

Taylor Eshpeter, Assistant Engineer  
City of Whitehorse  
2121 Second Avenue  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Y1A 1C2

**Re: Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition Stakeholder Contribution to Sixth Ave Local Improvement Project**

This letter summarizes stakeholder input from the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition's (WUCC) on the City of Whitehorse's proposed Sixth Avenue Local Improvement Project. Thank you for making the opportunity to meet with us earlier and consider our input as a key transportation user group.

Overall we are pleased to hear the City's commitment to building complete streets and WUCC is supportive of the general design direction proposed for Sixth Avenue. Including cycling infrastructure in roadway construction/reconstruction will help build towards transportation equity in the community. We understand that Sixth Avenue is classified as a "Local Street" and the City's goals of making the street a slower, safer and more community friendly street will be good for all users, including cyclists.

We recognize there are significant challenges to providing high quality cycling infrastructure that is accessible to all ages and abilities year round in a winter city. Although the proposed rebuilding of Sixth Ave will improve local and neighborhood cycling access, it should not be viewed as addressing the larger issue of safe, accessible, contiguous winter cycle commuting routes in downtown Whitehorse. The lack of such infrastructure will continue to be a significant barrier to wider acceptable of year-round (or near-year-round) cycling as a viable transportation option for many of Whitehorse citizens. This issue requires larger scale planning that is beyond this local road improvement project; the improvements to Sixth Ave do not address this larger issue and therefore are beyond the currently proposed Local Improvements.

**Recommended Approach for Including Cycling on Sixth Avenue**

WUCC is supportive of providing designated on-road bike lanes on Sixth Avenue. The proposed roadway cross section is wide enough to accommodate these spaces. Because the City does not adequately maintain bike lanes during winter months should not be considered justification for not providing bike lanes. This situation occurs elsewhere in the City (for example Fourth Ave.) This should be recognized as one of our community's challenges but should not be a basis for not providing the infrastructure that would be available for use when not covered in unplowed snow. An advantage of an on-street cycle lane in this instance is the marking can be continued from Jarvis St to Main Street such that there is a continuous bike lane for the length of Sixth Ave north of Main St.

Use of a "shared space" on the roadway is not the best option for Sixth Avenue. Shared space should only be used on lower speed streets (<30km/hr) or in instances where there is no other viable option. In the case of Sixth Avenue, there is ample opportunity for separated spaces (like on-road bike lanes.)

This approach is appropriate given the proposed speed of the roadway and associated speed disparity between motor vehicles and cyclists.

The other option proposed was a “shared sidewalk”. A multi-use path can be a viable option for accommodating cyclists and pedestrians off-street in some situations, for example the Riverdale path or the waterfront trail. But in an urban environment such as downtown, WUCC believes such an approach would lead to perceived conflicts with pedestrians, which we want to avoid. Should an off-roadway approach be used on Sixth then this would require designated spaces on the shared sidewalk, one half for cyclists as a cycle-track and the other half for pedestrians. To make this work would require first-class cycle facilities, complete with cycle-designed intersections at cross-streets, signage, etc. This approach would be preferred over the use of “shared space”. However, WUCC believes such an investment in first-class cycle infrastructure would be ideally made elsewhere in the City where there is greater need. Potentially Sixth Avenue could be used to “trial” or “pilot” new infrastructure designs, but at this time our recommendation is such initiatives are better done where there is greater need.

### **Additional Specific Input**

- Option 2 included a wider (2.5m) sidewalk on the west side of Sixth Ave. WUCC is supportive of this as it will provide better community accessibility and opportunities for non-motorized transportation. A wider sidewalk on the residential side of the street will provide additional space for neighborhood children who are starting to use bicycles for transportation. The capital and O&M savings realized by providing the wider, maintained sidewalk on the west side only can be used to develop and maintain the on-street cycle infrastructure.
- WUCC supports and encourages the use of narrow motorway lane width on Sixth Avenue. This will create a safer, lower speed, community-friendly street and save the City on both construction and maintenance costs of the roadway. Sustainable and community-centric street designs suggest motorway widths of 2.7 m to a maximum of 3.0 m for a local street of this nature and speed. Curb radius should be between 1.5 to 6 m to keep turning speeds low and safer for all road users.
- WUCC is supportive of the suggestion to increase the door-zone buffer to 0.6 m between the cycle lane and the parallel parking. The parking space itself can also be reduced to 2.1 to 2.4 m, plus the buffer. Again, narrowing the parking space saves operational & maintenance costs for the City. These dimensions can all be accommodated in the current road right-of-way

## Summary

- Overall, the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition (WUCC) is supportive of the proposed complete-street approach proposed for the Sixth Avenue Local Improvement Project
- WUCC's recommendation is that on-street bike lanes are provided for the entire length of Sixth Avenue from Main Street to Ogilvie Street with a wider, maintained sidewalk on the west side of the street for low-speed non-motorized users.
- Specific recommendations have been provided with respect to lane widths and roadway geometry to make this an even more community friendly and accessible street.

Thank you for incorporating our input on this civic improvement and we look forward to being the City's partner in this and other upcoming projects.