

February 17, 2019

Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board
Whitehorse Designated Office
Suite 203-309 Strickland St,
Whitehorse, Y1A 2J9

Re: Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition Input on Range Road Extension / Alaska Highway Widening Project (2019-0011)

Please accept this letter as stakeholder input from the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition (WUCC) with regard to Yukon Government's Range Road Extension project (2019-0011). Note that although this project is named the "Range Road Extension" project, it also includes substantial widening of the Alaska Highway, which likely has more significant community impacts than the relatively smaller Range Road portion of the proposed project. These impacts should be considered in assessing the project.

From the cycling community's perspective, the proposed project has a couple of positive elements; however, it falls short in a number of other aspects. WUCC has identified concerns, as well as opportunities to improve the project (i.e. reduce negative impacts), which could not only make the project safer for vulnerable road users but also make cycling more accessible to people of all ages and abilities. Doing so would improve safety for all road users.

With respect to positive aspects, we are pleased to see that the proposed highway improvements avoid the use of traffic islands ("porkchops") that are problematic, and are a safety concern for on-road cyclists. Secondly, the proposed project does include an extension to the multi-use path.

WUCC's concerns with the proposed project, and suggestions for improving the project (reducing negative impacts) are as follows:

1. **Multi-use Trail Design:** The design and alignment of the multi-use trail does not follow the alignment and design that has recently been developed by the City of Whitehorse and WUCC for this path extension. The City's design uses a contemporary approach for improving safety and accessibility for vulnerable road users.

There is no indication in the project proposal that the path extension is to be paved. Unpaved, the multi-use path does not meet the requirements of the City of Whitehorse Bicycle Network Plan and is not suitable for cycling by people of all ages and abilities. The Bicycle Network Plan was adopted by City Council as a guiding document (June 2018), and therefore should be used by the Proponent to inform the proposed project. The City should advise on the design and alignment for this project.

2. **Speed:** The design speed for the highway is identified as 70 km/hr. From a safety and community perspective, this is regressive and too fast. Furthermore, six travel lanes promotes driver confusion and decreases safety for all road users. Both the City of Whitehorse and Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition previously recommended to the Yukon government that the Alaska Highway should be designed for 60 km/hr through the core of the community (see <https://wucc.ca/input/alaska-highway-project/>). Lower design speed will mitigate potentially significant safety and community impacts from this proposed project.

3. **Pedestrian access:** Pedestrian safety is a concern, and a pedestrian crossing of the Alaska Highway should be accomodated. Widening of the Alaska Highway does include a median, which is positive from a systematic safety perspective, but inadequate. Government of Yukon is not proposing to signalize this intersection, yet pedestrians and cyclists currently do, and will continue to cross the highway at this location. To do so will require crossing six travel lanes. Because this is such a large distance, it will be important to include large pedestrian refuges at the central median to provide some protection to vulnerable road users crossing the highway.

Thank you for incorporating our input to make this a better project for all citizens.

Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition

CC: City of Whitehorse