

CYCLING IN CITIES Survey

evaluating bicycle facilities

One of the mandates of the Bicycle Advisory Committee is to evaluate bicycle facilities. There are several criteria important to such an evaluation:

- Is it the kind of facility cyclists are likely to use?
- Does it attract new cyclists of all demographics, including those who are under-represented now (i.e. women, older adults)?
- Is it safe?

To address the first 2 questions, a survey of 1402 Metro Vancouver adults in the “near market” for cycling was conducted by the Cycling in Cities research team, based at the University of British Columbia. A study of safety aspects of facility design is underway at the moment.



Paved off-street paths for cyclists only



Residential streets designated for cycling, with traffic calming



Cycling paths next to major streets, but separated by a physical barrier

preferred bicycle route types

The survey asked about 16 different route types, and 73 other factors that might encourage or deter cycling.

The **above three cycling facility types were preferred by all types of cyclists**, including those who cycle regularly, those who cycle infrequently, and those who hadn't cycled recently, but own a bicycle and were willing to cycle more often. Regular cyclists were willing to cycle on many of the 16 route types, but those who cycle less often, including women and people with children, did not feel comfortable cycling on major city streets, even with bike lanes, but did like the option shown in the photo on the right.

Current bicycle facilities in Vancouver include off-street paths, though some are unpaved and some are shared with pedestrians. The network also includes many kilometers of residential street routes, though few include features that minimize motor vehicle traffic. Vancouver and other North American cities rarely have cycling paths next to major streets, separated by a physical barrier. This type of route has been very successful in European cities with much higher cycling modal shares (15-40% of trips) than Vancouver (~3-4%).

Other factors that encourage cycling:

- Cycling routes that are separated from heavy and high speed traffic, away from noise and air pollution, and near beautiful scenery
- Routes that minimize slopes and distances, e.g., rail corridors
- The option to take bikes on transit
- Smooth non-slip surfaces, clear of debris
- Good lighting, lanes marked with reflective paint
- Safe indoor bike storage

For more information:

- www.cher.ubc.ca/cyclingincities