

What You Need To Know About Streets For Everyone

For Media Use

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1. Who is Streets For Everyone?

Streets For Everyone is a grassroots, community-driven organization based in East Vancouver dedicated to vibrant streets that are designed for all people.

We advocate for improvements that make streets better public spaces that foster community-interaction and enable people to socialize, walk, cycle, take transit, and choose modes of sustainable, healthy transportation on their favourite streets.

Our Commercial Drive Campaign is dedicated to making Commercial Drive a street that works for everyone. Some basic changes that we'd like to see include widened sidewalks, better transit and transit shelters, separated bike lanes, better pedestrian crossings, more marked or signalized crosswalks, more street furniture, and more landscaping.

We are lucky to have such a talented, creative, and growing team of individuals dedicated to working on this cause. The enthusiasm and diversity of skills amongst our community of supporters has enabled Streets For Everyone to do ongoing outreach in the Grandview Woodland resident community, collaborate and build strong relationships with many members of the business community, most notably on Commercial Drive, and build a positive relationship with other community organizations and the City of Vancouver.

2. SFE milestones

- **2013:** Research begins
- **February 24, 2014:** Initial convening of community members regarding a more “inclusive and sustainable Commercial Drive”
 - Initial research is presented to about 60 community members at Britannia Community Centre on Commercial Drive. Interested attendees leave contact information and the beginning of the Streets For Everyone community begins to take shape
- **Spring, 2014:** Community members who have attended a couple of regular meetings vote on the group's new name: Streets For Everyone (SFE)
 - Renderings are produced illustrating new ideas for Commercial Drive as part of SFE's first campaign, the Commercial Drive Campaign
- **June 2014:** Streets For Everyone builds a full-scale, 50-metre model of what Commercial Drive could look like with a wider sidewalk, more furniture, landscaping, and a separated bike lane as part of Car Free Day. The attraction is a big hit with folks in the community, and we gather thousands of signatures for our petition.
- **November 2014:** SFE's Sarah FioRito presents the Commercial Drive proposal to the Grandview-Woodland Area Council and approximately 200 community members including various members of city staff, members of the Commercial business community.

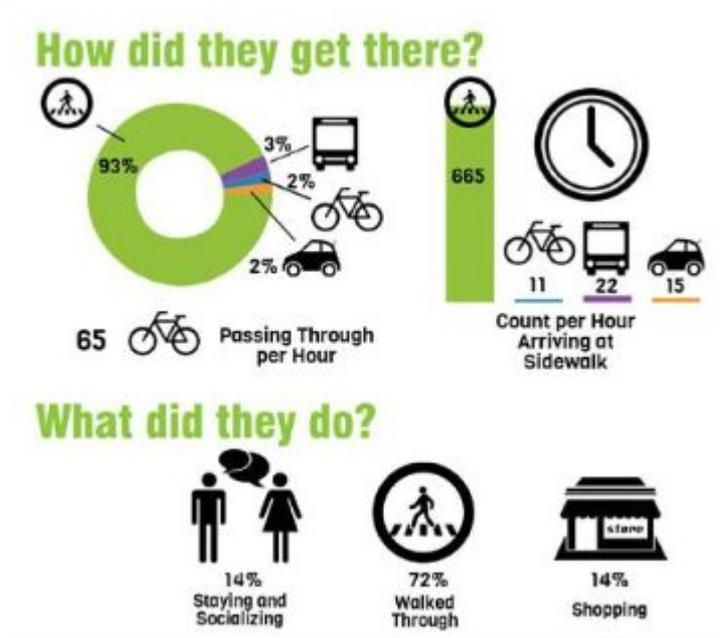
- **Winter 2014:** SFE organizers present the Commercial Drive Proposal to the Grandview Woodland Citizen's Assembly on the Community Plan for consideration as an addition to their recommendations to council.
- **June 2015: The Grandview Woodland recommends all core components of the Streets For Everyone Commercial Drive Proposal in their report to council -this is a big deal!** [Read the report](#)
- **Summer 2015:** SFE receives a Neighbourhood Small Grant to invest in a cargo bike to begin doing creative community consultation and engagement while also demonstrating the viability of cargo bikes as an alternative to moving large loads in cars.

3. What's being proposed?

- Improvements to the pedestrian realm, such as wider sidewalks and safer crosswalks.
- Street design that allows transit to move more efficiently.
- With no net loss of parking on the Drive, we propose to:
 - Widen sidewalks for pedestrians
 - increase efficiency of the 20 bus by having it stop every three blocks instead of every two
 - align bus stops with crosswalks
 - allow buses to move more efficiently thanks to the use of "bus bulges" which will allow them to stop without pulling in an out of the parking lane
 - make crosswalks safer
 - build a 'all ages and abilities' separated bike lane
- The specifics of the proposal we have put forward, formally known as [Streets For Everyone Commercial Drive Proposal](#), shows that this is possible and can be done. But we recognize that there are a variety of design options for achieving a street that works for everyone in our community and we are not attached to any specific design.
- A Complete Street is a street that meets the 'needs of every community member, regardless of their age, ability, or how they travel, where every resident can travel safely and conveniently' (Smart Growth America, 2013, p.6). SFE is proposing a "complete street" on commercial Drive.

4. Why Commercial Drive?

The Drive is an important gathering place for thousands of people in Vancouver. Commercial Drive is also a popular destination in Vancouver for dining, shopping, entertainment, and leisure. Unfortunately, the car-centric layout of the street gives the false impression that people primarily get to the Drive by car. The current design encourages loud, high-speed through-traffic, which makes Commercial Drive noisy and dangerous for community members who spend time socializing and shopping in the community.



Streets For Everyone believes that Commercial Drive's [and other streets'] design[s] should not only focus on moving people through the Drive, but also should help make the street a better public space where people want to spend time. A local research group, Slow Streets noted, "Regardless of how people got to Commercial Drive, they spend the majority of their time on the sidewalk. Based on these observations, shouldn't public investments prioritize creating a comfortable and secure sidewalk experience?" In addition to that, the success of events like Italian Day and Car-Free Day demonstrate the potential for a vibrant public space and destination street that thrives when we prioritize using it in other ways than primarily as a through-road for motor vehicles.

Streets For Everyone is advocating for updates to Commercial Drive that will orient it more toward the humans that use it and we are encouraging investment in human-scale modes of travel. We want to foster street life, vibrancy and community by creating a little more space for the vast majority of people who use Commercial Drive as a place to live whether they're parents with strollers, children playing with their neighbours, transit users, cyclists, pedestrians, and the diversity of other folks in our community*.

*Over 50% of the people in the surrounding neighbourhood (Grandview-Woodland) use transit, cycle, or walk to work (2006 census, Statistics Canada).

5. What effect will bike lanes and more pedestrian space have on Commercial Drive?

41% of people in Metro Vancouver don't bicycle more because they feel unsafe riding with vehicular traffic (TransLink, 2011).

Creating Separated Bike lanes is about:

- Enabling people to access affordable transportation options by providing them with comfortable, car-free space to ride a bicycle or bicycle alternative
- Allowing people who bicycle - from the community and visitors from other neighbourhoods, to safely access goods and services on the Drive*. This is especially important in Grandview Woodland which has some of the highest rates of cycling in Vancouver **
- Separating drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians so that each can go at their own speed at peace with one another.
- Creating new business opportunities all while ensuring everyone is safe*
- Enabling people in and around the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood to choose healthy, environmentally-friendly transportation options; helping Vancouver lower its emissions, have cleaner air, and healthier lifestyles.

*Bike routes on Woodland, Lakewood, and Victoria enable through-traffic for cycling commuters and people going long distances, but they don't encourage people on bikes to stop and spend time (and money) in the neighbourhood. Bike lanes on commercial high streets enable people on bikes to safely run errands on the street and to patronize local businesses.

**Translink Trip Diaries, 2011

In Vancouver, a study on the Hornby and Dunsmuir bike lanes showed that the bike lanes were associated with a reduction in ground floor commercial vacancies (Stantec, 2011).

It is less expensive to construct and maintain cycling lanes and sidewalks compared to vehicular lanes. Bicycles and pedestrians take up less space and weigh less, meaning reduced wear and tear and therefore reduced construction and maintenance costs for taxpayers. By dedicating more infrastructure to these less burdensome modes of transportation, we all save. In fact, currently property tax-paying

cyclists, transit users pedestrians are subsidising car drivers because their infrastructure costs so much more. (US PIRG 2011; Calgary 2013; Victoria Transit Policy Institute 2013; Conference Board of Canada 2013)

More people walking, cycling, and using transit can move per hour than driving and with less pollution, in addition to increasing capacity without expanding existing infrastructure. (Hickman & Banister 2014; Globe and Mail 2011; Vancouver 2012)

We can maintain the number of parking spots on Commercial by spacing bus stops every 3 blocks instead of every 2 blocks and by reducing the length of each parking spot to the current city-wide. On average, only 82% of parking on Commercial Drive is occupied according to a [report](#) published by Slow Streets in 2015. This highlights that there is an opportunity to make that space more efficient; 10 bikes can fit in one parking stall.

6. Who else is talking about this?

The **Grandview-Woodland Citizens' Assembly**, a representative sample of 48 people of the neighbourhood's population convened by the City of Vancouver to produce recommendations for the Official Community Plan, has recommended all core components of the Streets For Everyone Commercial Drive proposal.

15.1: We believe the City should introduce safe bike lanes (like Union Street's parking-protected bike lane) on Commercial Drive from East 14th Avenue to Graveley Street.

15.2: We recommend pedestrian experience improvements, such as wider sidewalks, more parklets, good access to bus stops, better signals, street furniture, trees and safe bike parking on side streets.

15.3: We urge the City to improve safety conditions for all users (pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, and people with mobility challenges), through means such as lowering the speed limit, intersection improvements, lighting, and parking controls.

[Slow Streets](#), a Vancouver-based design research group, is also advocating for a complete street that includes slower speeds, bike lanes, and more pedestrian space on Commercial Drive.

7. Business and organizational endorsements

Business Contacts who support the Streets For Everyone Commercial Drive Proposal:

Andre Montagliani - Renzo's coffee.

The Montagliani family has owned property and a business on Commercial Dr. for 50+ years.

Email: andremontagliani@gmail.com

Phone: 604-253-8721

Aiyana Kane - Bandidas Taqueria

The owners of Bandidas are very enthusiastic about changes to the street that will make it safer and more inviting for their customers

Email: bandidastacos@gmail.com

Phone: 604-568-8224

Some of the many businesses on Commercial Drive who support the Streets For Everyone Commercial Drive Proposal:

- Pulp Fiction
- Eternal Abundance
- The Gough Salon
- Sweet Cherubim
- Rabbit and Empee
- Bandidas
- Renzo's Coffee
- Toby's Liquor and Toby's Bar and Grill
- Cafe Deux Soleil
- Unity Yoga
- Ocean and Crow Yoga
- The Drive Pharmacy
- Audiophile Records

- Kickstand
- Coastal Food Mart
- Gramma Printing
- Bikes on the Drive
- The Kettle Friendship Society
- Dream Cycle

8. Related Business Quotes and Statistics

“I think [businesses] would be crazy not to do it. I think that’s a super smart move, just in terms of the number of bikes you can get in a car parking spot. We can have up to 20 bikes there.” -- John Neate owner of the JJ Bean Coffee Roasters commenting on the Commercial Drive bicycle parking corral. ([Source](#))

The owner of Renzo’s Coffee at Commercial and Charles Street, Andre Montagliani, wrote to the *Vancouver Courier* saying that he “would like to make [his] support clear for Streets For Everyone’s proposed improvements”, calling traffic “loud, dangerous and, at times, unpleasant”. “I am pleased that Streets For Everyone has put forward a proposal that would make the street more safe, attractive and accessible to all residents, shoppers and visitors”, he continued. ([Source](#))

“We definitely have benefited from the increased usage of the bike lane” - Steve Da Cruz owner of the Parker commenting on the Union Street bike lanes. ([Source](#))

In 2015 [Slow Streets](#) conducted a survey of businesses* on Union Street on their experiences with the newly installed bike lane and found that:

5/7 surveyed businesses stated that the bike lane was good for Union Street.

4/7 surveyed businesses stated that the bike lane helped them draw more customers.

5/7 surveyed businesses stated that the bike lane implementation had changed their minds for the better about bike lanes.

*The survey was limited to business that have walk-in customers - 7 of 12 businesses in total ([Source](#))

9. Facts from other cities

Surveys conducted in 5 major American cities (Portland, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, Austin) found that once a **new bike lane** was implemented, **10% of people had shifted from driving to cycling** (NITC, 2014).

A review of 460 lane removals found: **total crashes** could be expected to **decline by an average of 29%** by converting four automobile lanes three (plus other uses such as adding separated bike lanes). (Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, 2013).

Approximately 20% of residents who bicycled on a street stated that **how often they stop at shops increased after the installation of the protected bike lanes**. (NITC, 2014, p.13)

12% of residents stated they were **more likely** to visit a business **since the installation of a protected bike lane**. (NITC, 2014, p.13)

In Saskatoon, the City found in 2015 that **46% of people say they want to cycle more often**. (Saskatoon, 2015)

In July 2011, **Ottawa** installed Ontario’s first **segregated bike lane** downtown on Laurier Avenue. The 1.5 kilometer project was highly controversial. Businesses feared a loss of parking, although a **net**

parking gain (from 122 to 144 spaces) was realized. Car drivers assumed that there would be no demand. Now cited as one of Canada's most successful recent infrastructure projects, the Laurier Avenue lanes are winning awards. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2015): "Cycle mode share in the downtown area increased from 4% to 7%"; "**Cycling trips** along the street **quadrupled** from 700 to 2,800 per day"; and "**Fewer cars on Laurier with no increase in traffic volume on adjacent streets**".

In New York City, travel speeds in the Central Business District remained steady **after protected cycling lanes were created** while **retail sales increased** and **injuries dropped by 20%** (bike, automobile, pedestrian). Cyclist injuries dropped despite a "dramatic" increase in cycling. **Travel times** on Columbus Avenue and 8th Avenue **improved** by up to 14% (NYC DOT, 2014)

In Portland it's been demonstrated that **people walking and cycling will spend more overall per month than people driving** at restaurants, bars and convenience stores. (Kelly Clifton, 2012)

To learn more about Streets For Everyone:

<https://www.facebook.com/StreetsforEveryone>

<http://www.streetsforeveryone.org/>

<http://www.twitter.com/Streets4Every1>

Further resources on complete streets and transportation in Vancouver

UBC's Cycling in Cities: <http://cyclingincities.spph.ubc.ca/>

"What Route Types Best Motivate Cycling?":

<http://cyclingincities-spph.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2014/09/VeloWorks-2014.pdf>

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