



604.558.2002
bikehub.ca



14 December 2020

Mayor and Council,
District of West Vancouver
750 17th Street,
West Vancouver
BC V7V 3T3

Dear Mayor Booth and Council;

Re: 2021 District Budget Active Transportation Priorities

HUB Cycling is a charitable organization working to get more people cycling, more often and making cycling safer and better through education, action and events. More cycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions, relieves traffic congestion and means healthier, happier and more connected communities.

We the undersigned, as members of HUB Cycling North Shore Committee resident in the District would like to acknowledge the efforts of Council and staff in coping with the challenge of 2020 and maintaining service capacity with severely straitened resources. We are hopeful that 2021 will see a return to more normal circumstances and a resumption of Council's programs to address its important strategic goals.

HUB Cycling has a special interest in Council's strategic Mobility goals and implementation targets for increasing use of the active transportation mode. The recent steep decline in transit ridership has added to the difficulty in achieving Council's previously announced target of doubling active transport trips by 2025. The good news was the shift to cycling as a means of commuting and exercise. By some estimates, cycling trips in Metro Vancouver increased some 44% during the summer, as increased congestion of the Spirit Trail confirmed. The rapid uptake of e-bikes suggests that demand is only likely to accelerate.

The bad news is that, according to ICBC, during 2015-19 there have been 68 reported casualty crashes in West Vancouver involving cyclists, sadly including two fatalities. A perceived lack of safety in the existing bike network is a major concern to those potentially interested in cycling. Safety standards for bike paths have developed significantly since the District's cycling network was conceived in 2012. We suggest that, if Council's targets are to be achieved at some point, a significant improvement program is indicated.

Investment has reduced considerably since completion of Council's 2012 cycling network implementation plan. Nevertheless, consistent with Council's aims for 2020-21 to "Diversify, expand, and improv[e] the safety and appeal of active transportation options", the introduction of the well received, 'slow street' pilot on Bellevue Avenue created safer space for pedestrians and people on bikes to use while exercising and commuting. Important to recognize also is the recent provision of end-of-trip bike parking in Dundarave and Ambleside which has filled a much-needed gap in facilities for shoppers and visitors on bikes.

Looking ahead, while recognizing that the financial and staffing resources available to Council in 2021 may still be constrained, we would urge Council to consider the following projects as priorities in its 2021 budget provisions:

1. The proposed **Strategic Transportation Study**. This 'top priority' in our view could lead productively, among other things, to identification of a feasible second stage investment program of safe bike network development as well as a sustainable car parking policy that could allow reallocation of road space to protected bike paths.

2. The **Marine-to-Main Bikeway** (as presented to Council by HUB in February this year). We understand that elements of this vital arterial connecting Dundarave to Maplewood and the bridgeheads are at an advanced design stage and could be implemented in 2021. The priority elements would include: (i) the Welch Street Bridge widening (co-financed with Park Royal), and (ii) a protected eastbound bikeway between Lions Gate Bridge and Capilano Road in North Vancouver (co-financed with the District of North Vancouver).
3. Relevant to the Marine-to-Main Bikeway route, our discussions with staff and with Park Royal representatives have included planning concepts for improved access for bikes to and from Park Royal consistent with the Mall Bike Master Plan. These concepts warrant further investigation by the District and could include:
 - a. a possible route between the Welch Street bridge and 13th Ave bypassing the CN rail bridge underpass, a busy and notoriously hazardous section of the Spirit Trail;
 - b. a connection between the bike-friendly Gateway Residences and the Spirit Trail; and
 - c. a bikeable connection between Taylor Way and the main Park Royal access road.
4. There are several high value/low-cost '**Slow Street Network**' improvements also desirable in 2021, including:
 - a. development of Bellevue Avenue as a permanent slow street scheme (similar, for example, to Point Grey Road in Vancouver); and
 - b. expansion of the slow street concept into a bikeable network serving schools and civic facilities in Ambleside and Dundarave.

We suggest that the 'slow street network' would be an excellent basis for a 'Ciclovía' or 'car-free' day festival, as envisaged, we understand, by the ADBIA.

 - c. We also believe that, in view of the public parking spaces now available at the Grosvenor Building, the necessary conditions exist for complete closure to motor vehicles of Argyle Avenue between 13th and 18th Streets thus allowing completion of the separated pedestrian and bike paths through the Ambleside Waterfront Park as a segment of the abovementioned Marine-to-Main Bikeway.
5. Lastly, with respect to the abovementioned Strategic Planning Study, we are aware of planning by the District of North Vancouver for an **Upper-Level Bikeway** above Highway 1, paralleling the Spirit Trail in effect. We understand that preliminary planning by your staff exists for a multi-use path to run initially from Mathers/Haddon to Westcot Road and subsequently to the Cypress Bowl/Cypress Village Access Road (and possibly beyond) that could be integral with such an Upper Level Bikeway.

In view of the difficulty in obtaining a suitable right-of-way for the Spirit Trail from 31st Avenue to Gleneagles, we suggest that the proposed Upper-Level Bikeway be considered in the Study as an alternative bike route that could help relieve Marine Drive of the present-day skirmishes between some of its users operating at widely different speeds.

Yours sincerely,

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cc: Jenn Moller, Director Engineering Dept, District of West Vancouver
Vanessa Garrett, Chief, Roads and Transportation Division; Engineering Dept, DWV