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January 19, 2016

The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi,
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities,
Parliament of Canada

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the board of Canada Bikes, I would like to congratulate you on your election victory and your appointment to cabinet. We look forward to working together on the many goals we share.

I am writing to formally introduce our organization and share what we believe is an important perspective on infrastructure investment. We respectfully request your careful consideration of our recommendations (see page 3). We feel that, if observed, they would have an overwhelmingly positive impact on the future of Canada.

Canada Bikes was established in 2012. We envision a country where people of all ages and abilities are able to cycle safely, conveniently and enjoyably wherever they wish to go. By providing a knowledgeable national voice for cycling as transportation and recreation, we seek to achieve our two main objectives: the rapid growth of bicycle infrastructure in Canada and the development of a national cycling strategy.

We share our humble, but ambitious, vision with like-minded organizations across the country - organizations whose interests lie far beyond bicycles. Those who want more people on bicycles will cite innumerable reasons, whether it be to prevent chronic disease, to extend the reach of mass transit, to strengthen local economies, to improve road safety, to foster efficient urban planning, to promote ecological sustainability, to boost tourism, to move more people or, simply, to provide fulfillment and well-being for us all.

Importantly, we share our vision with every major city in Canada, all of whom are currently developing ambitious cycling plans and/or implementing projects to spark rapid growth in bicycle usage. We share the same vision with millions of individuals who currently enjoy cycling but would prefer to be able to do so more often and more safely. We share it with millions more (including the overwhelming majority of Canadians) who do not ride regularly now but who have consistently¹ expressed a desire to do so and are simply waiting for safer cycling infrastructure to be made available. We even share it with remainder

¹ The overall level of willingness to ride a bicycle for utilitarian trips is usually shown to be ~70% amongst the general public regardless of jurisdiction. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/158497>

of Canadians for whom their own ability to ride may not be a priority but who, nonetheless, recognize the benefits of making it safer for everyone else (especially their own loved ones) to do so. We share it with the high number of young adults who are thinking differently and for whom even getting a driver's licence is no longer the rite of passage it once was. And, of course, as always, we share our vision with the youngest among us - those for whom riding a bicycle has long been one of life's important pleasures and for whom anything else would be unthinkable. Together, we represent the vast majority Canadians, all of whom want one thing: a bike-friendly Canada.

As Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, you play a key role in setting the tone and direction for the country when it comes to sustainable transportation options. The infrastructure you choose to support will have an effect on how we move and who we are for years to come.

In the end, we get what we build for. Investing in cycling infrastructure - whether for transport, for² tourism or for recreation - offers the very best return on investment, by *any* government in *any* sector.

Canadians want options. Cycling is an incredibly efficient and intelligent way to provide them. The recently released study *Global High Shift Cycling Scenario (HSC)*³ by the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy and UC Davis, confirms the significant potential of cycling to reduce GHG emissions while increasing the affordability of transportation. The forecast, assuming the pieces are in place to induce more people to choose the bicycle, is for significant savings to individuals and government. The results show what many would say is obvious: a global increase in cycling could save society an enormous amount of money (\$35 trillion CAD cumulatively between 2015 and 2050 in urban passenger transport costs alone), while cutting CO2 emissions (from urban passenger transport by nearly 11 percent in 2050 compared to a scenario without a strong cycling emphasis).

We have a long way to go. The HSC projects a cycling mode share in Canada of 12% by 2030 and 16% by 2050. Luckily, the pent up desire of Canadians means it is quite possible to shift that many trips to cycling. However, it would require leadership, vision, and most importantly, dedicated infrastructure.

Across Canada, cycling is booming wherever investment has been made in dedicated cycling infrastructure. Federal investments are no different. Wherever they have been made, federal investments in cycling infrastructure have played a defining, inspirational role. The 2006 Urban Transportation Showcase program provided critical funding to complete the now popular Central Valley Greenway connecting New Westminster, Burnaby and Vancouver. The recent federally-supported linkage along the highway connecting Canmore, Alberta with Canada's most widely-known tourist destination (Banff National Park) led the Town of Canmore itself to rapidly develop its own network of cycling paths. In 2010, a one-time \$7 million federal investment made 36 cycling infrastructure projects possible throughout the city of Winnipeg, resulting in cycling numbers more than doubling wherever those improvements were made.⁴

² The economic, social and environmental benefits from cycling are significant and the return on cycling investments are considerable and can range in excess of \$30 for every \$1 invested:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371096/claiming_the_health_dividend.pdf

³ A Global High Shift Cycling Scenario: The Potential for Dramatically Increasing Bicycle and E-bike Use in Cities Around the World, with Estimated Energy, CO2, and Cost Impacts

https://www.itdp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/A-Global-High-Shift-Cycling-Scenario_Nov-2015.pdf

⁴ "At locations where bike lanes or paths have been completed in recent years the number of cyclists increased dramatically. Since 2007 bicycle counts at these locations have increased by 115%."

<http://bikewinnipeg.ca/2016/01/07/2015-winnipeg-bicycle-counts-report/>

Much more needs to be done. Since 2007, rates of active transportation in Canada have remained static, at around 20%,⁵ despite its known health and societal benefits. Independent mobility among Canadian children is a shadow of what it was for their parents. The number of youth using active modes to get to school is decreasing, while just 9% of kids aged 5 to 17 meet the recommended daily levels of even moderate physical activity (earning us just a D- on our own report card).⁶ We need to match our commitments to sustainability (such as those made at COP21) and the commitments to cycling that have been made by other advanced countries (such as the recent Luxembourg Declaration signed by Transport Ministers across the EU).

We can begin to address these pressing issues through investment in the built environment. Your government's planned investments in infrastructure present an ideal opportunity to transform our communities into places where people of all ages and abilities, but especially children and seniors, can cycle safely for their daily trips and recreation.

In order to maximize the benefits of any federal infrastructure investment, we recommend the following:

1. Prioritize those transportation projects designed to get people moving by sustainable forms of transportation. Canada's approach to climate change and transportation equity deserves a sense of urgency. It follows that all new infrastructure projects deemed acceptable to the federal government follow strict environmental rules leading to outcomes that help us meet our international obligations. Similarly, other levels of government do not always have the means to directly recoup the health benefits that cycling offers. Federal infrastructure investment programs are important opportunities to areas of overlapping interest and projects should be approved for federal funding based on their likely impact in areas of federal purvey.

2. Ensure that, if deemed eligible for federal funding, all new/upgraded roads infrastructure projects include family-friendly protected walking and cycling design. As investments in new and upgraded infrastructure have a lifespan of decades, it is critical that a complete streets approach be adopted now to ensure that these generational investments eliminate serious injuries and fatalities among people walking and cycling. We must insist upon highway/roadway design that includes protected bike lanes, protected intersections, traffic calming and design best practices known to dramatically reduce the safety risk to Canadians. Cycling facilities cannot be optional. Canada's 2015 Road Safety Strategy's ultimate goal is to continue to reduce fatalities and serious injuries caused by collisions on Canada's roads. No project approved by the federal government should work counter to this goal.

3. Understand that funding for cycling is integral to any mass transit project. Canadian jurisdictions are just now beginning to realize the need to link cycling infrastructure and transit. The reason for doing so is as simple as providing an exponential increase in effectiveness for any given station or stop. Cycling and transit are mutually dependent and thrive most when approached together. Mass transit represents a major financial investment, thus it is in the federal government's interest to insist that multi-modal

⁵The 2015 Cancer System Performance Report

http://www.cancerview.ca/idc/groups/public/documents/webcontent/the_2015_cancer_system_performance_report_en.pdf (see p31)

⁶ The Biggest Risk is Keeping Kids Indoors

<http://www.participaction.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2015-Report-Card-Full-Report-EN-FINAL.pdf>

transportation be approached wholistically and that cycling be engrained whenever a mass transit project is proposed.

4. Provide resources for the expertise needed to design high quality cycling facilities everywhere.

Smaller communities in particular often lack the resources to implement leading edge improvements. Other countries are far ahead when it comes to developing national standards, training opportunities and leadership on design best practices. The Federal Government has an important role to play in shaping provincial and municipal policy so that infrastructure for cycling is front and centre of the design of investments, rather than just an add-on or ignored entirely.

5. Provide leadership. As soon as possible, we recommend making a public federal commitment to increasing cycling as a form transportation in Canada. Making verbal public commitments and important gestures are one of the simplest and most inexpensive actions that can be taken by a political entity. Doing so would inspire municipal governments, provincial governments, non-profit organizations, government administration and the people of Canada themselves to do their utmost, knowing that we are united in our purpose.

In the end, a country's approach to cycling must be nuanced, specific and comprehensive. Cycling should be a specific priority of government as well as being integrated into all of its daily activities. As such, we also believe that the recommendations outlined above should soon form part of a much needed broader national cycling strategy. Such a strategy is an important tool for many countries around the world. As we move forward, we would like to work with your government to develop one for Canada.

We would appreciate an opportunity to talk or meet with you to discuss specific projects at your earliest convenience. We would also appreciate an introduction to the appropriate legislator or staff member in your Ministry with whom ongoing dialogue is most appropriate. We look forward to hearing from you. Meanwhile, please let us know if we can be of assistance to you and your Ministry on this topic or any other. It would be our pleasure to assist you in building a bike-friendly Canada.

Yours sincerely,



Anders Swanson
Chair, Canada Bikes
On behalf of the board of Canada Bikes
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cc: see reverse

The following Honourable Ministers have been cc'd for their information, due to cycling benefits reaching across jurisdictions.

cc:

Honourable Scott Brison, Treasury Board President
Honourable James Gordon Carr, Minister of Natural Resources
Honourable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Small Business and Tourism.
Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport
Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk, Minister of Employment Workforce Development and Labour
Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance
Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health
The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth

The following persons represent key partners and/or key stakeholders, and have been cc'd for their information.

Elio Antunes, President & CEO, Participaction
Richard Campbell, British Columbia Cycling Coalition
Chris Chan, Executive Director, Edmonton Bicycle Commuters
Mark Cohoe, Executive Director, Bike Winnipeg
Sara Maria Daubisse, Bike Regina
Gareth Davies, President, Citizens for Safe Cycling (Bike Ottawa)
Bob Elliott, Sport Matters
Ian Jack, Managing Director, Communications and Government Relations, Canadian Automobile Association
Jared Kolb, Executive Director, Cycle Toronto
Paul Labarge, Trans Canada Trail
Suzanne Lareau, President and CEO, Vélo Quebec
Patrick Leclerc, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Urban Transport Association
Raymond Louie, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Agustin Louro, President, Bike Calgary
Greg Mathieu, Chief Executive Officer & Secretary General, Cycling Canada Cyclisme
Jean-François Pronovost, Vice President, Public Development and Business, Vélo Quebec
Edward Pullman, President, Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition
Jamie Stuckless, Executive Director, Share the Road
Cathy Watts, Chairperson, Saskatoon Cycles