



31 March 2025

The Honourable Fred Tilley, Minister of Public Works

Via email to: publicworksminister@novascotia.ca

Halifax Cycling Coalition, established in 2008, is a membership-based, grassroots organization that advocates for the safety of people cycling on our streets. People from varied backgrounds and with different needs use our streets to cycle to work, to shop, go to medical appointments, and for recreational purposes. We organize events that are filled with families and young children enjoying the liberty of being able to cycle to places and having fun doing so.

One of us is in his sixties (David) and one of us is fast approaching it (Talan). We have both recently been victims of traffic violence while cycling, and have ended in emergency and operating rooms. **We can share our stories in more detail, if you have time to meet with us.** Even if you cannot, we kindly ask that you think of vulnerable road users like us when you receive complaints about bike lanes that are the only protections we have as people cycling.

In fact, roads in Halifax are mostly not welcoming to people cycling. Many people cycling are seriously injured or killed on our roads due to crashes with vehicles, and alarmingly the number of such tragic incidents is increasing. Despite that, of Canadian cities, Halifax is second only to Victoria in the proportion of population using Active Transportation.

Bill 24 gives you, as the minister of public works, significant powers to make decisions about transportation in Halifax, powers that were previously rested solely in elected municipal officials. We regularly work with our municipal decision-makers. They are non-partisan, engage, for the most part, in a meaningful manner, and, most importantly, they are familiar with the local environment and are directly accountable to local voters. They also have been strongly supportive of improving the safety of people cycling, although, as we noted above, the safety record of Halifax is not improving. We urge you to use your powers, should you ever use them, to make Halifax safer for people cycling.

We urge you to enhance municipal and stakeholder participation in what was the Joint Regional Transportation Agency (JRTA). We have contributed as volunteers to the report



created by the JRTA and the Nova Scotia Active Transportation Strategy. **We would like to know when you will be making these reports public.**

We also urge you in the strongest terms to commit to an evidence-based approach to matters related to road safety and transportation. There is ample evidence to suggest that investments in infrastructure that support sustainable modes of transportation (transit, cycling and walking) reduce demand on the roads, reduce congestion, and increase safety for all road users.

We continue to cycle because of the freedom it gives us to move around. Cycling also keeps us healthy. Evidence demonstrates that encouraging cycling has health benefits at the population level, reducing pressure on our strained health care system.

We bring to your attention the speed reduction in Wales that has already cut road violence in half. Or Vancouver downtown bike lanes, originally opposed by local businesses and later endorsed by the Downtown Business Association. Similarly, in Toronto when the provincial government proposed ripping out Bloor St. bike lanes, local businesses protested as they've been good for business. We would be happy to share these studies with you and your staff.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Talan Iscan, HCC Board Member and Advocacy Lead

David Trueman, HCC Board Chair