



604.558.2002
info@bikehub.ca
bikehub.ca



November 29, 2017

City of Vancouver
Transportation Engineering and Planning
By email: bikeupgrades@vancouver.ca

Re: Proposed Alexander Street Bikeway Improvements

Dear Sir/Madam;

HUB Cycling is a charitable organization that works to make cycling better through education, events and collaboration. We are Metro Vancouver's leader in making cycling an attractive choice for everyone. We are writing with comments on the proposed improvements to the Alexander Street Bikeway.

Overview

HUB Cycling representatives attended the Open House event that City staff held on November 21st, 2017 regarding the Alexander Street Bikeway project. We have reviewed the display boards.¹ We wholeheartedly support the creation of this bikeway. We particularly support the project goals of resolving a major gap in the bike network by making Alexander Street safer and more comfortable for people of all ages and abilities to cycle. We do have suggestions on how to best accomplish this as this project moves forward.

Context

HUB Cycling is currently supporting the Strathcona Business Improvement Association (BIA) in the creation of their Mobility Advocacy Plan, focusing on sustainable transportation improvements in the BIA area. That work has highlighted the opportunity of better utilizing Alexander as a bike route. We fully understand the need to be sensitive to business requirements for loading and parking. We see the biggest challenge with the Alexander Street route being vehicles short cutting Powell, often at higher speeds.

HUB Cycling has created a Gap Priority List for routes within the City of Vancouver, and throughout Metro Vancouver. We itemize gaps in the existing cycling network, and evaluate them in terms of the extent to which improvements to these routes would impact our goal of getting more people riding, more often. We have a current priority gap listed that we call the Powell Corridor, which we have defined as

¹ Alexander Street Bikeway Open House display boards: <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/alexander-bikeway-preliminary-design-proposals.pdf>



Your **Cycling** Connection

604.558.2002
info@bikehub.ca
bikehub.ca



running from Water Street in Gastown to Wall and Semlin at Powell, and utilizing the new protected bike lanes on the Powell Overpass. We are not specifically selecting any one street for resolving this gap, and so refer to the corridor in general. For the stretch from Water Street to the Powell Overpass, Alexander Street is the obvious link, and so improvements here would go a long way towards resolving this current gap. This route is important as it serves as an important connector for people in East Vancouver, and because it is a regional connector for people travelling between downtown, and the North Shore and Burnaby. We also understand that Water Street is the subject of future improvements, and so the connectivity at the west end of this project is subject to some change in future.

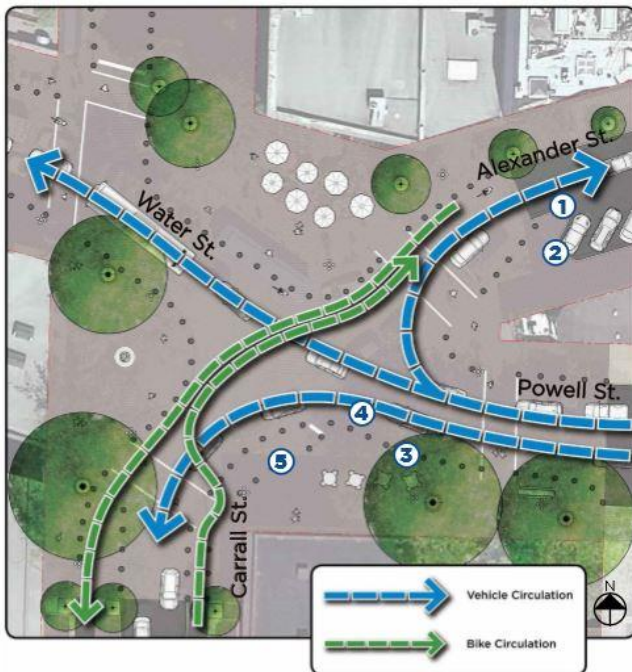
HUB Cycling previously completed an Assessment Ride of the Powell Corridor, and submitted our recommendations to the City in a report dated May 31, 2017.

This route follows the path of the proposed Portside Greenway, as outlined in the City Greenway plan.² As such, while a full Greenway construction is not being proposed here, the route should at least provide a safe protected route for all ages and abilities until the City does construct the Portside Greenway.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are divided into the three sections with alternatives presented at the Open House.

Section 1: West Alexander (Maple Tree Square to Columbia Street)



² City of Vancouver Proposed Greenway Plan, April 2011 <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/city-greenways-network-map.pdf> Page 2



Your **Cycling** Connection

604.558.2002
info@bikehub.ca
bikehub.ca



We support the change to make Alexander Street one way eastbound from Water to Columbia. We consider the proposed intersection bike path routing at Maple Tree Square to be a problem, as it is non-intuitive for users. We expect people on bikes would use it in a wide variety of ways if constructed as shown, with a resulting risk of crashes for both people on bikes and people walking. We suggest painting two green carpet crossings like those proposed for the intersection of Beatty and Nelson for the new Cambie Bridge protected lanes. We understand that this is not a signalized intersection, but have noted the use of green paint at other than signalized intersections. Separate from the issue of green paint, the bike crossings need to be straight, and marked, whether with green paint or crossbike stencils.

Section 2: Central Alexander (East of Main Street)



We support the traffic calming of Alexander with diversions. Our preference is for Option 1, without curb protected bike lanes. We expect that this option will have the greatest calming effect of the options presented. The issue we see is that if diversions are applied at only one point, they will have a reduced effect the farther one goes from that point, with little to no impact on traffic volumes at the other (east) end of Alexander. To be successful, diversions must be installed at more than one location. We heard at the Open House that current vehicle traffic volumes are up to ten times the volumes acceptable for a AAA route. If diversions are successfully applied, and vehicle traffic reduced as per the project goals, ideally to AAA levels, then protected bike lanes and concrete curbs are not required, reducing costs. This also respects the desire to tie improvements here into future improvements along Water Street as that Complete Street project progresses, as it avoids the construction of concrete curbs that may need to be changed in future.



Your **Cycling** Connection

604.558.2002
info@bikehub.ca
bikehub.ca



Section 3: East Alexander (Heatley Avenue to Powell Street Overpass)



We support the addition of a protected bidirectional bike lane on Hawks, tying into the protected lanes on Powell. Our preference is for Option 1. We recommend running the protected lane slightly farther west on Alexander before exiting to the street. This will have minimal cost, no net impact on the number of parking spaces, and for people heading east, shifts the bike crossing into the protected lane farther away from the blind corner. As noted in our comments to Section 1, we recommend applying traffic diversions at the east end, near Heatley, and if traffic measurements taken post construction warrant it, mid way between the two installed diversions. With vehicle traffic currently reported to be up to ten times the daily maximum for a AAA bike route, a single set of bollards simply won't get us there. We note that the display boards indicate that the intent for Section 3 – East Alexander is to “Restrict vehicle access to reduce shortcutting.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input to this process. We would be pleased to meet and discuss the above at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jeff Leigh
Chair, Vancouver UBC Local Committee
HUB Cycling
Vancouver@bikehub.ca