

November 25, 2019

Mayor and Council
City of Whitehorse
2121 Second Avenue
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 1C2

Re: Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition Input to 2020-22023 Capital Expenditure Budget

There is rapidly growing interest within the City for citizens to have more choice in transportation. Over the past 70 years we have been building a community that is almost exclusively auto-centric. Yet, a significant portion of Whitehorse's citizens do not have the privilege of operating an automobile. And those that do but want to choose cycling instead, they often do not feel safe or comfortable to cycle. Building infrastructure to provide separated, convenient, accessible spaces for active transportation is not only a demonstrable action to address the Climate Emergency, but also a matter of equity in transportation. Lastly, investing in cycling is just smart business. We know that every 10 km of automobile commuting costs our community on the order of \$5, where as the same distance travelled by bicycle saves society \$0.70 per trip.¹

In the 2020-2023 Capital Expenditure Program there are several projects that have a cycling component. Our support for funding and considerations for those projects, is listed at the conclusion of this letter. However, there are two important elements that the cycle commuting community sees as missing from the capital budget:

1. There is no comprehensive project pipeline for implementation of priority projects identified in Bicycle Network Plan. The grass-roots petition from parents and children for safe routes to school was presented Mayor and Council earlier this month speaks directly to this matter. Although there is some conceptual planning work underway right now, the budget does not include subsequent design and construction in 2020 and 2021. The budget should include the planning of additional projects, design & construction over next three years. The Bicycle Network Plan provides first-order cost estimates for the priority projects and these can be used as "place holders" budgets for 2021 through 2023. Furthermore, the new City-wide Transportation Study should lay out the long-term plan and project schedule for implementation of the Bicycle Network Plan.
2. We are currently in a unique time of abundant capital from federal infrastructure investment: access to capital dollars is not a limiting factor to the City investing in cycling. We believe that the City's ability to capitalize on this opportunity is limited by staff capacity to deliver these projects. The City needs to increase staffing to take advantage of third-party funding opportunities and thus the capital budget should include increased investment in cycling based on increased capacity to deliver the projects. This is also financially responsible because cycling infrastructure has a significantly lower cost to build and maintain per kilometer travelled relative to roadways¹.

¹ Travel Cost Calculator: <https://calgary.ca/Transportation/TP/Pages/Travel-cost-calculator/Calculator.aspx>

Cycling Related Capital Budget Items

The following is a list of potentially cycling related capital expenditures items identified in the draft 2020-2023 budget. These projects, contingent on considerations below, should be funded as follows (items are presented in temporal order and does not imply prioritization):

2020

1. Replacement Transit Buses – ensure new buses are equipped with bike racks that accommodate fat tire bikes because Whitehorse is a Winter City and needs to facilitate year-round cycle commuting.
2. Hillcrest Design & Reconstruction – engage with cycling community early in this design process as key components of the cycle network connect to and pass through Hillcrest. It will be important that the reconstruction is well planned and does a good job building these components of the network. Planning will need to ensure it connects to and through the Alaska Highway expansion being done by HPW, ultimately creating a seamless, paved, separated route from Copper Ridge/Granger through to the waterfront via Puckett’s Gulch.
3. Downtown Reconstruction: Cook St. West – we assume this would include extension of the escarpment Multi-use Path. Please ensure the MUP is well designed for cycle commuting, connects to the long-term cycle network and follows City of Vancouver’ [Design Guidelines for All-Ages & Abilities Cycling Routes](#). Engagement with cycle community during design is highly recommended.
4. Marwell East – Tlingit St – this street is identified in the Bicycle Network Plan as an All-Ages & Abilities (AAA) separated cycle route. Although this is not a priority project currently, please ensure this reconstruction includes this component of the Bicycle Network. This include intersection design, where it is being re-built, to provide a protected design for pedestrians and cyclists.
5. Pucket Gulch Stair Rehab – we understand the project includes of a guideway for pushing bikes up the stairs. Consider adding re-grading the southern path to provide a ride-up route to the base of the existing stairs, thereby giving cyclists the option to bypass the new stairs, should they choose. This would be a low-cost addition that could be implemented by City resources but could help reduce a key cycling barrier (the escarpment). Please consider development of low-impact trail lighting around the airport so trail users feel more comfortable and safe to use the trail year-round.
6. Transportation Study – the study should layout a long-term implementation plan and project delivery schedule for implementation of the Bicycle Network Plan. Include development of City design standards for cycling and various bylaw improvements for including end-of-trip facilities to facilitate the mainstreaming of cycle commuting.
7. Tank Farm Master Plan, Trail Plan, Whistle Bend Town Square, Urban Containment Boundary Studies - ensure the Bicycle Network Plan is implemented in these various planning exercises.
8. Zoning Bylaw Rewrite - implement actual requirements about bike parking and end-of-trip amenities (eg. covered parking, shower in offices, etc.) This should apply to both new buildings and when any major building renovations occur.
9. Building Consolidation Project – if this includes a new Transit Station, make sure that it includes covered bike parking.

2021

1. School Zone Improvements – we recommend coordinating with Dept. of Education to include building DIRECT connections from the school bike racks to the adjacent proposed cycle network facilities. These School Zone improvements should also plan for/build the associated connections to the cycle network so it results in safe, convenient connected routes for children to bike directly to school.
2. Asphalt Surface Overlay Program – we know most Whitehorse’s greenhouse gas emissions come from local motor vehicle traffic. With the declaration of the Climate Emergency, investing in auto-centric projects that encourage more motor vehicle usage should no longer be a key priority for the City. This \$5.8 million budget item is over 10% of the Engineering Services budget and is an area where the City should reduce spending, re-directing some of this budget to other strategic priorities for City.
3. Range Road/Two Mile Hill Intersection Upgrades – this is a critically important project for cycle commuters. This intersection is one of the most dangerous and difficult for cyclists to navigate. We request that the redesign take a protected intersection approach, making safety and convenience for vulnerable road users *the* priority focus of the project.
4. Hamilton Boulevard Roundabout – please ensure that a contemporary approach be used in the design of these roundabouts, such as the use in European cycling countries (see <https://youtu.be/41XBzAOmmIU>), which carries the separated cycle routes around the intersection in a convenient and safe manner. These projects should also include the adjacent multi-use paths which currently could use some improvements to reduce barriers to cycling and community connectivity.

2022

1. Range Road North Reconstruction – ensure that this project continues the separated multiuse path northward following the AAA guidelines.
2. Takhini Arena & Mt. Mac Upgrades – include high quality, conveniently located, sheltered, secure bike parking as part of these upgrade projects.
3. Pedway – Mt. Mac CGC - Consider including a bike guide rail to the stairs.

Thank you for incorporating our feedback to making Whitehorse a better, more inclusive, sustainable community.

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