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Mayor and Councillors

**RE: Separated Bike Lanes**

The Bicycle Advisory Committee is an advisory body appointed by Vancouver City Council. The mandate of the Bicycle Advisory Committee is to provide a safe and convenient cycling environment for commuter and recreational cyclists by improving the existing road network to better meet the needs of cyclists, and by promoting the safe and responsible use of bicycles for transportation and recreation.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee wishes to comment on its support for the demonstration projects of separated bike lanes recommended by staff, and to provide Vancouver City Council with the Bicycle Advisory Committee's perspective on Separated Bike Lanes, its work plan for gathering cyclists thinking and expectations, and upcoming input and recommendations to Council and staff.

## DISCUSSION

The Cycling in Cities Survey identified that separated bikeways on streets would encourage a large number of occasional and non-cyclists to move to cycling for transportation. The value of separated bikeways as a means of increasing the cycling mode share has been evidenced in other cities, especially in Europe. Without separated bikeways, cycling mode share goals of 10% or 20% will never be achieved in Vancouver.

Moving forward, especially in parts of the city with current cycling levels exceeding 10%, a good policy would be to include cycling facilities on every street with separated bikeways on roads with automobile traffic beyond the tolerance level of less risk-taking and less confident cyclists. To really encourage cycling, the grid of cycling facilities should be finer than that for the automobile and should allow safe and direct access to all destinations for people of all ages and abilities.

From: <http://bikeportland.org/2009/10/30/want-to-be-like-copenhagen-think-about-vacuum-cleaners-and-raging-bulls/>

In the 1980s, when Copenhagen was experiencing a boom in bicycling, city officials worried that too many people were riding on the busy main streets. "They thought, we've got to stop that, it's not safe." Their solution was to direct bike traffic to the backstreet by building high-quality cycle tracks through neighbourhoods. The problem was that the neighbourhood routes meant people had to ride 10-15 minutes out of their way to get from a to b. The result? No one used them. "It was a flop. So, the city shrugged and went, 'fine, we'll put them on the main streets'". The lesson, says Colville-Andersen, is that planners should put bicycle infrastructure where people actually want to go, not where engineers think they should go.

## Protected Bicycle Lanes on Arterials

The cycling strategy should include protected (separated) bike lanes on arterials, especially those arterials near commercial areas. Portland's bicycle co-ordinator, Roger Geller, in a recent article "Portland's Portland's Bicycle Brilliance", <http://thetyee.ca/News/2009/08/04/PortlandsBicycle>, makes the case that the reason for Portland's growth in cycling being greater than Vancouver is that Portland has created bicycle lanes on arterials that get cyclists all the way to their destinations as opposed to our bikeways which get cyclists 90% to their destinations but leave them to battle traffic or illegally ride on the sidewalk to reach stores, employment and community facilities.

The Bicycle Advisory Committee fully supports the bikeway network in the 1999 Bike Plan. It is time to make the next step. The bike route network in the Plan will serve as cycling arterials with protected bike lanes on arterials streets for making local connections, in effect, the reverse of the pattern for cars. This basic bike route network should be augmented with separated bikeways on select arterial roads and with off-road bike trails, especially along roads serviced by rapid transit, for effective cycling growing towards the target levels.

## Downtown Bicycle Network

The Bicycle Advisory Committee applauds staff in bringing forth a draft plan for the protected bicycle lanes downtown. While there were several north south routes, there was a distinct lack of east west routes. Note that during Canada Line construction and the Granville Street upgrade, that fourteen east-west lanes were closed in downtown; 10 at Granville and 4 at Davie and Pacific. There did not seem to be much public concern or even notice over this lose of capacity so it seems like some traffic lanes could be reallocated

## CONCLUSION

The City of Vancouver Bicycle Advisory Committee would like to express its support for separated bikeways in Vancouver and for Staff's two proposed demonstration sites for 2010. The Bicycle Advisory Committee suggests that a comprehensive list of candidate streets with implementation schedule should be developed with public consultation along with goals and objectives of a separated cycling network. Furthermore, the direction for implementing separated bikeways should include a strategy of early roll-out through use of lower cost, temporary physical separation techniques and then followed up with permanent physical separation through future Capital Budget plans. Separated bike lanes and off-road bike trails are the next critical steps in significantly increasing cycling mode share. These types of facilities provide the cycling environment which people seek for them to seriously undertake cycling for transportation.

## BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACTION

The Bicycle Advisory Committee, in its 2009 / 2010 work plan, has undertaken a task for developing a list of recommended streets as candidates for separated bikeways within Vancouver. As part of the work plan, the Bicycle Advisory Committee will also develop through input from the cycling community, a suggested list of criteria of what makes a street a candidate for separated bikeway and a list of parameters for cyclist-attractive bikeway design. These lists will be from the cyclists' perspective and will be provided to staff, on completion.

Yours truly,

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Bicycle Advisory Committee

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### Attachment

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