



Transportation Standing Committee
c/o Office of the Municipal Clerk
City Hall
1841 Argyle Street, Main Floor
PO Box 1749
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

Re: Lower Water Street Bike Lane

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is in response to the change in traffic patterns that occurred in September 2011, creating a bicycle lane on a portion of Lower Water Street. Although, the Halifax Cycling Coalition (HCC) applaud Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) in its effort to develop more on-street bicycle lanes we feel there are serious issues with the approach HRM is using to develop on-road facilities and the cycling network on the peninsula.

The HCC is a 400-member-strong organization of concerned citizens dedicated to improving cycling conditions and raising awareness of cycling issues in HRM. We believe that increased bicycle use has the potential to reduce traffic congestion, reduce infrastructure spending, improve our health, and enhance our urban environment. Consequently, we feel the planning and design of bike lanes on the peninsula should be approached from the perspective of creating a safe and connected cycling environment.

Currently, HRM is planning and designing on-street bike lanes in a fashion that ignores the importance of developing a connected network of routes where cyclists are given priority over automobiles. The design of the Lower Water Street bike lane is a clear example of this issue. This lane begins at the intersection of Lower Water Street and Terminal Rd. and ends just before the intersection of Lower Water Street and Sackville Street. The on-street bike lane ends abruptly with no explanation of whether cyclists are still in fact on a cycling route, creating a confusing and dangerous situation for cyclists and motorists. The original plan for the change in traffic patterns for Lower Water Street identified a bike lane that would connect the market at Terminal Road with the Ferry Terminal to Duke Street providing a valuable multi-modal connection for cyclists using the ferry for part of their commute.

This decision by HRM Staff to terminate the bike lane abruptly further reduces the efficiency and safety of HRM's (limited) active transportation network. Ignoring the fundamental principle of connectivity, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians will suffer from increased conflict, as the current plan consciously eliminates integration of its active transportation and public transit networks.

HCC recommends HRM review the final design of the Lower Water Street bicycle lane and consider extending the bicycle lane on Lower Water to the transit terminal to improve safety and encourage greater connectivity for cyclists on the peninsula. HCC would like HRM to give greater attention to the connectivity of its cycling routes on the peninsula as well as the design of on-street routes to ensure cyclists are given priority on identified cycling routes. HCC feels these two principles are central to the development of cycling as a viable form of transportation in HRM for all ages and cycling levels moving forward.

Sincerely
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