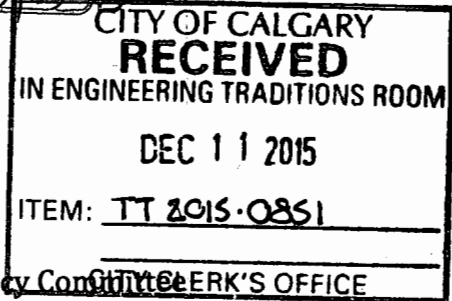


December 10, 2015

Attention: Councillor Shane Keating, Chairman
Transportation and Transit Standing Policy Committee
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE**RE: Centre City Cycle Track Network Pilot Project Update**

Dear Councillor Keating,

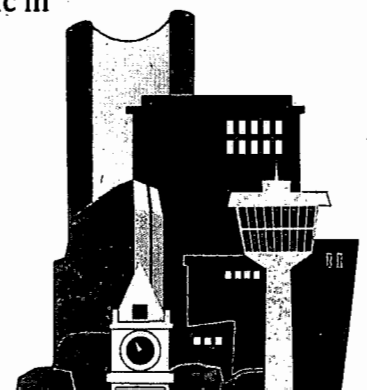
Due to travel commitments, it is not possible for me to attend the SPC meeting on December 11, 2015, so please accept this letter on behalf of the Calgary Downtown Association (CDA) for submission to the meeting minutes. Also, please find enclosed 35 copies of this letter for distribution.

First, we would like to thank Katherine Glowacz, and her team, for their diligence in communication and working towards resolving issues in relation to the pilot project. Additionally, she played an important role in championing the education component of the pilot. The CDA has been advocating for education for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists since 2011, and not only were we glad to see the education program undertaken, but we were pleased to have our Hospitality Outreach and Safety Team (HOST™) members contribute. We believe there is still a great deal of work to be done in this area, especially where engaging motorists is concerned.

The CDA was pleased to see a few families heading into the downtown on the network to enjoy some of our free programming over the summer, and also to see the increase in female riders.

The CDA and the ratepayers on the west end of 8th Avenue were happy to see 50% of the street parking re-established. We were all relieved to see some modifications made to address accessibility, but there is still much work to be done to make travel dignified and safe for physically challenged people negotiating the cycle tracks and the shared space of the pilot.

Travel times for motorists have increased, albeit marginally, but there isn't any data assessing how much traffic may have moved to other routes to avoid the cycle tracks, or the environmental impact of idling vehicles. The flow of traffic in some areas of the pilot needs further adjustments to be effective. At 5th Street, both at 8th and 9th Avenues, traffic has seen frustrating delays, especially for those drivers exiting the Eighth Avenue Place and Holt Renfrew underground parking structures.



The CDA, in conjunction with the building managers from Hines and 20 VIC, commissioned a traffic study in the area, and presented the findings and recommendations, which would benefit the traveling public and businesses along the corridor, to the City's Traffic Manager in December. Those recommendations are under consideration.

The use of the 311 system to gather feedback has been onerous, and many folks are reluctant to make the effort to report. The initial 311 response to the project, especially during the construction phase, demonstrated the lack of communication from the City, and the anger of the businesses severely impacted by the lack of access and removal of on-street parking. The CDA encouraged everyone to report issues and challenges as well as positive experiences to 311, Ward Councillors, and the Mayor. Following a high amount of negative reports, some of the on-street parking removals and handicap access issues were accommodated. Other concerns were not addressed, and many people felt they were not being heard. A number of businesses and property owners have stated that they do not believe this is a pilot at all, but a done deal, and are therefore reluctant to waste their time contacting 311. The CDA repeatedly recommended modifications be made to the 311 app in order for people to have a quick and easy way to report safety incidents and related issues immediately, but, to date, that has not been done. In light of the reporting challenges, a low number of negative reports should not be interpreted as support.

The preliminary data in the report indicates that sidewalk riding next to the cycle tracks has declined, which is excellent. However, this is not the case throughout the downtown. We have seen an increase of sidewalk riding, especially on the streets adjacent to Stephen Avenue Walk/8th Avenue, and have been working with the CPS to address this dangerous behavior. This is especially evident during programming and events such as breakfasts, noon hour stage performances, and other gatherings, as well as the 6:00PM to 6:00AM period on the mall.

Another area of concern is that of bike parking in the downtown. Although free and plentiful, there seems to be an expectation by some that a bike rack will always be available directly in front of the desired destination of the cyclist. Locking bikes to trees and street furniture, often compromising pedestrian access and safety, has been repeatedly reported and not addressed.

Travelling speeds of cyclists throughout the pilot areas are of concern, and we have had numerous complaints, especially on Stephen Avenue Walk, where the posted speed is 30 KPH. During the very heavy pedestrian times on the mall during the Calgary Stampede, when cycling was not allowed on the mall, we were pleased to see a number of people walking their bikes, but were disappointed by the numbers of cyclists riding irresponsibly. The education team came onto Stephen Ave to flash large signs to bikes to "SLOW DOWN" indicating problems with speeding cyclists. Unfortunately it would be impractical to have those staff in place throughout the

year, or even daily during the summer. A more practical solution is still required to ensure higher levels of safety on Stephen Avenue Walk.

We have noticed changes in pedestrian patterns on Stephen Avenue Walk, which are disappointing. More and more, pedestrians are moving on the sidewalks during pedestrian hours, and this has negatively impacted the street vendors who are on the carriageway, and takes away from the pedestrian mall experience. There have been reports of people not utilizing the mall due to the unpredictability of bike traffic. In fact, the annual CDA Downtown Visitor Survey for 2015 indicated the top area for improvement for Stephen Avenue Walk was "cycling," with recommendations to eliminate it or improve the signage and education around the shared space use.

The CDA is very grateful that our worst fears of injury accidents involving cyclists and pedestrians have not been realized. We have witnessed pedestrians knocked to the pavement by cyclists and many near misses. Our staff, including our maintenance workers, have had daily near miss situations with cyclists. During events on the mall, with or without legal road closures during pedestrian hours, and during open roadway hours with legal road closures in place, we have been witness to cyclists endangering worker safety during set up/tear down, and interfering with pedestrians in attendance, including riding through tents. We are grateful to the CPS, who were able to assist and regain control of dangerous situations. Recently, we have seen some action from the City through social media to engage with cyclists and ask them to ride courteously or dismount during events, which we appreciate. Single-file riding, and keeping to the right of the carriageway education would be helpful.

The CDA is pleased to see the increased ridership in the downtown portion of the pilot, but it is clear that 8th Avenue is not achieving target numbers, likely because it is not a good connector across the core. This may provide some explanation as to the increased sidewalk cycling. It is most disconcerting to see a significant negative impact on the pedestrian traffic on Stephen Avenue Walk. We are concerned that ratepayers are experiencing negative impacts to pedestrian traffic during very difficult economic circumstances. We are already seeing an increase in leased space vacancies along Stephen Avenue in 2015. We anxiously await the economic vitality information, which we had hoped would be collected in September and reported for a year over year comparison.

It is of interest that the 2015 City of Calgary Downtown Cordon Count reported a decline in bicycle trips in 2015 from the same time (May) in 2014. Based on the expected target volume increases for the downtown cycle track portion of the pilot being double, or higher than the volumes in 2014, expectations are high to see if the new cycling infrastructure will contribute to a 2016 Cordon Count with an increase of similar proportions.

In summary, the CDA has been encouraged by:

- Education initiatives
- Willingness to make accommodations/improvements
- Increased ridership along downtown pilot routes
- Reduced sidewalk riding along pilot routes

The CDA believes there is more work to be done in the following areas:

- Education and reinforcement - sidewalk riding in the downtown, safe cycling, speed, parking
- Traffic movement at 5th Street
- 311 Reporting
- The viability of 8th Avenue as a connected part of the network
- Increasing bicycle trips in the downtown as a return on investment

The CDA is happy to continue to work with Katherine Glowacz' team for the remainder of the pilot. We look forward to the final evaluation.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Schofield", with a large, stylized initial "M" and a circular flourish at the end.

M.A. (Maggie) Schofield
Executive Director

CC: City Clerk