



April 3, 2018

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To the Vulnerable Road Users Steering Committee,

We are writing on behalf of Sustainable Calgary and Active Neighbourhoods Canada (ANC) in response to your call for participation on the Vulnerable Road Users and Heavy Vehicles Countermeasures Project. We extend our thanks for your effort to include Canadian citizens in this important conversation and as an organization, we are grateful for the opportunity to participate. We recognize the immediate importance of addressing the challenge of vulnerable road user safety, as it is not only an issue of transportation, but also of population health and environmental sustainability.

ANC, a pan-Canadian initiative funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, is represented by three organizations across the country from Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta: the Montreal Urban Ecology Centre, the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation, and Sustainable Calgary. Together, we have developed a “co-design” approach to creating healthy cities. Our work is guided by the belief that bringing together local and expert knowledge can create strong outcomes and healthier communities.

ANC recognizes the connection between the quality and availability of active transportation infrastructure, population health outcomes, and environmental sustainability. Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer, in her report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2017: Designing Healthy Living, focused on this complex relationship between the built environment, physical and mental wellness, and “air pollution, safety (e.g., injuries), housing, heat, UV exposure, climate change and natural disasters.” (p.6). We believe the best countermeasures will not only address this complex intersectionality of issues, but will create value: value in safer neighbourhoods, value in greater health outcomes, and value in a better quality of life for all Canadians.

To accomplish this, we argue the need to rethink our budgets. We have a clear choice to spend differently: to create not just safer communities, but healthier, more sustainable, age-friendly, equitable economically productive communities, that generate more tax revenue per square foot. We can do this by encouraging more compact development, and by prioritizing our investment towards pedestrians, cyclists, public transit, as cities across Canada and the world now aim to do. By ensuring that our budgets reflect our desired end goals, we can fund interventions that diminish the need for band-aid solutions in traffic safety.

In this spirit, we encourage you to consider:

Do budgets reflect stated priorities? Here we include the priorities of municipal, provincial and federal priorities. Cities across Canada and abroad increasingly prioritize walking, cycling and public transit to provide choice, affordability and inclusivity for Canadians, and to work towards greenhouse gas targets. Health agencies at all levels of government have stated the value of investing in healthy, walkable built environments, but lack jurisdiction over infrastructure and transportation decisions. Transportation

Canada aims for inclusive communities and a low carbon green economy, while Transportation Alberta strives towards innovative, accessible and active transportation systems. The largest shares of Calgary and Canada's environmental footprints are transportation and housing; and we know that the built form of our cities has more impact on our overall fossil fuel consumption than green building technologies alone. To honour these priorities, we need to structure our policies and budgets accordingly: towards more compact development, and the prioritization of walking, cycling and transit.

How do solutions to increase safety for vulnerable road users address priorities, goals and strategies in other ministries, agencies, and levels of government? Research shows that more walkable communities can have positive outcomes when it comes to public health, mental health, quality of life, aging, fossil fuel consumption, tourism, affordability, low-income and vulnerable Canadians, economic productivity, economic development, and tax revenue. Aligning priorities in these areas of government intervention may allow for larger budgets moving forward, as shared goals and outcomes across departments are identified.

Questions we encourage you to continue asking include:

- Is there collaboration between different levels of government and across ministries?
- What organizational infrastructure exists to facilitate such communication and collaboration?
- Do federal and provincial transportation budgets reflect the stated values of accessible, inclusive, innovative, and environmentally-friendly transportation?
- Do federal and provincial transportation budgets reflect the stated values of the municipalities they work with?
- How can federal and provincial priorities and budgets reflect the recommendations of health agencies at all levels of government?

Let's work towards long-term, root cause solutions; towards solutions that take advantage of cross-departmental synergies; and towards solutions that don't simply make roads *less bad*, but create great communities for all Canadians - while making effective and synergistic use of our budgets.

We are at your disposal to participate in any such conversations, and to contribute background information – research and best practices that we have used or created - as needed.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for reaching out to hear the perspectives of Canadians on such an important issue.

Sincerely,



Celia Lee, B.Sc., M.E.Des. & Sustainable Calgary Team