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Re: Safety Issues on Kent Avenue Bicycle Path

Lisa Slakov<lslavov@telus.net>

Sat, Feb 5, 2011 at 1:39 PM

To: mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca

Cc: "Edwards, Scott" <scott.edwards@vancouver.ca>, "Harris, Michelle" <michelle.harris@vancouver.ca>, dale.bracewell@vancouver.ca

**Metro Vancouver's Cycling Advocates**

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Dear Mayor and Councillors:

The VACC Vancouver/UBC Committee urges council to address safety issues for cyclists on the Kent Ave bicycle path. There are three main concerns- the lack of a bicycle route that connects the Kent Ave route west to the Canada Line bicycle bridge and ideally further west, the intersection of Kent Ave and Ontario St, and the speed of vehicles along Kent Ave. Although communications with city staff indicates that extending the bike path west is planned, city cyclists have already been waiting for this safe connection for some time and our committee would like to encourage the COV to pursue this extension as quickly as possible. In addition, the committee would like to see a pedestrian and cyclist activated light at the intersection in order to deal with current and future safety issues. Finally, the committee requests that the city look at implementing measures to reduce excessive speeds and driver negligence along the Kent Ave route.

We welcome the recent information provided to us via member Juergen Dankwort emailed to him by Scott Edwards, Streets Activities Engineer, and Michelle Harris, Greenways & Neighbourhood Transportation, that "improving the connection between the Ontario bikeway and the Canada Line Bridge is an important link in the network, and that Council support for this project with resources dedicated to advancing it have been approved." It is encouraging to learn that the City is "pursuing options for providing much improved pedestrian and cyclist connections to the bridge, generally following the Kent Avenue South alignment." We also understand that the city is currently examining traffic patterns at the Kent Ave and Ontario St intersection in order to determine appropriate measures for the intersection.

However, given that the City must negotiate with private property owners (corporations) to obtain a required right-of-way for the bike path extension west, there will almost certainly be a significant period of time before the safe cycling extension is in place. Cyclists must currently cross Kent Avenue to proceed going either west or north. Kent Avenue is heavily used by commercial traffic as a result of the industry in the area such as the big box super store on Main and the Vancouver South transfer station. Given the continued development of residential and commercial property to the east (e.g., East Fraserlands Project) with corresponding population density and greater use of the bicycle path, we feel the safety issue raised by crossing Kent Avenue at Ontario should not be delayed any longer. Moreover, our committee also felt that even with the future extension of the bike path, the hazard at the Ontario crossing will remain in any case, given the particular circumstances of traffic flow there.

Further, it is apparent that motorists tend to speed along Kent Avenue as it serves a parallel east-west route without traffic lights, unlike Marine Drive slightly to the north. We note that Mr. Dankwort, resident in the area, and who often uses the bike path, addressed the traffic pattern and "culture" of motorists who tend to speed along Kent Avenue, paying little or no attention to pedestrians, cyclists or bicycle signage at that location in the city, perhaps because there are relatively few of these, as compared to a heavy volume of commercial traffic.

It's certainly possible that the Kent Ave bike route is being considerably underutilized as a result of the dangers and inconveniences highlighted in this letter. It is the view of our committee that the recommended push light and traffic control and enforcement along this route as well as the speedy extension of the route west to at least the Canada Line Bridge are critical actions required on this route for the safety and effectiveness of the route.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Lisa Slakov
Chair, VACC Vancouver/UBC Committee