



August 7, 2015

Devan Fitch, City of Vancouver

Holly Sovdi, City of Vancouver

**Re: HUB Submission re Viaducts Removal and the new Pacific Blvd**

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 would like to take this opportunity to provide input to the Public Consultation process relating to the potential removal of the Viaducts, the creation of a new Pacific Boulevard, and the creation of a new Active Bridge to provide bicycle connectivity from the existing Adanac, Ontario, and Carrall bicycle routes to Dunsmuir Street. Our comments are based on the display boards from the Open Houses, and the presentation City staff made to HUB Cycling on July 21, 2015.

**Background**

The Dunsmuir Viaduct is an important cycling and pedestrian link in the Vancouver and regional cycling networks. The viaduct provides protected lanes with a reasonable slope to climb up the escarpment to Dunsmuir Street, at least for the Adanac Bikeway. This area is also an important connection hub for the Ontario Greenway, the Seaside Greenway, and for bicycle traffic arriving from the Central Valley Greenway.

We support the removal of the viaducts, the creation of a new Georgia ramp, and the realignment of Pacific Blvd. More than simply replacing the viaducts, though, we see this as a moment in the history of the city where Vancouver can showcase its Greenest City goals with world class active transportation facilities in this critical cycling area. This is an opportunity to make something very special on a relatively clean slate, a critical opportunity to design and implement complete ground level streets, serving the needs of all modes (walking, cycling, transit, and motor vehicles). Infrastructure should also be designed considering rapidly changing mode share numbers, particularly for cycling, and thus be designed to accommodate significant cycling growth.



## Connectivity and Expected Volumes

- Bicycle route connectivity must be optimized to the Adanac Bikeway, and the Ontario Greenway. These two routes will contribute substantial volumes to the new Active Bridge. Consideration should also be given to the False Creek Flats planning process, and the potential of connecting the Central Valley Greenway through to this bridge.
- Connectivity to the seawall has been stressed in the display boards. Since the new Active Bridge is expected to carry the bulk of the bicycle traffic to and from downtown compared to the new Georgia ramp, connections from this bridge to the seawall are critical.
- Bicycle routes to the two stadiums should be considered in terms of the transportation potential with respect to large events.
- Expected daily peak bicycle volumes should be established now, considering the current volumes on the major feeder routes, and the expected growth due to new construction, whether residential, office, or health care. Unlike the falling motor vehicle volumes over the viaducts, bicycle volumes are increasing rapidly and have seen an increase of 80% over the last 3 years alone. This bridge should be designed to not only accommodate future growth in mode share, but to encourage it in line with Transportation 2040 objectives. Given the very high expected volumes, consideration should be given to designing the bikeway as a Super Cycleway with a minimum width of 4m and grade separation at major road crossings.

## The Active Bridge

- For the new Active Bridge, we propose establishing a design target of a maximum 3% grade over the length. This will provide a more comfortable access than the 5% grade planned for the Georgia ramp, while reducing downhill speeds and avoiding the need for rest stops on the ascent.
- We strongly suggest discounting the conceptual design that is based on a series of switchbacks. This design is inappropriate for the volume of active transportation users expected. There are numerous safety issues relating to sight lines, and sharp turns. This design represents a significant downgrade from the current Dunsmuir Viaduct bicycle lanes, and as such does not conform to the current guiding principles.
- For the new Active Bridge, we propose including physical separation of bicycle lanes and pedestrian paths. A painted lane to separate the two modes is not sufficient for safety, especially with higher volumes of users.



- We do not have a position on whether the new Active Bridge should run on the north side or the south side of the Skytrain guideway. We do suggest that the landing point be established early in the design process, to allow detailed design to proceed with consideration of the recommended maximum grade.

### **Pacific Blvd and Expo Blvd**

- We would like to see a principle established that all new roads be designed as complete streets, with consideration for all modes of transportation. Along Pacific Blvd and Expo Blvd, given expected traffic volumes, this will mean physically protected bicycle lanes are required.

### **The Georgia Ramp**

- We strongly suggest that two unidirectional protected bicycle lanes be included on the new Georgia ramp. We feel it is short sighted to not include a downhill protected bicycle path given the higher speeds that will be attained by both bicycles and motor vehicles on this section. We also want to stress our support for the City's commitment to building All Ages and Ability (AAA) bicycle infrastructure. To meet this objective, busy streets, especially those with grades, require physical separation for cycling.

### **Conclusion**

HUB Cycling supports the goals of increasing active transportation modes, and providing improved connectivity in this area. We are confident that the proposed improvements have the potential to do this. We would like to see additional guiding principles adopted for the next phase of the project, to ensure attention is paid to the above points. With that, we feel that this project will be another major step forward in helping Vancouver achieve its goals.

HUB Cycling would be pleased to discuss any of our recommendations further. Please be in touch with us at the HUB Vancouver UBC Local Committee at [vancouver@bikehub.ca](mailto:vancouver@bikehub.ca)

Thank you for the opportunity to engage in this process.

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