the StrongerBC Plan. As part of the B.C. government's long-term economic plan, the government has committed to building a more sustainable transportation system that helps get people out of their cars and that is accessible for everyone.

The pandemic has shifted many people's transportation patterns⁴. Now is the time to provide them with options to take active transportation, while they are already open to transition. The mode shift opportunities presented by the pandemic, as well as the growth in popularity of e-bikes and other active transportation micromobilities means that now is the time to invest aggressively in active transportation networks.

Currently, the mode share of cycling in B.C. is 2.5 percent and the provincial government wants to at least double this mode share by 2030. This can only be accomplished if active transportation is easy, efficient, safe and affordable, and as a result a preferred choice for most people.

HUB Cycling recommends the Province of BC provide funding to:

1. conduct a province-wide benchmarking study to provide a snapshot of the extent and quality of current active transportation networks and provide consistent categories of infrastructure across jurisdictions. Identifying crucial gaps in our infrastructure will help #UnGapTheMap and help make small improvements to infrastructure that make big differences in communities.
2. review of the BC Motor Vehicle Act to better protect vulnerable road users in the current fiscal year. The Act has been largely unchanged in the past 50 years, during which time significant changes to infrastructure, vehicle types, and road usage have taken place.
3. provide \$2/capita/year for programs like Go by Bike Week, Bike to School Week, Learn2Ride cycling courses in schools and StreetWise Cycling online courses for adults.
4. improve depth and frequency of data collection regarding active transportation use, demographics, barriers, and motivations.

⁴ [International Energy Agency: Changes in transport behaviour during the Covid-19 crisis](#)

5. enforce a mandatory minimum amount of project funding (1-5%) to promote new infrastructure, similar to the Bicycle Infrastructure Capital Cost-share funding criteria at TransLink.

3. Invest in systemic school cycling education for children.

Fund systemic school cycling education for children at \$1.7 million/year.

Children represent the future of sustainable transportation and providing them with cycling education, necessary skills, tools and opportunities to safely walk, ride or scoot should remain a priority for the government. In British Columbia, 33% of households have at least one child walking or cycling to school.

Universal cycling education in schools is an effective way to raise a generation of sustainable transportation users and safe road users. Every child should finish elementary school having received cycling education, much like they do in many European jurisdictions. This creates a systemic culture of cycling that permeates student, parent and teacher lifestyles and transportation choices.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is currently funding \$ 400,000/year to provide 8,000 children in BC with in-class and on-bike cycling education. This investment should be expanded to \$1.7 million/year to make universal cycling education a reality for every child in British Columbia.

4. Making the case: High return for investment in Active Transportation.

\$1 spent on active transportation returns over \$8 in economic benefit.

My Health My Communities⁵ research and other related research from the Where Matters projects of UBC⁶, Vancouver Coastal Health, Metro Vancouver, and TransLink demonstrate the significant direct health savings that accrue from creating active transportation-friendly land use and design, along with the livability and quality of life increases. Research from Los Angeles showed \$1 spent on active transportation returns over \$8 in economic benefit. The value for money assessment by the United Kingdom's Department for Transport shows a very solid 5:1 benefit: cost ratio that motor vehicle and transit projects could only dream of.

Local businesses also benefit from day-to-day spending by those who cycle. In urban areas, people walking and cycling spend more money with local businesses than motorists who visit the neighbourhood, according to a study by the Clean Air Partnership⁷. We know that many of the economic benefits come back to areas other than transportation - this is where it is important to

⁵ [My Health My Community](#)

⁶ [Where Matters: Health & Economic Benefits Study \(UBC\)](#)

⁷ [Clean Air Partnership, Bike Lanes, On-Street Parking and Business: A Study of Bloor Street](#)

be working across ministries for investments and returns, for example with Health, Environment, Education, Higher Education, Tourism, Municipal Affairs and Housing, etc.

Provincial funding for MoTI's active infrastructure projects is far below demand⁸ and is missing out on the enormous benefits of potentially more people using active transportation. As identified in the [State of Cycling report](#), Metro Vancouver's cycling network is full of gaps—or areas lacking adequate cycling infrastructure—and safe, connected infrastructure is needed now, more than ever before, to #UnGapTheMap.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Province of B.C., to expand and improve our active transportation and new mobility options. Together, we can make our region safer, more sustainable, more resilient, and more liveable.

Sincerely,

Erin O'Melinn
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ABOUT HUB Cycling

HUB Cycling is a charitable not-for-profit organization. Since 1998, HUB Cycling has been working on removing barriers to cycling, while cultivating the health, environmental, and economic benefits that active transportation can bring. HUB has educated hundreds of thousands of people, motivated communities across the region, and championed improvements such as #UnGapTheMap to create a connected cycling network.

HUB Cycling's mission is to get more people cycling more often. We make cycling better through education, action and events. More cycling means healthier, happier, more connected communities. We're leading the way in making cycling an attractive choice for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Learn more at bikehub.ca.

⁸ In 2020, MoTI received 134 applications for the B.C. Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program, and funded only 44 of them (67% declined).