

April 9, 2021

Attention:

Hon. Rob Fleming, **Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure** (Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca)
Hon. Selina Robinson, **Minister of Finance** (FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca)
Hon. George Heyman, **Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy** (ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca)
Hon. Bowinn Ma, **Minister of State for Infrastructure** (Minister.SI@gov.bc.ca)
Hon. Josie Osborne, **Minister of Municipal Affairs** (MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca)
Rachna Singh, **Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives** (AG.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Regarding: Request to Increase BC Active Transportation Grant Funding

HUB Cycling is a charitable not-for-profit organization that has spent over 22 years removing barriers to cycling in Metro Vancouver, while cultivating the health, environmental, and economic benefits that active transportation can bring. HUB has educated thousands of people, motivated thousands more, and championed improvements that #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 everyone.

The groundwork has been laid, now it's time to get moving

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has recently made important strides to encourage active transportation in the province. With the release of the BC Active Transportation Design Guide in June of 2019, municipalities across BC have a comprehensive, locally-focused resource to guide building active transportation facilities. This has been complemented by the release in the same month of the Active Transportation Strategy - Move. Commute. Connect. The Strategy outlines short and medium terms goals to increase active transportation, and work is already underway to implement some of the short term goals, with a focus on programming and infrastructure.

More is needed to achieve province's active transportation goal

With plans created for promoting and encouraging more active transportation in British Columbia, now is the time to walk the talk and invest to make those plans a reality.. **HUB Cycling recommends that funding for the Active Transportation grant be increased significantly to at least \$45 million per year.**

In 2020, the province invested \$8.5 million in cycling facilities through Active Transportation grants (Table 1), a number largely unchanged for the past six years. Only about half of the projects that were put forth for consideration by municipalities received funding. This indicates there is strong demand to put in more cycling

and active transportation facilities, aligned with the Province’s goal to double AT trips and significantly reduce GHGs, but that demand is not being met with the current funding amount.

	Funding amount	Number of Projects funded		
	Total	Infrastructure	Network	Total
2015	\$6,147,253	26	-	26
2016	\$6,511,947	25	-	25
2017	\$7,673,072	23	-	23
2018	\$8,000,304	26	-	26
2019	\$10,992,452	24	4	28
2020	\$8,564,994	23	21	44

Table 1: Funding for BikeBC/Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program

The new Active Transportation Infrastructure grants provide funding for not just cycling facilities, but projects involving a variety of active transportation modes, which effectively means reduced funding for cycling if no funding is added. In order to meet the Province’s goal of doubling active transportation trips, reducing GHG emissions to [40% below 2007 levels](#), and reducing fossil fuel use for [transportation by 20%](#) funding should be increased commensurately.

The Active Transportation Strategy identifies the provincial goal of doubling active transportation trips by 2030. This is a laudable goal, and HUB Cycling fully supports this. The steps taken with the Active Transportation Strategy and Design Guide are great first steps toward this goal. However, more than plans are needed to double active transportation trips within a decade.

Infrastructure and promotion spending is required to boost Active Transportation

HUB Cycling recommends that funding for the Active Transportation grant be increased significantly to at least \$45 million per year.

This increase will not only ensure that there is enough funds to cover the increased number of projects now that the grant has been expanded beyond cycling, it will also help the province meet its mode share and sustainability goals.

Research shows that increases in cycling rates, and declines in crashes, are directly tied to [safe and comfortable bicycle infrastructure](#). The recently released [State of Cycling report](#) in Metro Vancouver shows that 46% of the bikeway network in the region is comfortable for most people. This leaves slightly more than half of the bike network that is not comfortable for most people. The areas that showed the greatest growth in ridership levels were also the ones that built infrastructure that was comfortable for most people. More needs

to be invested in Metro Vancouver and across the province to ensure there are safe, comfortable and connected facilities for people to walk, cycle and use other forms of active transportation.

Municipalities need to have access to sufficient funding to build active transportation networks that are safe and comfortable for most people. In order to achieve the goal of doubling active transportation in the province by 2030, that money needs to be invested soon. The earlier the investment, the greater the return.

Research from [New Zealand](#) and the [UK](#) shows that investment in active transportation facilities such as cycling infrastructure has a return on investment between 5:1 to 11:1 considering the health improvements and injury and CO2 reductions.

Spending on non-infrastructure items such as education is necessary, and needs to be paired with spending on physical infrastructure spending. Cities across the province have made significant strides in the development of active transportation infrastructure. Physical improvements alone, however, will not be enough to attract more people to switch to active transportation. Many external factors like cultural practices, social influence, emotions, and attitudes all influence which mode of travel people will use. Spending on education and promotional events programs cost a fraction of infrastructure investments, yet can be very effective in increasing ridership to maximize the use of new as well as existing infrastructure. In recognition of this, BC Active Transportation Infrastructure grants should include a mandatory minimum amount to provide promotion of the new infrastructure, similar to the BICCS cost share funding criteria at TransLink.

Proactive investment in projects that serve underserved and racialized communities

Transportation is the linchpin that allows us to function in our daily lives. The lack of active transportation options in racialized communities has become increasingly clear. Lack of access to safe active transportation infrastructure has contributed not only to rising obesity and diabetes rates, but also contributes to a mounting toll of injuries and fatalities to people walking and cycling without other options than traveling on unsafe streets. Research¹ shows that people with low-income walk and bicycle more than people in the upper-income brackets, but safe active transportation options are often limited for low-income individuals and families. Lack of transportation options often leads to restricted employment possibilities and low school attendance.

Providing safe and convenient walking and cycling infrastructure in racialized and marginalized communities can help overcoming these challenges. Many studies² have shown the need to create networks of wide, barrier-protected, bicycle-exclusive cycle tracks in lower-income ethnic-minority neighborhoods to help these communities get to work affordably, quickly and safely, and improve public health and quality of life in communities where these benefits are most needed.

The province should encourage that funding for active transportation projects is targeted for these communities and not encourage the philosophy that communities that already bike the most deserve more additional resources. This philosophy perpetuates a vicious cycle where cycling grows quickly in some neighborhoods, while underserved communities continue to stay underfunded.

¹ saferoutespartnership.org

² [Bicycle Facilities Safest from Crime and Crashes](#)

Moving toward a more healthy and active BC by 2030

BC is making strides to encourage active transportation in the province. The goal of doubling active transportation by 2030 is less than a decade away. *Now* is the time to significantly increase funding in active transportation infrastructure through the new Active Transportation grants and other funding vehicles to ensure that safe and comfortable infrastructure is being built that is attractive to most people.

Currently, Provincial funding for cycling is far below demand, and is missing out on the huge potential benefits of more people using active transportation. As HUB Cycling has identified, Metro Vancouver's cycling network is full of gaps³—or areas lacking cycling infrastructure—and safe, connected infrastructure is needed now, more than ever before to #UnGapTheMap.

HUB Cycling encourages the Province to increase investment in cycling to ensure environmentally and economically healthier communities, assisting the Province in reaching its goals for active transportation, the climate plan, and poverty reduction, and ensuring an innovative, equitable and sustainable public health system.

Sincerely,

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HUB Cycling's Regional Advisory Committee, composed of board members at HUB Cycling, works in a coordinating role with 10 HUB Cycling Local Committees in Metro Vancouver, and on regional cycling issues, often with representatives of different organizations and ministries.

³ bikehub.ca/ungapthemap