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23 April, 2018

Mayor and Council, District of West Vancouver

RE: Welch Street Bridge over the Capilano River

Dear Mayor and Council,

Two of our members, Paul Stott and Peter Scholefield, met on 18 April with Raymond Fung, Director of Engineering & Transportation Services, and Rick Amantea, Vice President of Park Royal Shopping Centre, to discuss our concerns over the announcement that Park Royal intends to proceed with improvement of the Welch St Bridge on the basis of the 2014 design proposals. As you may recall, due to the narrow 3.5 m width of the multi-use path, we had strong reservations over the suitability of that design from a safety point of view. We had recommended to you various further improvements to alleviate those concerns. We continue to seek a safer crossing of the Capilano River for people on bikes that connects conveniently to the Spirit Trail and the north end of the Lions Gate Bridge.

We feel that traffic on this bridge is likely to increase due to commercial and residential developments, both on the west side of the river in Park Royal and on the east side of the River on Squamish Nation lands and Lions Gate Village in North Vancouver. Therefore, we feel that, even with the planned improvements, the following safety hazards to cyclists and pedestrians, will persist and could worsen with the new path:

1. Two-way multi-use paths can present safety hazards to both people walking and people on bikes due to the interaction between the two, especially where the traffic is heavy and the path too narrow.

Based on our members' use of the Spirit Trail, we think that the busiest and most hazardous section of the North Shore is the 4 m-wide section between Park Royal South and Ambleside Park. From the amount of cyclist and pedestrian traffic that is already observed crossing the Capilano River on the Welch Street Bridge at Park Royal, we think that the proposed 3.5m (narrower) multi-use path on the bridge will be even busier and make it more hazardous than any section along the Spirit Trail.

2. Increasing the hazard of the river crossing is the continuing requirement for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the road just east of the bridge, especially for eastbound cyclists and pedestrians approaching the blind curve on Bridge Road. We expect to be able to work with the District, Park Royal and the Squamish Nation to mitigate the hazards somewhat, but we can't imagine a solution that will be as safe as a protected pedestrian/bicycle crossing on the north side of the bridge. Vehicle speeds which are not enforced to the posted-limit continue to be an issue in this area.

Despite these two significant hazards, we think that the wider path, combined with improvements to the road surface on and approaching the bridge, will be an improvement over the current unsafe situation for cyclists. Even with the proposed multi-use pathway south of the bridge, a significant number of people will continue to bike in the traffic lanes across the bridge instead of sharing a narrow path with pedestrians. It is critical that bridge markings provide for the safety of those users as well.

Going forward, we at HUB Cycling North Shore are going to continue to promote our vision for a protected two-way cycleway between the two-way protected Spirit Trail in Ambleside and the north end of the Lions Gate Bridge (see attached drawing) which we believe is required for West Vancouver to enjoy the benefits of more people choosing to cycle safely for transportation.

Yours truly,



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