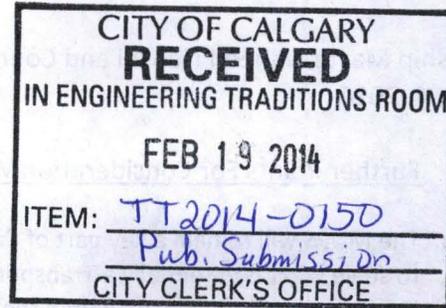


Chris Alig, P.Eng
231 Silvermead Crescent, NW
Calgary, AB, T3B 3W4
February 4, 2014



His Worship Mayor Naheed Nenshi and Council
Office of the Mayor
The City of Calgary
P.O Box 2100, Station M,
Calgary, AB, T2P 2M5

Dear Mayor Nenshi and Council:

I am writing to ask you to support the upcoming plan for cycletracks in the CBD. With respect to recent media coverage regarding concerns over the proposed 1st SE cycletrack, I would like you to know that while I initially also shared those concerns I have since met with the cycling planners in Transportation Solutions and have changed my mind. Any and all cycling infrastructure being placed on Calgary's streets will necessarily be a matter of making a 'least-worst option' type of decision that will require leadership and support from your office and Council in order to be successful, and the 2014 plan is no exception.

Cyclists in Calgary already face many obstacles, and it is imperative that the delivery of safe on-street cycling infrastructure is recognized as a public safety issue, and that its delivery is done in a manner that benefits all Calgarians. Cycling downtown is currently a dangerous proposition, with little to no road space allocated for cycling commuters to get to their places of employment. While it would be ideal if cyclists could be safely accommodated on all streets in the CBD, this isn't likely going to happen. I urge you to keep the safety of Calgary's cycling community front of mind when you are asked to consider where and how infrastructure is delivered for them. As I have been told many times, Transportation is about moving people, not just cars, and every bicycle seen downtown represents one more available parking space and the associated, however small, reduction in overall vehicle traffic.

As the Co-Chair of Calgary's Pathway and Bikeway Advisory Council (CPAC) from 2006 to 2012, I would be pleased to discuss this matter in more detail with you or any member of council if there is further interest in this matter. Several additional points, related to cycling, are included in the attached for consideration.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Chris Alig, P.Eng

Further Points For Consideration With Respect To The Delivery Of Cycling Infrastructure.

- a. The MUPS will remain a key part of Calgary's cycling infrastructure, but Council can't keep looking to Parks to solve what is essentially a Transportation problem, namely moving cyclists safely on city streets. Parks has done an admirable job within their mandate of providing recreational infrastructure, but due to issues such as pathway congestion, poor sightlines, inadequate drainage leading to freezing, and speed limitations, it quickly becomes apparent that the MUPS alone cannot address the needs of Calgary's cycling commuters. Delivery of on-street cycling infrastructure falls to Transportation, and currently there is an infrastructure gap that needs to be closed in order to provide a safe transportation option for those Calgarians wishing to cycle.
- b. The congestion experienced by drivers in the CBD is not the result of cycling or cycling infrastructure. Congestion in the CBD peaks twice daily and it is apparent that the capacity of the streets and roads in the CBD are at their limit. One solution is to reduce the number of vehicles vying for that available capacity in the CBD – which means providing Calgarians with the option to choose Transit or active modes as an alternative to driving. With the number of commuters travelling to the CBD from the suburbs, the exurbs and the nearby surrounding towns, the CBD simply doesn't have the vehicle capacity to accommodate every person wishing to drive. Increasing the mode share for active modes such as cycling requires provisions for cycling to be made in order to realize mode share gains, which equates directly into reduced vehicle traffic, an immediate net benefit to the remaining drivers. Note that this is *not*: "The City wants everyone to ride their bikes", it's more along the lines of: "The City recognizes that the safety of its citizens who choose to cycle is at risk with the current lack of safe, on-street cycling infrastructure". If the messaging is not clear on this distinction the result will be a driver backlash against cycling.
- c. Street design. Calgary's streets have historically had a cross-section that included vehicle lanes and adjacent sidewalks. Had our streets been designed to safely accommodate cycling in the first instance, as they were to safely accommodate pedestrians, the call for the removal of cycling lanes would seem as ridiculous as, say a call today to remove sidewalks to better accommodate vehicles. Having to retrofit cycling infrastructure onto Calgary streets is now the reality that's in front of us, and it's an issue that will require confident leadership to manage successfully. It is expected that the leadership for this issue will come from the Mayor and Council, as well as from the leadership within Transportation in a manner consistent with addressing a public safety issue.
- d. Vehicle driver outcry at the loss of road space will remain a reality that will need active management. At current mode share numbers, the 1 to 2 percent of Calgarians choosing to cycle will never be in the majority. The numbers of cyclists in Calgary are increasing year over year and it is unacceptable that safe accommodation of cyclists on City streets is not being provided at a rate that reflects the uptake of cycling as a form of transportation. Just as it is unthinkable to not provide reasonable accommodation for any other group of vulnerable Calgarians, the reality is that Calgary owes a duty of care to the safety of its citizens, including those that wish to cycle. It would be difficult to consider on-street cycling in the CBD as anything other than an activity that leaves cyclists needlessly vulnerable without safe and adequate cycling infrastructure getting put in place.
- e. Parking. No discussion of delivering cycling infrastructure is complete without mentioning the loss of parking spaces. The recent car share program launched in Calgary has placed 300 rental cars in and around the CBD, with virtually no outcry due to the resulting loss of parking capacity. For the sake of consistency, until the parking spaces lost to cycling begins to approach the volume of parking lost to car share, the loss of parking should not be a considered as a deciding factor used to avoid placing cycling infrastructure in the CBD. <https://www.car2go.com/en/calgary/>