

May 25, 2023

City of Vancouver
Portside Greenway Team
Attention: Paul Krueger, Engagement Lead

Re: HUB Cycling Comments on the Proposed Portside Greenway

Dear Paul,

HUB Cycling strongly supports the development of the [Portside Greenway](#). A complete and improved Portside Greenway will provide better opportunities for people to walk and cycle in this part of the City which is generally lacking safe and comfortable routes for people of all ages and abilities. We imagine the Portside Greenway to serve a similar purpose as the Seaside Greenway near Point Grey Road, and are glad to see the City advancing this project. We have previously provided suggestions on the improvements needed for this route, in our May 31, 2017 Powell Corridor Recommendations¹.

Our following comments address the four sections identified in the project boards of the Portside Greenway consultation, and issues applicable along the length of the Portside Greenway.

Alexander St

From Carrall St to Columbia St, the revised traffic pattern has worked well to reduce vehicle volumes. The intersection at Carrall St remains a challenge at times, and the future connection along Water St is required to complete the Portside Greenway. It is vital that a safe and comfortable route connects to the Carrall St bikeway, the Richards St bikeway, and the Seaside Greenway near the Convention Centre.

From Main St to Hawks St, the improved pavement has been a benefit, but in combination with the width of the roadway, it has also caused vehicle drivers to travel too quickly at times. When we provided comments on the improvements to Alexander St², we requested additional traffic diversions in the area of Heatley St to reduce the incidence of people in vehicles cutting through the neighbourhood, often at high speed. We were advised at the time that the City would continue to monitor traffic volumes and speeds along this section. We ask that you refer back to the results of that monitoring, and consider an additional diversion or two for motor vehicles. This is a low cost and easy to implement improvement that would provide benefits to active transportation users along the entire length of Alexander St. . Also, there are additional recommendations for this section contained in our letter of 2017.

¹ [HUB Cycling Recommendations to the CoV re the Powell Corridor](#), May 31 2017

² [HUB Cycling letter to the CoV re the Alexander St Bikeway Improvements](#), Nov 29 2017

Powell Street

Powell St provides the safest and most comfortable section along this route, despite the level of vehicle traffic, because of the physical protection along the overpass. It also contains the most uncomfortable and least safe section, along Powell St from McLean Drive to Wall. From McClean Drive east to Wall St, nothing less than a protected lane will provide adequate comfort and safety for active transportation users. Given that this section effectively divides the Portside Greenway into two pieces, we recommend that it be addressed first, connecting the Portside Greenway along its length and driving much increased user volumes. The difficult-to-follow bypass route takes people too far to the south, and leaves people with difficult choices; to detour out of their way, and ride up the hill to the Lakewood Bikeway; to ride unsafely along Powell with motor vehicles, including heavy truck traffic; or to ride on the sidewalk, creating risks for people walking. This latter choice is very evident with people cycling west from Wall St, as it avoids two additional crossings of Powell St. None of these ways of connecting between McClean Drive and Wall St are good choices. Our May 31 2017 proposal, and our Sept 6 2019 proposal for the Pandora St Bikeway and Powell Connector³, both recommended that any interim bypass route for Powell start at Woodland, not at McLean. That would reduce the detour to the south. Even for those users headed for the Pandora Bikeway and other points east and south, Woodland makes more sense.

There are some creative possibilities on Powell St that could make a separated mobility lane more feasible, such as reducing the motor vehicle lanes to 3 lanes with a centre counterflow lane, or widening Powell St by reclaiming space on the south side which is currently used for parking and shifting the traffic lanes south slightly. It may also be possible to route a separated bike lane south of the train tracks but north of the businesses, if concerns can be addressed relating to lighting and personal safety. To fully realize the benefits of the Portside Greenway, the Powell gap must be addressed first.

Wall Street

Wall St should be the easiest section to address, as Point Grey Road serves as a recently built template for what can be achieved here. Vehicle volumes must be reduced, and this can best be accomplished with multiple diversions, reducing the incidence of vehicle operators short cutting through this neighbourhood. At several locations there are small parks on the water side, opposite to larger parks on the south side. These should be joined, exactly as was done at Volunteer Park and Point Grey Road Park on Point Grey Road. This would not only reduce vehicle volumes, but it would greatly increase the attractiveness and user numbers for the small parks on the water side. We imagine that there could be lookouts established at these small parks, perhaps with interpretative signs showing the port skyline, indicating various sites across the water.

As it currently exists, there are challenges with pavement quality along Wall St.

Bridgeway

There are sections of this route that are through a parking lot, bringing to mind the conditions in Kits Beach Park. There are other areas where a bikeway has been defined, but requires improvements for the safety and comfort of users of all modes. In particular, the pavement quality is poor in many sections, and poor maintenance of this section often leads to debris in the bike lane. Furthermore, this

³ [HUB Cycling Assessment Ride Report re Pandora Bikeway and the Powell Connector](#), Sept 6 2019

section is challenging to navigate. A lack of effective wayfinding signs and stenciling makes it very difficult for people unfamiliar with the area to navigate to the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge, or bikeways heading south. And even when finding the correct route, the paths to the bridge are narrow, confusing, and crossing both directions of the Cassiar Connector is difficult, uncomfortable, and feels unsafe. In general, this section of the Portside Greenway requires better connections to points south and east.

Issues common to the full Portside Greenway

The Seaside Greenway on Point Grey Road not only provides a template for the Portside Greenway design, but a wealth of experience was gained in the area of public engagement and those successes should be built on and the lessons learned applied here. There was significant opposition to the Seaside Greenway prior to its construction but once the route was built, that opposition evaporated. The reroute is recognized as a significant benefit to the City and its residents. Those lessons and comparisons should be drawn upon for the Portside Greenway project.

The active transportation connections to this route should all be addressed. There are multiple cross street connections that require attention to the quality of the crossing for active transportation users. At the west end, connections are required to complete the Portside Greenway towards the Convention Centre, and the north-south bike routes on Carrall and Richards Streets. At the east end, better connections are required to the Trans Canada Trail in Burnaby, the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge, Adanac, Kaslo/Sunrise, and the future Eastside Crosscut Greenway.

The Portside Greenway presents an incredible opportunity for the City of Vancouver. On October 15, 2022, members of the HUB Cycling Vancouver UBC Local Committee completed another assessment ride along the route of the Portside Greenway. This was in preparation for the upcoming public consultation. We were struck by the similarities with the Seaside Greenway, with the potential for this route to unlock latent cycling demand in East Vancouver, and the number of active transportation connections it can create. Completion of this project will promote sustainable transportation options and enhance the livability of our city. It will not only benefit bicycle commuters but also encourage more East Vancouver residents to embrace cycling as a sustainable and healthy mode of transportation. We urge the City of Vancouver to proceed with this project, as it is long overdue.

Sincerely,

Anthony Floyd
Jeff Leigh
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About HUB Cycling

HUB Cycling is a charitable not for profit organization that has spent 25 years removing barriers to cycling in Metro Vancouver, while cultivating the health, environmental, and economic benefits that active transportation can bring. HUB has educated thousands of people, motivated thousands more, and championed improvements that [#UnGapTheMap](#) to create a connected cycling network. HUB Cycling's mission is to get more people cycling more often. HUB Cycling has close to 3,000 members and more than 45,000 direct supporters. HUB Cycling has 10 volunteer committees across Metro Vancouver that encourage cycling for all ages and abilities (AAA) in municipalities across Metro Vancouver. For more information, visit bikehub.ca.