

November 13, 2020

Dear Mayor and Council,

With the early snowfall, Whitehorse is bound for a long winter. While the Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition would like to acknowledge the City's quick response to the recent snowfall and success in getting motor vehicles back on the road to nearly full capacity within 24 hours, winter maintenance remains vital to non-motorized transportation. A significant portion of Whitehorse's population does not have the privilege of operating a motor vehicle, and another portion choose not to.

Seasonal snow clearing is an important component of cycling safety, along with good infrastructure, well designed routes, and a culture that supports self-propelled transportation. With the global pandemic in full force, Whitehorse residents are expected to continue opting for outdoor activities throughout the winter. In particular, many children are choosing or are required to walk and cycle due to the limited bus spaces. Safe routes to schools are more important than ever as the school children appealed to you at this time last year.

Citizens who cycle have identified the following several areas of concern that limit year-round cycling.

- **Two Mile Hill to CGC (paralleling Hamilton Blvd.):** If ploughed, this segment of multi-use trail would complete a nearly safe route from downtown and Takhini to the CGC. Unfortunately, the lack of ploughing of this section poses a hazard to residents in these areas when they are forced to choose between pushing a bike up the steep hill, or traveling on the road. Clearing this short section of pathway would allow families who opt to walk or cycle to Whitehorse's central recreational facility in summer and fall to continue doing so in winter, freeing up parking space for others.
- **Hamilton Boulevard.** While the segment mentioned above is a dire priority, the entirety of the Hamilton Boulevard multi-use trail is an important link in the cycling network. Although has been a long-standing practice of packing that trail for motorized use, it warrants revisiting, based on increased use by non-motorized users and low use by snowmobiles.
- **Airport Trail** between Alaska Highway and Black Street Stairs: Clearing of this trail has increased over the past few years, and users encourage the City to continue maintaining this regularly. It is a vital link to downtown, and one that allows many children and commuters to avoid the much longer and more dangerous route down Two Mile Hill. As a wind prone location, it does need frequent clearing.
- **Access points to major trails.** Self-propelled road users appreciate the clearing done on major routes like the Millennium Trail and the Waterfront Trail. In addition, clearing of the access points to these major trails remains vital, such as at Selkirk Street, Nisutlin Drive, and various points along Front Street. These small access points are often the difference between a challenging winter commute and an impossible one when the alternative is detouring into traffic to find an access point.

- **Curb cuts and crosswalks.** Snow ploughs often leave windrows that block crosswalks and curb cuts. They are nearly insurmountable for a bike pulling a chariot, and are dangerous for children who must climb on top of them in order to access a crosswalk. Although roads must be fully ploughed and snow removed, eventually, these windrows are seldom removed. Two staff with hand shovels could probably take care of many of them in short order. These barriers affect all people, including pedestrians, people with mobility challenges and even drivers who are required to walk from their vehicles to their final destination.
- **Sidewalk clearing by business owners.** We understand that City bylaw requires adjacent property owners to clear sidewalks. Many property owners do a commendable job of clearing sidewalks, while many businesses and governments do not. The City should hold them to a higher standard and start enforcing its bylaw. Areas of particular note are Chilkoote Way, Selkirk School, and Lewes Boulevard.
- **Two Mile Hill south trail.** This trail is typically closed in winter due to lack of clearing, yet many cyclists and pedestrians favour this route due to its gentler grade, and lack of vehicle interactions creating a safer route. With the Black Street stairs closed in the short term, clearing this segment would provide a nearly continuous safe route between downtown and Takhini, Hillcrest, and points beyond.

We trust that Mayor and Council and its departments are well aware of the benefits that cycling and walking provide citizens, such as improved health outcomes, affordable and flexible transportation options, and emissions reduction. Furthermore, as per our presentation to you last year, increasing cycling is simply smart business because increased cycling reduces costs to the City overall and improves road safety for all road users. With a long winter ahead, and the global pandemic in our midst, we urge the City to keep ahead of the snow so we can enjoy the glory of winter in our city.

Sincerely,

Whitehorse Urban Cycling Coalition