



BIKE-N-BUSINESS

HELPING TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE
BIKE-FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

FINAL REPORT
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CityStudio's Bike-N-Business (BNB) revamp the bikeability of businesses

VANCOUVER, CANADA, November 27, 2012 – CityStudio's Bike-N-Business (BNB) Bike-N-Business (BNB) develops customized innovative solutions for businesses to partake and benefit from the City of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan, specifically around green transportation and lighter footprint goals. In partnership with local foods grocer and eatery Harvest Community Foods, BNB is designing and piloting cost-effective cycling amenities, including helmet hooks for easy helmet storage, fixit kits that provide convenient bike maintenance tools, and bike-friendly decals and marketing materials, that make businesses more accessible and convenient for cyclists. These amenities will be launched at an open house event scheduled on December 8th 2012 from 5:00PM to 7:00PM at Harvest Community Foods.

Harvest Community Foods is a neighbourhood local food grocer and eatery located on the edge of the Chinatown/Strathcona neighbourhood on Union Street, one of Vancouver's busiest cycling corridors. Harvest Community Foods aims to buy from passionate farmers and producers who are local and follow sustainable practices.

By developing cycling amenities for Harvest Community Foods, BNB aims to assist Harvest Community Foods in fulfilling its goal to engage in the cycling community. BNB hopes that cyclists will use these installed amenities, encourage more cyclists to visit Harvest Community Foods, and inspire other businesses to become more bike-friendly. This, in turn, encourages active modes of transportation driven by businesses, allowing businesses to help increase the bikeability of the city.

CityStudio Vancouver is an energetic hub of learning and leadership where students design and implement Greenest City projects. CityStudio is co-led by Duane Elverum (Emily Carr University of Art and Design) and Dr. Janet Moore (Simon Fraser University – Centre for Dialogue). The project is a collaboration of the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC), British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Langara College, Simon Fraser University (SFU), University of British Columbia (UBC) and Vancouver Community College (VCC). The project is supported by Vancouver's Campus City Collaborative (C3).

For more information please visit:

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Bike-N-Business

Helping to create bike-friendly businesses.

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Summary

Bike-N-Business (BNB) develops customized innovative solutions for businesses to partake and benefit from the City of Vancouver's Greenest City Action Plan, specifically around green transportation and lighter footprint goals. In partnership with local foods grocer and eatery Harvest Community Foods, BNB designed and piloted cost-effective cycling amenities, including helmet hooks for easy helmet storage, fixit kits that provide convenient bike maintenance tools, and bike-friendly decals and marketing materials. These amenities are designed to help make businesses more accessible and convenient for cyclists. BNB officially launched on December 8, 2012 at Harvest Community Foods.

Project Outcomes and Impact

The installation of bike lanes in Vancouver caused a lot of resistance from business owners that claim that their sales will decrease from the absence of parking spaces at their storefronts. Businesses like Harvest understand that there is a lot of potential in engaging cyclists on the Adanac Bikeway and hopes to increase their client base by doing so. By developing cycling amenities for Harvest Community Foods, BNB aims to assist Harvest Community Foods in fulfilling its goal to engage in the cycling community. BNB hopes that cyclists will use these installed amenities and encourage more cyclists to visit Harvest Community Foods. This, in turn, encourages alternative modes of transport driven by businesses, allowing businesses to help increase the bikeability of the city and contribute to the Green Transportation and Lighter Footprint goals of the Greenest City Action Plan. Adrian and Chanel held the project launch event and dialogue at Harvest Community Foods on Saturday, December 8, 2012.



Methods

When BNB was first developing a parklet project in partnership with Harvest Community Foods, the project employed communicative planning tools as well as dialogue and discussion, working closely with different stakeholders to address their needs. After creating a stakeholder mapping analysis by finding commonalities among the different needs of the stakeholders, Adrian and Chanel was able to submit a formal parklet project proposal to the City of Vancouver while meeting the needs of the City of Vancouver, CityStudio Vancouver, the Chinatown Business Improvement Association, the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, and Harvest Community Foods. When faced with the problem of legalities and the lack of insurance coverage that was necessary for the parklet project to continue, Adrian and Chanel went back to using communicative planning tools as well as dialogue and discussion to reformulate their project, leading to the development of BNB.





BNB Launch Event

Adrian and Chanel held a launch event for Bike-N-Business hosted by Harvest Community Foods on Saturday, December 8, 2012. The event celebrated Harvest becoming a bike-friendly business by showcasing the cycling-focused amenities that were developed. Adrian and Chanel also held a dialogue around the potential of connecting cycling and businesses. There was a diversity of participants, which included the following:

- Richard Campbell, *BC Cycling Coalition*
- Kevin Chan, *UBC Bike Co-op*
- Donna Chen, *BikeHUB*
- Jessica Stein, *BikeHUB*
- Uryel Cho, *Cyclist*
- Nicholas Evans, *Guest of Tony Osborn*
- Cassandra Ly, *SFU Student*
- Jeffrey Ma, *JM Photo*
- Tony Osborn, *Architect*
- Graeme Poile, *SFU Student*
- Mike Soron, *Sustainable SFU*
- Ben Wells, *Shift Delivery Co-op*



All of the City of Vancouver staff invited was not available to attend. Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) also sent their regrets and would like a report of the event. In addition, Adrian and Chanel talked to a few business owners on the block who are also interested in engaging cyclists but could not attend the event, particularly Tracy from Jet Grrl Bike Shop.

Many discussions and connections were developed and established from the launch event and dialogue. Two questions were formulated, which were focused on the potential of connecting bikes and businesses and how the ideas can be taken further in our respective roles. Ideas that resulted from the discussion ranged from small business actions, combined business efforts, to municipal level actions.

The discussed business actions involved building bike culture into the business and develop deliberate marketing focused on the cyclist demographic. By building bike culture into the business through encouraging employees to bike to work and implementing cycling focused amenities such as providing space to store large bags, the business can create a more inviting environment for cyclists. Increasing visibility of businesses on the bike lane will attract cyclists that often ride through the Adanac Bikeway. Ideas include large, visible bike-friendly signage, discounts for cyclists during off-peak hours, letting people know that Union Street is a bike route, bike-themed products, celebrating supply deliveries by bike, and setting a day of the week for cyclists. Businesses can also take part in activating cyclist customers to advocate on their behalf.

Due to the interest of engaging cyclists by many of the businesses on 200-block Union Street, there was a large emphasis on combining efforts to develop marketing strategies to engage cyclists. There is potential in collaborating with the businesses to market the Union Street strip as a “bike-friendly block” with standardized signage and signage at each stop location on Gore Avenue and Main Street that is visible for cyclists. One of the priorities to move forward with collaborative marketing is activating the Chinatown BIA Society to support these initiatives. By collaborating, there is increased pressure in advocating for the installation of bike corrals and other forms of bike-friendly business support by the city.



Finally, the bureaucratic challenges of the city serve as barriers that businesses and non-profits face in moving forward with increasing bikeability in the city. To overcome these challenges, we discussed increasing public-private partnerships, identifying the network of allies that can help with bike initiatives, and learning from other initiatives around the world. The city often lacks the resources to implement programs and bike amenities. Business partners can aid by co-developing and financially supporting initiatives that will mutually benefit both parties. Businesses can also activate their network of allies to support bike-friendly initiatives, which can include clients, surrounding residents, other businesses, suppliers, non-profit organizations, and even tourists. In addition, BIAs and businesses can participate in trainings and workshops held by cycling organizations to help understand the challenges and needs of the cycling community.

There is a need to have further dialogue around connecting bikes and businesses, particularly building more public-private partnerships to collaborate on increasing bikeability in the city and in turn, contribute to the Greenest City Action Plan. The Bike HUB has expressed a keen interest in further pursuing these ideas with BNB.



Key Challenges

The greatest challenge in implementing a project “on the ground” was encountering bureaucratic parameters and procedures. With the development of our initial idea of designing and implementing a parklet project in front of Harvest Community Foods, our lack of insurance became a major setback to our project. The issue of insurance was overlooked by both the city staff and our group, but this discovery taught us about the need to deal with insurance as early as possible at the beginning of the process, to allow time for the city to aid us in acquiring adequate insurance and overcoming bureaucratic barriers.

Another key challenge includes coordinating, building, and maintaining relationships with diverse stakeholders. Our key stakeholders included Harvest, the Chinatown BIA Society, the City staff, Viva Vancouver, and the Wood Waste team for a short period of time. We mapped the needs of each stakeholder to find a project that would be nested in the community. As the project shifted, we lost sight of those needs and the bigger picture perspective while focusing on the process of continuing the parklet project and partnering with the Wood Waste team. In the end, we learned to detach from our main idea and refocus on Harvest’s original need of engaging cyclists.

Due to the dynamic nature of the City Studio projects, there were moments during the semester when we were excited about new ideas and miscommunicated the intentions and directions of the project among our network of stakeholders. Particularly, when the parklet project fell through, we learned to scale back and slow down our communication with Harvest when new ideas arose.



Project Status

The BNB Launch, the final component of the project, created excitement among a diverse group of people around connecting bikeability in the city and businesses. The event helped create a network of people and organizations that are willing to support bike-friendly business initiatives. In addition, Harvest will continue to pilot the cycling amenities to engage cyclists.

Project Stewardship

Harvest Community Foods will continue to pilot the cycling-focused amenities provided by BNB. We will be distributing a report of the BNB Launch that will be sent out to all attendees of the event as a starting point to spark actions and inspire other businesses to develop their own customized innovative solutions to engage in cycling and green transportation. We will also be connecting with Bike HUB in 2013 to further pursue the ideas that came out of the dialogue.

Acknowledgements

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Works Referenced

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