



604.558.2002  
info@bikehub.ca  
bikehub.ca



April 23, 2018

ATTN: Mayor and Council, City of Vancouver (by email)  
CC: Paul Storer, CoV; Dale Bracewell, CoV; Tanya Paz, ATPC (by email)

## **Re: Increasing cycling infrastructure on commercial streets**

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 have more than 2300 members, 38,000 direct supporters, and ten active local committees across the region.

To help increase transportation cycling across Metro Vancouver, HUB Cycling will once again be hosting Bike to Shop Days in 2018, with the event taking place June 22-24th. Last year, Bike to Shop Days grew from a single day to a full weekend celebration, resulting in 1,700 registrants – a 42% increase from the previous year. The event consisted of over 14 free outdoor events, and a free guided ride. Over 100 businesses offered discounts to anyone arriving by bike and several bike themed prizes were given away to participants. The success of *Bike to Shop Days*, including increased support from Business Improvement Associations (BIA) such as the Downtown Vancouver BIA<sup>1</sup> sends a strong message that increased cycling not only benefits the well-being of cities and the environment, but also improves the vitality of local economies. However, it is challenging to convince people to bike to shop when the infrastructure simply isn't safe and welcoming enough on most commercial streets.

The growth in customers by bicycle is intricately tied to the creation of safe all ages and abilities (AAA) cycling infrastructure. While we would like to thank the Mayor, the City Council, and City staff for their ongoing efforts to improve cycling connections such as the Burrard Street Bridge, the temporary path on the Arbutus Greenway, and the South False Creek Seaside Greenway, among many others<sup>2</sup>, we strongly encourage the implementation of AAA cycling infrastructure on more commercial streets as soon as possible.

Last November, City of Toronto Council voted unanimously in favour of making the Bloor Street bike lanes permanent. City staff found the bike lanes contributed to a 4.45% growth in customer spending, indicating that cycling infrastructure can be an economic benefit on busy, commercial streets. Protected bike lanes are also planned and under construction on similar commercial streets in Victoria<sup>3</sup>, Calgary<sup>4</sup>, Ottawa<sup>5</sup>, and across other North American cities<sup>6</sup>. However, within the City of Vancouver, many of the City's retailers are located on commercial streets that currently offer little to no AAA cycling infrastructure, limiting the success of *Bike to Shop Days*, and resulting in less of the "interested but concerned about cycling" demographic of customers choosing to cycle across the City.

<sup>1</sup> Lovgreen, T. (2017). '[Part of an evolution: Downtown business partners with cycling group.](#)' *CBC News*.

<sup>2</sup> City of Vancouver, (2017). [2017 Active Transportation Updates](#).

<sup>3</sup> [Fort Street, Victoria](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Downtown cycle tracks, Calgary](#).

<sup>5</sup> [Main Street, Ottawa](#).

<sup>6</sup> [Inventory of protected bike lanes. People for Bikes](#).

For Vancouver to achieve its strategic cycling goals as articulated in the T2040 plan, the City needs to accelerate its implementation of AAA cycling infrastructure on key commercial streets. Example priority streets that have been identified through the HUB Cycling #UnGapTheMap campaign include:

- Main Street from 10<sup>th</sup> to 37<sup>th</sup>
- Fraser Street from E 10<sup>th</sup> to E 37<sup>th</sup>
- Kingsway from E Broadway to Boundary Rd
- Commercial Drive from Powell St to E 10<sup>th</sup>
- Cambie St from SW Marine to King Edward
- Robson St from Beatty St to Denman St
- Smith St from Richards St to Burrard St
- Nelson St from Thurlow to Richards St
- Water St

While HUB Cycling supports the implementation of bikeways on quiet neighbourhood streets, we encourage the City to critically examine whether providing AAA infrastructure on busier, commercial streets would be more effective in supporting businesses, increasing ridership, and reducing motor vehicle congestion and greenhouse gases. As an example, we support the City's commitment to develop a complete street on Commercial Drive rather than maintain the status quo on the adjacent bikeways of Woodland and Lakewood Drives<sup>7</sup>.

Why is this important? When people on bikes are relegated to quiet back streets, they become “invisible” to other people interested in cycling, such as those who predominantly drive, take transit, or walk. Increased cycling on shopping streets brings more visibility and legitimacy to this mode, thus improving the potential uptake in transport cycling. According to the City's Walking + Cycling Report Card, 6% of shopping trips are done by bicycle, four percent fewer than trips made to work by bike. Importantly, the survey found that 51% of people want to cycle more, illustrating significant potential to increase cycling trips to shop, work, and recreational activities.<sup>8</sup>

In short, we encourage more AAA infrastructure – like what we see on Burrard Street from West 1st St to Burnaby St – implemented on more commercial streets to increase both the cycle mode share and the success of local businesses. With this growth in commercial street infrastructure we anticipate that Bike to Shop Days will also continue to grow.

Sincerely,

Jeff Leigh  
Chair, Vancouver UBC Local Committee  
HUB Cycling  
[vancouver@bikehub.ca](mailto:vancouver@bikehub.ca)

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<sup>7</sup> [Commercial Drive Complete Street](#).

<sup>8</sup> City of Vancouver 2017, *Walking + Cycling in Vancouver. 2016 Report Card*. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/walking-cycling-in-vancouver-2016-report-card.pdf>. Accessed Nov 20, 2017.