



**GREATER VICTORIA
CYCLING
COALITION**

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Re: Bicycle Master Plan Update

Mayor and Council,

The GVCC would like to express its qualified support for the updated Bicycle Master Plan and staff's recommendations to council.

The GVCC was pleased to contribute to and provide input to the plan, and also to see the City engage in an extensive public consultation process. The resulting plan does reflect a strong public desire for the provision of high-quality, low stress cycling facilities that meet the needs of all bicycle users, especially vulnerable users such as women and children.

We provide the following comments and observations for Council's consideration:

1. The primary recommendations are the six priority projects identified for implementation of the next 5 years, budgeted at \$4.9 Million. That level of investment would be a welcome increase in the city's active transportation program, after years of relatively modest bicycle budgets. Substantial increases in the cycling infrastructure budget will be needed to meet modeshare targets and provincially mandated GHG reduction targets.
2. We note that the prioritized projects are, at this point, six routes and segments selected from a much longer list of (almost 100) potential projects. That alone indicates the scope of bicycle improvements and investments needed to build a complete and safe network for all riders in the City of Victoria. The long list of identified projects also underlines the strong need to allocate considerable resources to fund, over both the short- and long-term, an attractive and functional bicycle network in Victoria.
3. As the report indicates, critical additional work on each of the top six projects remains: "design concepts, specific improvements and detailed cost estimates." The GVCC believes it is essential to obtain further public and stakeholder input at the 'detailed design stage' for each of these projects, to ensure input from user groups and strive for high-quality design standards and best practices. In our view, a number of recent bicycle projects and designs (e.g. Hillside/Shelbourne bike lanes) have been incomplete or inappropriate to the road right of way or traffic speeds.
4. To cite one proposed project, Pandora Ave is slated to be designed with a one-way cycle track. Many observers in the cycling community feel options for a 2-way cycle track should be fully considered and presented to the public. 2-way facilities are common in other cities on similar conditions and routes. An alternative routing east-bound along Johnson, as proposed, has multiple

issues, not least of which is an awkward intersection and gap to connect from the bridge crossing. A close look at options, constraints and costs on Johnson seems necessary before the Pandora design is determined.

5. Although it is good to see some spot improvements, a stronger focus on closing the gaps in the existing bikeway network is critical, especially at busy intersections such as Fort at Oak Bay where the lane ends just before the intersection. Research shows that these locations are amongst the most dangerous for bicycle riders and thus need to be prioritized.

6. We have a number of concerns about the proposed "All Ages and Abilities" (AAA) network. We support the city's intent - and the broad public demand - for bike lanes and routes that are "high-quality, low-stress and safe for all users." However, we would expect the entire network to aim for those characteristics. Moreover the Triple A routes appear to be constituted based more on where its implementation is feasible rather than where it is needed. Many gaps and holes exist in the network. As well, it is not clear how those routes would be specifically communicated (signage, maps, other means?). Further explanation and clarity may be needed to communicate the function and role of these routes.

7. The GVCC is very pleased with the proposed outline (Page 8) for a comprehensive update to the Bicycle Master Plan. Cited topics include modeshare targets, wayfinding, education, parking, economic development opportunities, implementation and evaluation. All of these are important, and underline that creating a truly great bicycling city required much more than just a network of bike lanes. We recommend that, for Phase II, the city expand the membership of its Task Force/Technical Committee to include a diverse range of bike riders and stakeholders.

Thank you for the leadership you have shown in undertaking this update. Creating a healthier, safer and more sustainable future starts with more people riding their bikes more places, more often.

Sincerely,



Edward Pullman
President
Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition

