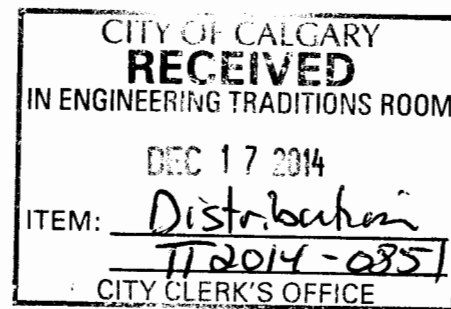


BIKE CALGARY

Historic City Hall (Sandstone Building)
700 Macleod Trail S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

December 17, 2014



Bike Calgary Comments Pertaining to the Cycling Strategy Annual report

Attention Councillor Keating, Chair SPC Transportation & Transit

Dear Councillor Keating,

Bike Calgary is pleased to provide comments on the Cycling Strategy Annual Report. Calgary's commitment to improving and enabling cycling, as embodied by the Cycling Strategy, has improved significantly over the past few years. We note that 2014 in particular was an exciting and productive year for cycling in Calgary.

2014's eventual approval of the Cycle Track Network trial represented a major milestone for cycling in Calgary, one that received international recognition. It also significantly raised the public profile of cycling in Calgary, bringing out widespread support from citizens, businesses and organisations of all sorts. Other smaller infrastructure projects have also delivered notable on-road and off-road improvements for cycling. Though the Cycle Track Network has focused much City and public attention on cycling in the Centre City, these other projects have demonstrated a commitment to improving conditions for those cycling across Calgary. Bike Calgary is excited both for 2015's opening of the Cycle Track Network and the continued expansion and improvements of cycling infrastructure elsewhere.

We would also like to thank City staff from a variety of departments for their work on ongoing efforts to restore cycling infrastructure destroyed during 2013's major flood. In particular, the recent reopening of the Elbow River Pedestrian Bridges was warmly welcomed by Calgarians who walk and cycle for recreation and commuting. We look forward to the City completing outstanding projects. Another major achievement was the Complete Streets Guide approval. Bike Calgary appreciates the significant attention that went into this key document that will help to shape our city as it expands and redevelops.

Unfortunately, 2014 was not without its troubles. Council disappointingly voted to significantly reduce funding for active modes, removing 15% of the budget for that programme. This will adversely impact Administration's ability to fulfil its Council mandated obligations to improving conditions for cycling and creating a safe transportation environment for all road users. Bike Calgary is also concerned that this cut will hamper Administration's ability to meet mode shift and transportation targets identified in the 2020 Sustainability Direction and in the Calgary Transportation Plan.

Bike Calgary notes that it is particularly discouraging that Calgary is cutting any funding for active modes, when cities around the world are increasing their commitments to active transportation. Close to home, Edmonton recently approved a \$20 million active modes programme, near double that of Calgary's. Edmonton additionally approved a single \$8.8 million permanent downtown cycle track. It also approved another \$4.3 million dollar bicycle route outside of the downtown. Perhaps most importantly though, each of these proposals in Edmonton were met with unanimous approval from its City Council. This last point is particularly deserving of consideration by Calgary's Council. While Edmonton has

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been able to unanimously approve significant commitments to cycling and walking, Calgary has been far less unified. The politicking surrounding cycling in Calgary has often been divisive and has detracted from meeting Council-approved policies. Council approved the Cycling Strategy to help build a better city and to better meet the transportation, recreation and health needs of Calgarians. It is crucial that this not be lost sight of.

Bike Calgary encourages Council to renew its commitment to cycling, and to ensure that decisions going forward are truly evidenced-based and directed at reaching the ultimate goal of making Calgary a better place for cycling. City staff are working diligently to carry out a Council-directed mandate and it is essential that they receive the support and funding needed to do so.

Naturally, Bike Calgary still has ongoing concerns around cycling infrastructure design, operation and maintenance. In particular, we would like to note ongoing challenges around winter cycling maintenance. On the Cycle Track Maintenance Report also being discussed today, we comment on the high-quality and consistent commitment Roads has displayed with the 7 Street SW cycle track. We also recognise that Parks continues to generally meet expectations with timely and reliable pathway clearing. Unfortunately, on-street bikeway clearing continues to be a notable challenge for winter cycling maintenance. While Roads has shown improvements on this issue over the past year, deficiencies remain:

- Critical components of infrastructure are not being identified and cleared reliably. This particularly relates to turn bays that perform the essential function of transitioning riders from one piece of infrastructure to the next.
- While some parts of a piece of infrastructure are cleared, some parts are still being missed. This contributes to inconsistent expectations and possible hazards.
- Snow build-up in parking lanes that are adjacent to bicycle lanes causes automobiles to spill over into those lanes. Policy to address this disruption is needed.
- Finally, snow continues to be shovelled from sidewalks into bicycle lanes by residents, businesses and even City contractors. This compromises the safety of bicycle lanes and often diminishes Roads' commitment to clearing. Currently, the shovelling of snow from a public sidewalk into a bicycle lane is permissible, but since it almost always results in the blocking of the facility, a bylaw revision is warranted.

2014 has been an important year for cycling in Calgary, one ultimately defined more by success than divisiveness. Bike Calgary is proud to have been a part of realising that success and we look forward to helping make 2015 an even better year. We extend our thanks to City staff for their work this year. We would also like to thank Council for its work in 2014 and for welcoming Bike Calgary's feedback at these committee meetings.

We respectfully ask that the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit recommend that Council receive this report for information.

Sincerely,

<signed>

Kimberley Nelson
(President, Bike Calgary)

<signed>

Dale Calkins
(Vice-President, Bike Calgary)