

CITY OF VANCOUVER

# Richards Street Protected Bike Lane

## Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary Report

*vancouver.ca/downtown-bike-network*

2018 - 2019



**Richards Street Protected Bike Lane**  
Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary Report

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# Richards Street Protected Bike Lane

## Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary Report

### OVERVIEW

The City of Vancouver is improving the downtown bike network to make cycling **safer and more enjoyable** for people of **all ages and abilities**. In 2013, the City converted sections of Richards St. to a protected bike lane. However, the City heard feedback during consultations in 2016 that the narrow width of the bike lane and the painted separation between people cycling and parked vehicles created **uncomfortable interactions**.



Based on this feedback, potential upgrades to the Richards St. bike lane were identified in order to:

- Improve safety by reducing conflicts at intersections, driveways, and parking spaces
- Provide high-quality protected two-way north-south cycling connection between Waterfront Station and Gastown, and Yaletown and the Seawall.

In late 2018, initial designs were shared with stakeholders, businesses, residents and the broader public. Staff received feedback from **over 700 people**, both in-person and online. Overall, there was support for the upgrades to the Richards St. bike lane and for the two-way and fully protected bike lane. Some people, however, had concerns about the impacts to parking and loading, as well as the potential impact to traffic flow on Richards St. Staff have made **modifications to the designs** based on the feedback we received and have provided further analysis to help address continuing areas of concern.

### PROJECT HISTORY

Richards St. has been a cycling facility since 2006 when a southbound bicycle lane was painted on Richards St. from Cordova St. to Pacific St. In 2012, Richards St. was then identified to be upgraded to an all-ages and abilities cycling facility as part of the Transportation 2040 Plan.

In 2013, Richards St. was repaved between Robson St. and Drake St. This allowed for a reconfiguration of the bike lane in that section from a conventional painted bike lane to a parking-protected bike lane - a bike lane that is placed between parked cars and the sidewalk to add protection from motor vehicle traffic. Although many people found this design to be an improvement, it also created a number of challenges, including conflicts between people cycling and people parking or accessing their vehicles. There is also no equivalent protected northbound cycling connection and no separation between cyclists and motor vehicles at the intersections.

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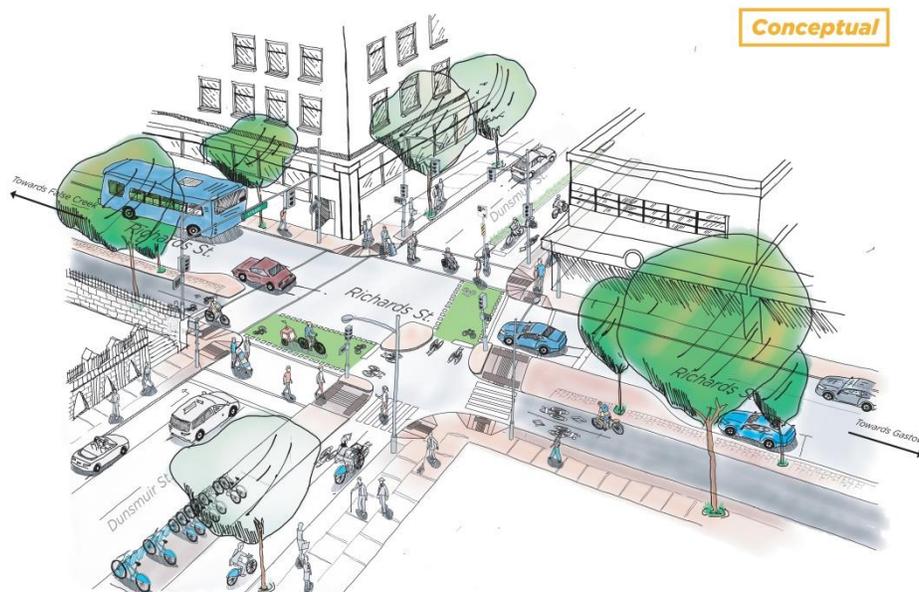
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In 2016, to support the launch of public bike share in Vancouver, staff engaged the public on the Downtown Bike Network Expansion, which resulted in protected bike lanes on Smithe St., Nelson St., Beatty St. and Cambie St. There was also a proposal to extend the parking-protected configuration of Richards St. north to Cordova. However, a number of issues were raised during the engagement that required a more thorough revision to the design of the parking-protected bike lane on Richards St:

- Parking buffer width, although wider than south of Robson, still allowed limited painted space to stand between parked cars and the bike lane.
- More conflict points were on the west side than the east side.
- Substantial work at bus stops and relocation of trolley infrastructure was required on the west side.
- The design didn't accommodate a northbound protected bike lane.

The current upgrades to the design of the Richards St. bike lane try to respond to both the feedback received during engagement in 2016 and the general feedback staff received about the parking-protected design.

### Key features of the design:



- Install the protected bike lane **on the east side** of Richards St. to avoid conflicts.
- **Improve northbound connections** by making the protected bike lane two-way.
- **Create protected intersections** to connect east-west cycling routes and reduce conflicts.
- Add trees and raise the bike lane to provide an improved streetscape.
- Retain capacity for current motor vehicle volumes, with one through lane plus turn lanes and rush hour parking restrictions between Dunsmuir St. and Nelson St.
- Retain most parking spaces (approximately 85%) while adding physical separation to address conflicts with parked cars.
- Relocate four existing Mobi bike share stations and install two new Mobi stations.

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### PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON PROPOSED UPGRADES (2018-2019)

To hear from a wide variety of stakeholders and members of the public, the City designed an engagement process with a series of in-person and on-site discussions, presentations, and online opportunities to provide feedback.

The goals of the 2018-2019 engagement process were to:

- Receive public and stakeholder input on the proposed design upgrades, with special consideration to the importance of maintaining access for businesses and residents along the street
- Discuss the role of the Richards St. bike lane in the overall downtown cycling network and get feedback on future connections that could improve safety and encourage sustainable travel
- Communicate with the public and stakeholders about the proposed upgrades in an on-going and timely manner.

#### Engagement and Communications Overview

Activity	Quantity	Participants*
Stakeholder Meeting/Conversations	15	31
Local Businesses (Door-to-door)	64	68
Public Open House	1	184 attendees
		33 comment forms
Website	1	748 visitors
Online Comment Form**	1	291 responses
Social Media	2 Twitter posts	20 (3 comments, 5 retweets, 12 likes)
	1 Facebook event	548 (256 unique clicks, 47 comments, 157 post reactions, 75 event responses and 13 shares)
Emails and 311 inquiries	1 inbox	47 emails/calls
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>2,030</b>

Communications Product	Quantity	Distribution
Notification Letters	2	4,992 (Consumer) 586 (Business)
Posters	1	47 - Distributed at Vancouver public library and other community centres in downtown
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5,625</b>

\*Totals may include those who participated in multiple consultation methods

\*\* Online comment form was open till January 1, 2019

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### WHAT WE HEARD

#### Most common themes:

Based on our conversations with stakeholders and the public, as well as the feedback we received through our online survey, a few themes stood out.

There was general support from many participants for the design upgrades to Richards St. and there was a positive response to:

- Creating a comfortable two-way downtown cycling connection for people of all ages and abilities
- Physically separating the bike lane and protected intersections to reduce conflicts at driveways, intersections, bus stops, and alongside parking areas
- Moving the bike lane from the west side to the east side of Richards St.
- Potential to increase cycling connectivity and the numbers of people choosing to cycle downtown.

Some participants had concerns related to:

- Removing a travel lane during non-peak hours and the impact this might have on traffic flow
- Removing some passenger/loading zones and parking
- Improving safety at intersections.

#### Stakeholder/Business meetings & Conversations

In late 2018 and early 2019, staff held 15 stakeholder meetings and 64 door-to-door meetings with local businesses along Richards St. to receive feedback on the revised designs. Approximately 580 businesses were notified of the engagement and opportunities for participation.

#### We met with:

- Transportation 2040 Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Vancouver Fire Department
- TransLink
- Downtown BIA
- Gastown BIA
- Medina Cafe
- Kingston Hotel
- L'Hermitage Hotel
- Consulate General of Italy
- Holy Rosary Cathedral
- Choices Market
- HUB
- + Other local businesses along Richards Street

#### We notified:

- Yaletown BIA
- Hasting Crossing BIA
- BC Trucking Association

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### Most common themes from conversations with businesses:

- General support for bike lane upgrades on the east side of Richards St. as it would reduce conflicts between cyclists and drivers.
- General support for a two-way bike lane on Richards St. to bridge the gap in the downtown bike network.
- Interest in learning about future east-west connections.
- Interest in understanding the potential increase in the bike volumes along Richards St. with the bike upgrades.
- Concern regarding removal of some passenger/loading zones and parking.
- Concern about the impact to traffic flow during peak hours along Richards St.
- Concern about safety at intersection with Nelson St.
- Interest and concern about the treed median and its maintenance.

Some impacted stakeholders such as Kingston Hotel, Holy Rosary Cathedral and L'Hermitage Hotel were interested in improving walking and cycling safety along Richards St. but there was concern about loss of passenger zones. Staff took the feedback received from stakeholder/business meetings into consideration and adjusted the designs to maintain passenger/loading zones where possible.

Participants on the north section of Richards St. were interested in additional recreational zones such as patios or parklets along Richards St. Staff are working with Medina Café on the feasibility of a curbside patio and/or parklet in the space identified in the updated design.

### Public Engagement

In late 2018 and early 2019, staff notified residents about the recommended design changes and invited them and the broader public to provide feedback. Opportunities included:

**Postcard mail drop:** Postcards were sent out to approximately 5,625 residences and businesses along Richards St. in advance of the consultation period inviting people to provide feedback on the recommended designs. They specified various options on how to provide feedback to the project team, including the link to the online comment form, the calling services on 3-1-1, and the project email.

**Digital online advertisements and posters:** A paid Facebook digital advertisement campaign ran, covering the project area. The project was also advertised on the [vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca) home page and through e-newsletters. Posters were distributed at various community centres and libraries to promote the public open house.

**Social media:** invitations to attend the public open house were posted on City of Vancouver's social media accounts, including: Twitter, Facebook etc.

**Consultation web page:** A dedicated project page ([vancouver.ca/downtown-bike-network](http://vancouver.ca/downtown-bike-network)) was created, displaying project information and how to provide feedback. Consultation materials were posted to this website and were available throughout the consultation period.

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### ENGAGEMENT METHODS

#### Public Open House: Dec. 6, 2018 – 4 to 8 pm at Vancouver Public Library

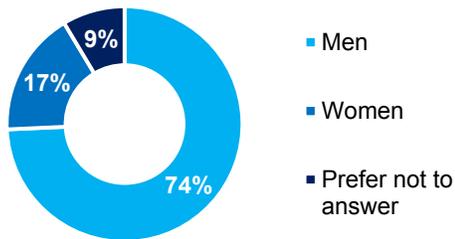
The City hosted a public open house, located at Vancouver Public Library Central Promenade, which invited residents of Richards St, and members of the public to learn and provide feedback on the recommended Richards St. designs under consideration.

*Engagement boards* were on display to present recommended designs along with supporting information and data ([vancouver.ca/downtown-bike-network](http://vancouver.ca/downtown-bike-network)). Participants were encouraged to join conversations with the project team to discuss their concerns, provide feedback, and learn more about future downtown connections.

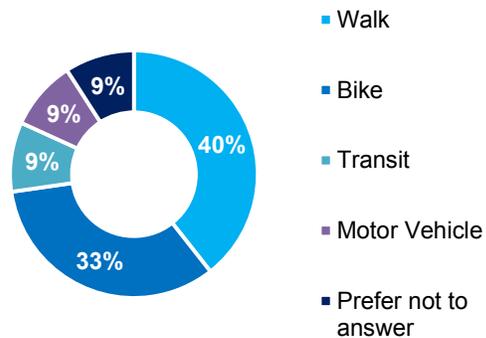
Comment forms were available for participants to provide written feedback and suggestions. Participants could also provide suggestions to the project team and sign up to be on the mailing list. In total, **184 participants** visited the public open house and **33 written** comment forms were completed.

Based on the participants who filled out the comment forms:

#### Gender Distribution



#### Primary Mode of Commute



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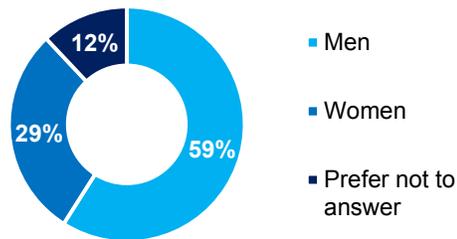
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### Online Engagement

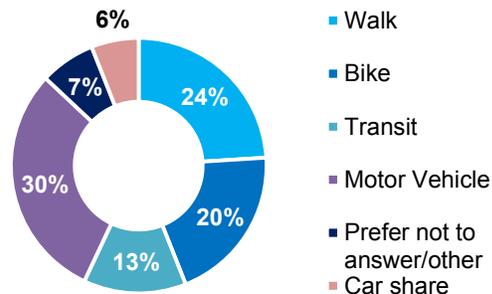
The City promoted an online survey to residents and the broader public and asked for information on how they use the downtown bike network and for their feedback on recommended designs along with their views on future bike connectivity. The form asked both open-ended and closed questions about the recommended designs, as well as basic demographic information. The online comment forms were open for **more than 30 days** from mid-November to January 1, 2019, receiving **291 responses**.

Online-survey participants:

**Gender Distribution**



**Primary Mode of Commute**



### Most common themes from residents and broader public feedback:

- Support for the two-way bike lane and an interest in understanding future downtown bike connections
- Positive response towards physically separating bike lane to avoid conflicts between parking cars and people biking
- Concerns about having a single travel lane on Richards St. during non-peak hours and the potential impacts on traffic flow.

### Other ideas and feedback:

- Concerns related to right turns and potential changes on various intersections along Richards St.
- Safety concerns related to doorings and collisions with drivers parking on street.
- Concerns about access and loss of on-street parking spots.
- Some residents were concerned about traffic diverting to local streets.

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**STAFF RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC FEEDBACK**

<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Staff Response</b>
<i>Support for a comfortable, two-way cycling connection downtown for people of all ages and abilities</i>	The new design of the Richards St. bike lane will include a two-way bike lane and extend the bike lane to Cordova St. and Pacific St, providing better connections to key destinations and the broader cycling network. The new design will also meet our all-ages-and-abilities guidelines, thereby providing a more comfortable and safe cycling experience, which we hope will encourage more people to choose to take sustainable trips in the downtown.
<i>Support for physically separating the bike lane and protected intersections to reduce areas of conflict</i>	The design upgrades to the Richards St. bike lane will provide physical protection for cyclists and reduce the conflicts with parking drivers. Safety at intersections is also a top priority. We continue to work on intersection designs to improve safety for people walking, cycling and driving. We are also exploring how to create spaces at the intersections for cyclists to wait out of the roadway, bike lane, and crosswalk.
<i>Support for moving bike lane from the west side to the east side of Richards St.</i>	The new design will move the bike lane from the west side to the east side of Richards St. in order to reduce conflicts at intersections and driveways, and provide better connections to other protected bike lanes.
<i>Potential to increase cycling connectivity and the number of people choosing to cycle downtown</i>	<p>The current bike lane on Richards St. hasn't seen the same increase in cycling activity as other bike facilities downtown. This is likely due to the lack of physical separation from parking vehicles and limited connections to the rest of the network and key downtown destinations. We expect that the recommended designs will make the bike lane on Richards St. more comfortable and appealing for a wider range of people.</p> <p>Future connections on the City's five year cycling priority map are expected to significantly increase ridership on Richards St, specially connections to the False Creek bridges on streets such as Smithe St, Nelson St, and Helmcken St. via Richards St.</p>
<i>Potential to create an activity zone/patio</i>	We have realigned the bike lane south of Georgia St. to support a potential curbside patio and/or parklet, while maintaining the bike connection to Telus Garden and adding two parking spaces.
<i>Concern about removal of travel lane during non-peak hours and the impact this might have on traffic flow</i>	We have analyzed traffic data to evaluate the impact of a single travel lane on Richards St. Traffic volume at busy intersections and left turns on Georgia St. and Nelson St. is significantly higher during the midweek afternoon peak period than other times of

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	<p>the day. As a result, parking along the west curb is proposed to be restricted during the afternoon peak period from Dunsmuir St. to Nelson St. with limited exceptions for shortstops (e.g. bus stops and hotel passenger loading), providing an extra lane for moving traffic.</p> <p>In addition, the proposed design would create space for drivers turning left and right, as opposed to the current two lanes for through traffic shared with turning lanes found at many intersections along Richards St. today.,. This ensures that the single travel lane maintains uninterrupted traffic flow at intersections.</p> <p>We will monitor operations closely during other times of the day, including the afternoon peak and during special events. Parking regulations along the west curb and near left turn lanes may be adjusted to ensure a continued balance between moving and parked motor vehicles, particularly in support of emergency services.</p>
<p><i>Concern about the removal of some passenger loading zones and on-street parking on Richards St.</i></p>	<p>Based on feedback, we are exploring how to retain loading zones and parking meters by modifying the designs where possible. This includes working with impacted businesses on the street to find solutions to their loading and access needs by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extending the tour bus zone north of Hastings St. into the former transit bus stop</li> <li>• adjusting the location of Italian Consular Zone southward of the new Mobi station at Pender St. and maintaining its existing length</li> <li>• Adjusting the loading zone south of Davie St. to include a ramp to the bike lane/sidewalk level.</li> </ul> <p>The proposed design maintains most of the on-street parking by reallocating one of the southbound general travel lanes to add northbound cycling and physical protection to the existing southbound bike lane.</p> <p>We have also identified many off-street parking spots available along Richards St. to support the removal of on-street parking. According to Parkopedia, there are 1951 publically listed off-street parking spaces along Richards St. north of Robson St., including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbour Centre Impark – 602 spaces</li> <li>• 516 W Pender (accessed from Richards St.) – 263 spaces</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy Park Lot 3 (between Pender St. and Dunsmuir St. ) – 363 spaces</li> <li>• 655 Richards St. and Impart 1037 (Telus Garden) – 723 spaces</li> </ul> <p>In addition, we plan to relocate the layover point for the #20 bus from far side Georgia St. (before) to far side Dunsmuir St. (after), removing three parking spaces alongside an off-street parking lot, but adding back four parking spaces on the more commercial section south of Georgia St.</p>
<p><i>Continued concern about safety at intersections</i></p>	<p>Safety at intersections is a top priority, and we have continued to evolve intersection designs. For example, left turns from Richards St. onto Georgia St. and Nelson St. are designed to have separate signal phases from the protected bike lane. We are also exploring signal coordination on Nelson St. and may add a laneway raised crossing or make other changes to improve this intersection.</p> <p>We are also exploring how to create spaces at the intersections for cyclists to wait out of the roadway, bike path, and crosswalks.</p>
<p><i>Alignment with other future projects</i></p>	<p>We plan to construct the section north of Dunsmuir St. with interim materials, in recognition of the ongoing Gastown Complete Streets transportation planning process.</p> <p>We have confirmed that Richards St. is compatible with potential future projects including the potential Granville Bridge Connector.</p> <p>We will seek onward southern connections, such as to the Seaside Greenway.</p>

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An example of a typical intersection design and a cross-section is illustrated below:

