



Friday, September 9, 2005

Mayor Larry Campbell and Council  
Vancouver City Hall  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mayor Campbell and Council,

In February 2005, Council made the bold and progressive decision to aim for a 10% cycling mode share in Vancouver by 2010, for which we applaud you. Achieving this goal will reduce traffic congestion, aid in the fulfilment of Vancouver's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, improve community health and street safety, and enhance tourism. The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition would therefore like to express its concern with the level of funding proposed in the 2006-2008 Capital Budget Plan for the cycling network.

You rarely hear people say they won't drive because it's not safe. Many do, however, cite that as a reason for not cycling in Vancouver. A car network has long been established in the city, but a safe, complete cycling network does not currently exist.

Staff have identified the total cost of completing the proposed bicycle network as \$17 million. They have argued for spreading this cost over nine years, starting with \$4 million this capital cycle and finishing in 2014. This approach makes a 10% mode share by 2010 extremely unlikely.

Staff justified the \$4 million allocation by arguing that a 9 year construction period would allow more 'leverage' of external funds. Their analysis is flawed: it assumes that no further money will be spent on cycling after completion of the proposed network. If the city continues to spend money on cycling after completion of the current plan, then total external funding will be identical, regardless of the amount spent in this cycle. Senior levels of government provide external funding to encourage and accelerate the development of bicycle facilities, not to slow down their development.

Furthermore, during the upcoming capital period, many construction projects will take place related to the RAV line and the Olympics. Bicycle network construction can often 'piggyback' on other road construction, saving money by restriping lanes while other construction takes place. This particular capital period offers many opportunities for such cost savings, provided that adequate bicycle funding is made available.

*The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC) is a volunteer-run non-profit society whose members work toward improving conditions for cycling in the Lower Mainland. The VACC believes that increased bicycle use has the potential to significantly reduce traffic congestion, improve health conditions that result from inactive living, and enhance our urban environment.*

*The VACC campaigns to change the circumstances that currently discourage bicycle use: poor or non-existent cycling facilities and lack of appropriate education for both cyclists and motorists. We do this by providing informed input and consultation on cycling issues to municipal, provincial, and federal politicians and government staff; and by offering advocacy support and education to groups and individuals in the Lower Mainland.*

For more information on the VACC, visit [www.vacc.bc.ca](http://www.vacc.bc.ca).

Compared to other modes of travel, small investments in cycling infrastructure can produce big results. For example, the remainder of the 1999 Bicycle Plan network could be completed for less than the price tag of a single RAV station. At this time of uncertainty about oil prices and availability, a relatively modest investment in the creation of a safe and convenient cycling network can offer the city a simple and effective means to diversify its transportation options.

There is enormous potential to grow the cycling mode share in the next few years. This will only happen though, if people feel it is safe and convenient to do. According to a recent TransLink study, over 30% of Vancouverites ride bikes at least occasionally, demonstrating a large potential for the growth of transportation cycling.

The VACC therefore urges council to increase the proposed investment in the bicycle network. Ideally, we would like to see the entire \$17 million to complete the network allocated in this budget cycle. However, if borrowing capacity does not allow this, we suggest \$10 million over the next three years. If funding continues at this level, the network will be completed by approximately 2010. While the completed network does not guarantee a 10% mode share for cycling, it represents a large step towards that goal.

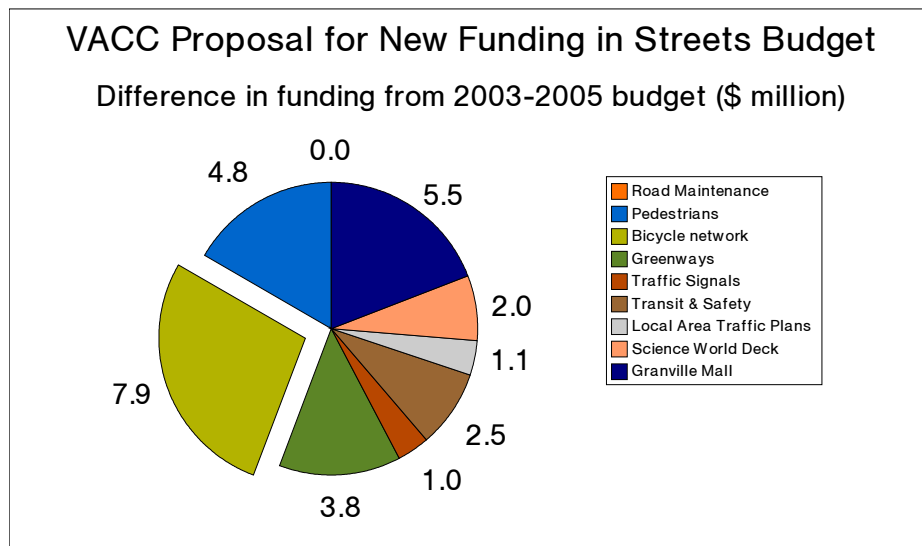
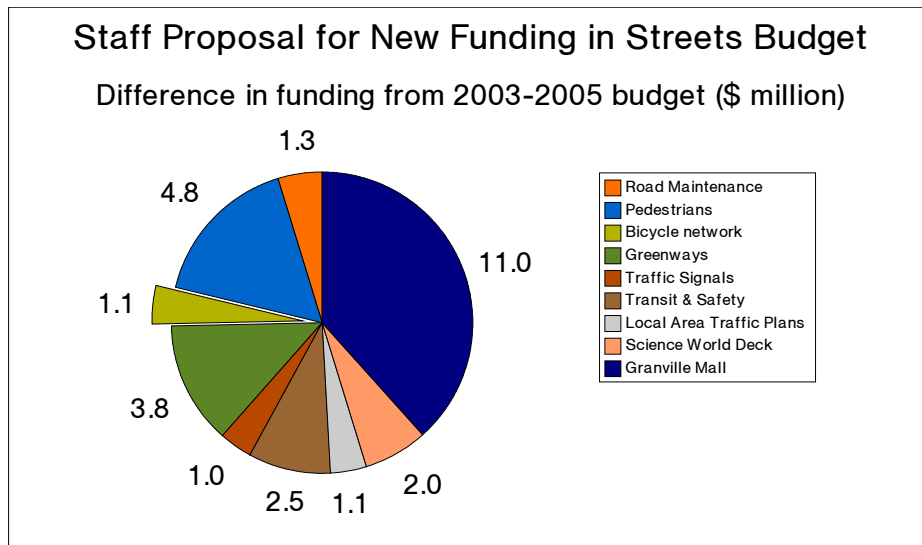
Furthermore, we have identified enough within the current Streets budget to fund \$10 million for the bicycle network, without any increase to the budget. If the Granville Mall project (\$11 million) was spread out over two budget cycles and the cycling network reduced from three cycles to two, \$5.5 million could be reallocated to cycling in this capital cycle. The infrastructure budget could also be frozen at its 2003-05 level, freeing up \$1.3 million. Together, these could add \$6.8 million to the proposed \$4.0 million bicycle network budget, for a total of \$10.8 million in funding for the bicycle network, without any additional borrowing. In the appendix, we show details of this reallocation.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Jack Becker

Chair, VACC Vancouver  
Director, Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

## Appendix



These charts show **differences from 2003-2005** (i.e., 0.0 represents the same funding as 2003-2005). The total bicycle network budget is \$2.9 million larger once the 2003-2005 baseline is included: \$4.0 million in the staff proposal, and \$10.8 million in the VACC proposal.

*DCLs and CACs are included, but outside funding has been excluded.*

*The Burrard Bridge funding has been excluded, since it was originally budgeted as part of the 2003-05 capital plan.*

*The total streets budget 2006-2008 is \$84.3 million in both proposals. If the city borrows an additional \$6.2 million, the \$17 million target for the bicycle network can be achieved.*