

The Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities: Canada Bikes submission by video (text version)

Canada Bikes is invited to appear by **videoconference** on Tuesday, June 4th at 3:45 pm (Ottawa Time).

To undertake a study: The study is called, *How Competition Can Make Infrastructure Dollars Go Further*. Canada Bikes testimony relevant to the following items for the study:

1. Red tape reduction

A large body of evidence supports cycling infrastructure projects as the most beneficial type of initiatives within the broad area of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. Cycling projects require less bureaucratic oversight and red tape for negative social and environmental impacts. However, design and planning for safety is of critical importance and cannot be ignored as saving lives and reducing injuries significantly trumps the need to reduce red tape. Cycling related projects:

- Are typically smaller scale projects which should require more simplified paperwork
- Produce a broad suite of benefits - from health care and infrastructure cost savings to congestion and travel cost reductions
- Have minimal negative impacts and high resilience
- Require coordination with other road users and travelers

Therefore, cycling projects require less oversight for negative impacts but require high safety standards, as do other vulnerable road users.

The primary issue, which cannot be compromised, is design and planning guidelines for cycling to ensure safety while providing ride ability and co-ordination with other modes and road users.

2. Contract allocation process and increased bidders for federally-funded projects

When assessing a range of competing infrastructure projects, comprehensive evaluation of costs, benefits and risks are critical to the correct valuation of projects and their return on investment

A broad range of externalities – important economic and qualitative values including comprehensive lifecycle variables – must be incorporated to evaluate infrastructure spending correctly for different types of project. For example, cycling projects return more than \$10 for every dollar investedⁱ, far more than competing projects. Conversely, comparatively low spending on cycling infrastructure is directly related to cycling fatalities and injuries and the perception of cycling as dangerous.

What does this mean? This means that cycling projects should be a first priority for transportation and infrastructure spending based on the overall value they deliver. With increased value return on lower cost and risk projects comes more leeway to realize safety guidelines and up-to-date specifications – and to provide adequate margins to increase the bidding pool with minimal effects on ROI.

3. Increased private sector infrastructure

In the future we will be operating under increased uncertainty for transportation projects, due to a range of issues from climate change impacts to greater economic uncertainty for revenues and costs. To minimize risk and increase resilience we must diversify in the right directions to meet future transportation needs. For example, we've seen a reduction of overall driving mileage and increases in fuel efficiency which translate into reductions in gas tax revenues – and these trends are likely to continue. The infrastructure crisis and funding challenges for different levels of government, require

that the Federal government play a strategic role - building for value and future needs, not for yesterday's template.

We need to prioritize projects that are likely to deliver the highest benefits under a range of risky future scenarios. This is the value proposition for cycling. Safe and appropriate cycling infrastructure does this very effectively – as a key part of an integrated sustainable transportation system.

So what does this mean for private sector infrastructure? The inclusion of Private Sector infrastructure involvement is contingent on the public getting a good deal for their investment. This means being able to match negotiating expertise and to correctly formulate specifications, standards and guidelines. To address the economic, social and environmental risk factors identified above and an uncertain future, we must invest – in a comprehensive cycling infrastructure for cities and across Canada – that is safe, convenient, has all weather accessibility and is an integrated part of the future transportation system.

ⁱ Alliance for Biking and Walking, 2012 Benchmarking Report
http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012_benchmarking_report/