

CERTAINTY IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

**The Case for Accelerated Investment in Cycling
in
Challenging Economic Times**



Economic Development

Health

Climate Change

Submission to the Finance and Government Services Committee

British Columbia Cycling Coalition

bccc.bc.ca

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Certainty in an Uncertain World

The Case for Accelerated Investment in Cycling in Challenging Economic Times

The British Columbia Cycling Coalition (BCCC) is encouraged that Premier Campbell recognizes the value of accelerated investments in infrastructure during the current economic slowdown. The BCCC recommends that the Province accelerate investment in cycling infrastructure as part of this commitment to address the economic slowdown. In addition to increased economic activity, accelerated investments in cycling infrastructure will hasten the achievement many of the goals of the Provincial Government including increased physical fitness, reduced greenhouse gas emission and increased tourism providing a great legacy for future generations

The BCCC's 2007 budget submission *Shifting To High Gear: Realizing the Benefits of Accelerated Investment in Cycling*¹ built the case for dramatically accelerating the pace of investment in cycling facilities in the province. This submission reinforces and reiterates the key recommendations contained within *Shifting To High Gear* in light of the present economic realities.

The current financial crisis and the likelihood of a period of slow economic growth provides the ideal conditions, impetus and opportunity for the significant acceleration of investment in cycling infrastructure.

While the recent commitment of \$31 million in Bike BC funding over 3 years is a significant improvement over previous funding levels for cycling, it will only begin to address the cycling facilities deficit that has resulted from the lack of investment over the last few decades.

Recommendations

To accelerate the completion of not only commuter but also recreational and touring cycling facilities, the BCCC recommends the following:

- Investments of \$150 million per year over the next three years by the Provincial Government in addition to leveraged funding from municipalities, developers and TransLink.
- Provisions for greater than the usual 50% cost sharing to encourage the building of high quality cycling facilities that advance the state of the art.
- Funding for the resources, including staff and consultants required to plan, design, project manage and evaluate projects to ensure that municipalities have the capacity and experience required to accelerate the delivery of high-quality cycling projects.
- Funding for cycling spot improvement and upgrade programs for Provincial transportation infrastructure.

¹ http://bccc.bc.ca/BCCC_Budget_Submission.pdf

Key Points

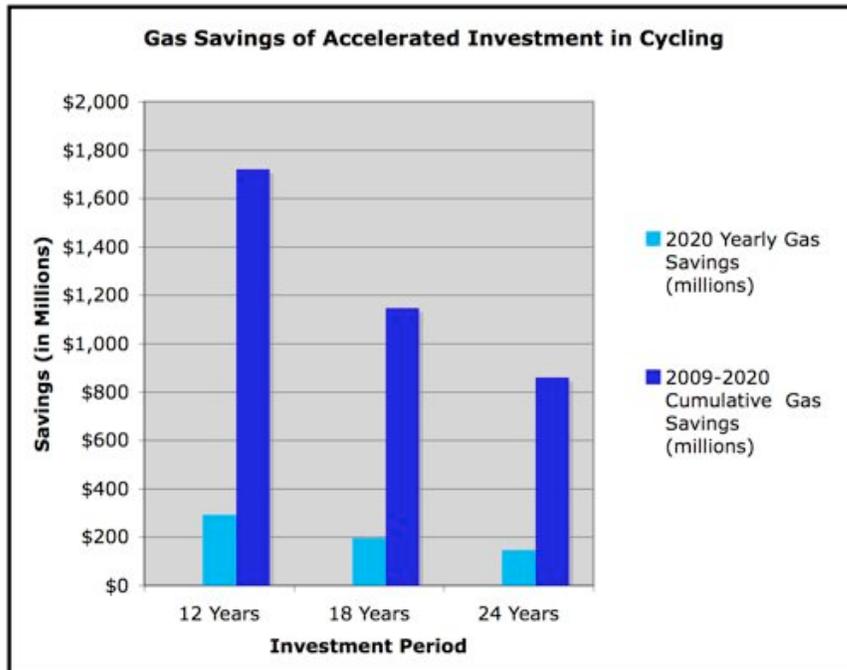
Rapid Realization of Benefits

As opposed to other types of projects with longer planning and design horizons, given sufficient resources, cycling projects can be completed relatively quickly. This would increase the likelihood that BC residents be able to benefit from both the resulting employment and the provision of low cost, sustainable transportation options during the current economic slowdown.

Inexpensive Transportation Stimulates Local Economics

At a time when many British Columbians are facing personal financial challenges, improved cycling facilities will enable them to use low-cost transportation in their daily lives. The money saved will increase the amount they can spend at local businesses, providing communities with a significant economic benefit in difficult times.

As indicated in the following chart and table, if accelerated investment in cycling results in a cycling mode share of 15%, British Columbians could save a cumulative total of \$1.7 billion by 2020 in reduced gasoline costs. This is twice the amount that could be saved if the investment is not accelerated.



| Gas Savings Resulting from Investments in Cycling | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Investment Period | Bicycle Mode Share | 2020 Yearly Gas Savings (millions) | 2009-2020 Cumulative Gas Savings (millions) |
| 12 Years | 15% | \$ 294 | \$ 1,721 |
| 18 Years | 11% | \$ 196 | \$ 1,147 |
| 24 Years | 10% | \$ 147 | \$ 860 |

Lower Construction Costs

During times of economic slowdown, the cost of constructing cycling facilities will likely be lower due to decreased material, labour and design costs.

Low Cost Vacations and Local Economic Growth

In tough economic times, people will want to save money by traveling closer to home. Instead of spending thousands of dollars flying to Europe to cycle tour, residents of British Columbia, Alberta, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana can enjoy cycling vacations in British Columbia thus stimulating local economic growth.

Velo City 2011

Vancouver is a candidate city for Velo City 2011, the premier international cycling conference. Should Vancouver win the competition to host the conference, this will be an ideal opportunity to highlight British Columbia as a premier world cycling destination.

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