

Places in British Columbia That a Cyclist Might Want

Methods and Limitations

BC Cycle Tourism Society
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Preliminary — working data, subject to revision

Researched and drafted with AI assistance (Claude models, Anthropic)

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The companion documentation for three open datasets describing the 18,591 places in the BC Bike Stops directory: where they are, what they offer a cyclist, and where every one of those facts came from.

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	July 2026	First published version

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1. What these three files are

A cyclist crossing British Columbia needs to know some very ordinary things. Where can I fill a bottle. Is there a grocery store before the pass. Will this motel let me keep the bike in the room. None of that is written down anywhere in one place, so we wrote it down.

The result is the BC Bike Stops directory: 18,591 places across British Columbia, each with a page on our site. These three files are that directory as data, split by the kind of thing each row describes.

File	One row is	Rows	What it answers
bc_stops	a place	18,591	what it is, where it is, and how it treats an arriving cyclist as far as we know
bc_stops_amenities	a place and one amenity	55,050	whether it has washrooms, water, bike parking, a shower, and around sixty other things, with the evidence and the date
bc_stops_sources	a place and one field	66,580	where each fact came from: the map, a website, a language model, or a person

The three join on **listing_key**. There is no identifier scheme to learn, and the same key is the address of the place's page on our site: bccycletourism.ca/www/stop/ followed by the key.

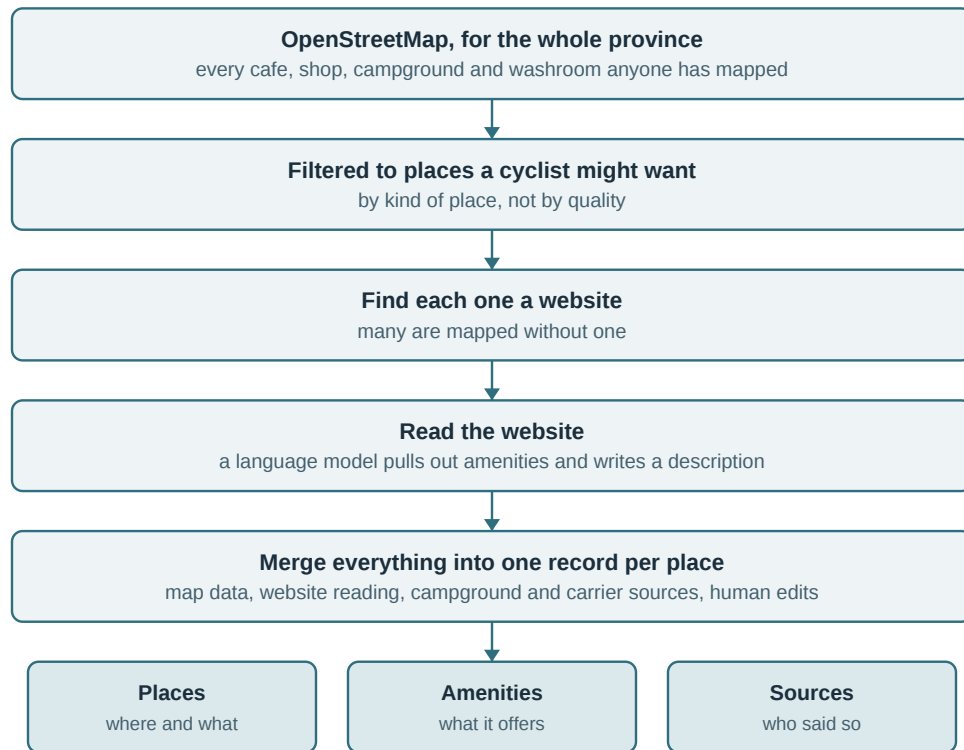
The amenities file is long rather than wide on purpose. There are more than sixty amenities and no place has more than a handful, so a column each would produce a table that is 95% empty. In this shape it goes straight into a pivot table.

One caution that applies to all three, and it is the reason this document exists: A blank cell means we have not recorded that thing. It never means zero, and it never means the answer is no. Blanks are common here, because most of these places have never been asked.

2. Where the places come from

The directory starts with OpenStreetMap, the open map of the world that anyone can edit. Everything a cyclist might want is already on it somewhere: cafes, grocery stores, campgrounds, taps, washrooms. What it does not have is any sense of which of them are useful to somebody arriving by bicycle with panniers and a bottle to fill.

So the pipeline filters the province's map data down to the kinds of place worth knowing about, finds each one a website where it can, reads that website, and merges the result with a handful of other sources: campground records from BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC, our own hand-built registry of carriers, and places added by people. A human review layer sits on top and wins over all of it.



From an open map of the whole province to three published files.

The **origin** column says which of those paths each row arrived by. 18,168 of the 18,591 rows still carry the identifier of the OpenStreetMap element they came from; the other 423 are campground records, carriers, and places somebody added by hand.

This is a collection, not a census. It is the places we have found that a cyclist might want, in the parts of British Columbia we have worked through so far. We can tell you what is in it. We cannot tell you what is missing from it, and coverage is uneven by design: some communities have been gone through carefully and others have only whatever OpenStreetMap already held.

3. What counts as a place

Every place sits in one of 7 categories and one of about 35 subcategories. The category is decided from the map data where the map data is specific enough to decide it, and from the place's name where it is not: a tag that says 'attraction' or 'shop' could be almost anything, so those defer to a name classifier rather than guessing.

Category	Places	Typical subcategories
Food & Drink	11,025	cafe, bakery, restaurant, pub, fast food
Groceries	2,575	grocery store, farmers' market, liquor store, outdoor gear
Attractions	1,653	museum, park, gallery, viewpoint, visitor centre, pool
Accommodation	1,540	hotel, motel, inn, hostel, bed and breakfast
Camping	1,395	provincial park, recreation site, private campground
Bike Services	201	bike shop, repair shop, rental

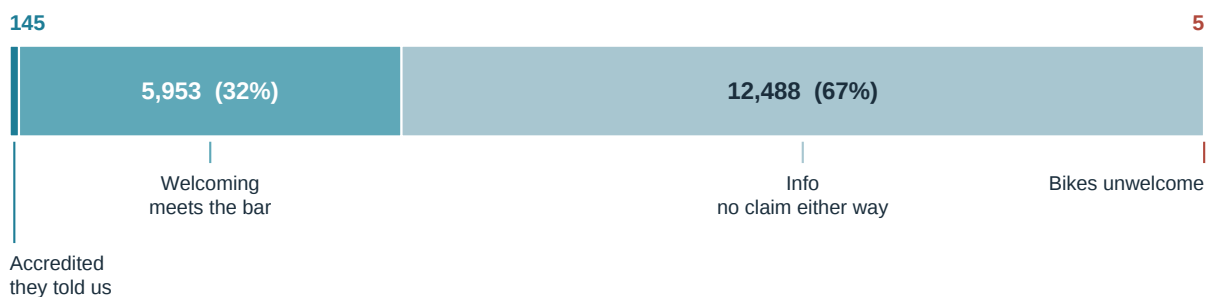
Category	Places	Typical subcategories
Transport	202	bus, ferry, water taxi, train, shuttle

They sit in 921 communities across British Columbia's 6 tourism regions. Coverage is uneven and the unevenness is not random: the Lower Mainland has the most because OpenStreetMap has the most there. A community with few rows is almost always a community nobody has mapped in detail, not a community with nothing in it.

Food and drink is by far the largest category, which reflects how the world is mapped rather than any judgment of ours about what matters most on a long day.

4. The four tiers

The tier column is our own four-level assessment, not the operator's claim. 'accredited' means a place has told us it welcomes cyclists and we have quoted them saying so. 'welcoming' means it meets the amenity bar for its category on the evidence we hold. 'info' means it is a useful place to know about and we make no welcome claim either way, which is most of the file. 'unwelcome' is reserved for the handful of carriers we have checked and found will not take a bicycle at all.



Most of the directory makes no claim at all about how a place treats cyclists.

What earns "welcoming"

A place reaches the welcoming tier by having every required amenity for its category on the evidence we hold. The bar is deliberately different per category, because what a cyclist needs from a campground is not what they need from a bakery.

Category	All of these are required
Food & Drink	Bike parking or bike visibility; water bottle refill; washrooms
Groceries	Bike parking; water bottle refill
Attractions	Bike parking; water bottle refill; washrooms
Accommodation	Secure overnight bike storage
Camping	No turn-away policy for cyclists
Bike Services	Staff help with urgent mechanical issues; a pump available
Transport	Accommodates bicycles

The welcoming tier is overwhelmingly food and drink: 5,292 of the 5,953 welcoming places are cafes, bakeries, restaurants and pubs, whose three requirements are things an ordinary cafe already has. Camping is the opposite extreme, and no campground reaches welcoming at all, because a no-turn-away policy is

something an operator has to tell us rather than something we can read off a map or a website. Accommodation is thin for the same kind of reason: secure overnight bike storage is rarely described anywhere we can check.

What earns "accredited"

Accreditation is the only tier that involves the business. The 145 accredited places have published something that welcomes cyclists in their own words, and we quote them saying it on their page. Nobody pays for it and nobody can buy their way up the list. It is also where the local knowledge sheet belongs: local routes, repair options, hazards and fallback transport, kept for staff who don't already know. We never infer it, and it never affects any other tier.

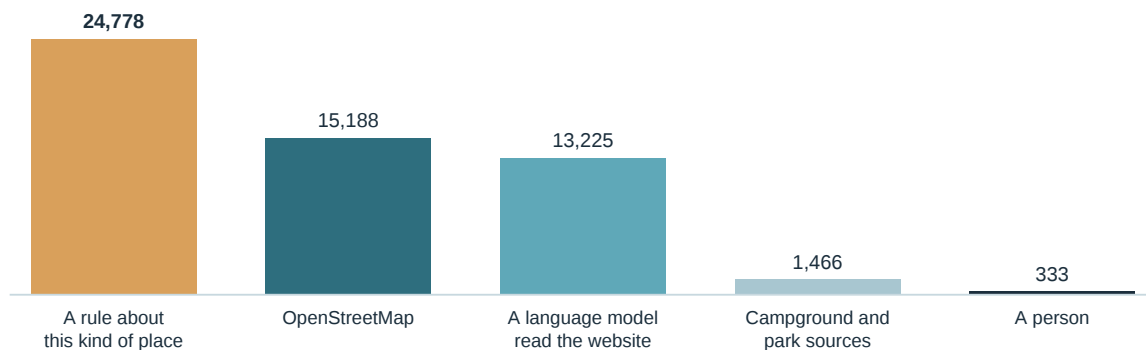
What "unwelcome" is for

The 5 unwelcome rows are all carriers, not businesses. They are operators we checked specifically and found will not take a bicycle at all, and the tier exists so that a rider planning a trip finds out before the depot rather than at it. We do not use it to mark a cafe we did not like.

A tier is not an endorsement and not a rating. It says what we know about how a place treats an arriving cyclist, and nothing about whether the food is good, the beds are clean, or the staff are kind. Nobody pays to be in here and nobody pays to move up.

5. How an amenity becomes a yes

The amenities file holds 55,050 answers: 31,572 about amenities that count towards a tier and 23,478 about extras we record when we find them. Every one carries the source that produced it and the date, and the sources are not equally strong.



how each of the 55,050 amenity answers was reached (60 derived or source-less answers not shown)

The largest source is also the weakest. Read the source column.

- **OpenStreetMap** — somebody mapped it. A tag saying the place has drinking water or a toilet.
- **A language model read the website** — the model was given the text of the place's own website and asked what it says about each amenity. Reliable when the website says something, silent when it does not.
- **A rule about this kind of place** (the sources beginning 'inferred:') — nobody established this for this particular place. We applied a rule: a sit-down restaurant has washrooms, a full-size supermarket has somewhere to fill a bottle. These are safe as a class and occasionally wrong individually, and they are the

single largest group of answers in the file.

- **Campground and park sources** — structured amenity records from BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, and Parks Canada.
- **A person** — somebody typed it, usually after looking.

Only 333 of the answers are FALSE. That is not because almost everything has everything: it is because 'we looked and it does not' is a much rarer thing to establish than 'we found evidence it does'. A place with no row for an amenity has not been assessed for it, and must not be read as a no.

6,049 answers carry a detail note as well, which is where the useful specifics live: which months the water is on, whether the shower costs money, where the rack actually is.

6. Who wrote this, and the licence

The sources file exists so that nobody has to take the directory on trust. It names, for every place, what supplied its name, its description, its website and its address.

Two honest facts fall straight out of it. The first is that most of what you are reading was written by a language model working from the place's own website: 14,480 of the 18,591 places have a description, and the great majority of those were drafted that way and not reviewed line by line by a person. The second is that a large share of the underlying facts are OpenStreetMap's, which is what decides the licence.

Licence: Open Database Licence (ODbL) 1.0, with the attribution © OpenStreetMap contributors. Most of these listings began as OpenStreetMap records and still carry their OpenStreetMap identifier, which makes this a derivative database rather than a work of our own, so it is share-alike whether we would have chosen that or not. Use it, redistribute it, build on it. If you publish a database derived from it, that database has to carry the same licence.

Our other research datasets are released into the public domain, because we measured or assembled them ourselves and share-alike would only get in people's way. This one is different and we do not get to choose: it is built on OpenStreetMap, so it inherits OpenStreetMap's terms. If you build a database from it, that database is ODbL too. If you merely use it to make a map, an article, or a decision, that is a produced work and you can license that however you like.

7. The Indigenous role column

226 places carry an entry in the `indigenous_role` column, marking them as Indigenous owned, Indigenous operated, or presenting Indigenous culture and heritage. A place can carry more than one.

The `indigenous_role` column is included, vetted, and still worth reading carefully. The tags were assigned by matching listings against Indigenous Tourism BC and Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada membership and against curated lists, then reviewed against a written evidence rubric in a vetting pass on 7 July 2026, which corrected twelve records and removed four outright. It describes ownership, operation, or cultural subject matter as we could evidence it from public sources. It is not a Nation's own statement about itself, and where we have it wrong we would like to be told.

The vetting pass on 7 July 2026 worked against a written evidence rubric: what counts as evidence of ownership is not what counts as evidence of operation, and neither is what counts as a place presenting culture. It corrected twelve records, removed four listings outright, and fixed several names and websites

along the way. We publish the column because visitors ask for exactly this and because Indigenous tourism operators are chronically under-found, not because we consider our record of it authoritative.

8. Google Place IDs

7,767 of the places carry a Google Place ID, so that this file can be joined to work built on Google's identifiers.

Where we hold one, `google_place_id` is Google's identifier for the same place, offered so this file can be joined to other work. The match was made automatically by name and distance and has not been checked by a person, so some of them are wrong: `google_place_id_match_km` gives the distance between our coordinate and Google's, and a large one means treat the match with suspicion. Nothing else from Google is republished here.

We have deliberately not applied a confidence threshold on your behalf. The match distance is in the file; pick your own. A match a few kilometres out is usually a different branch of the same business, which may be exactly what you want or exactly what ruins your analysis, and you are better placed than we are to know which.

9. What we left out on purpose

Some things we hold are not in these files, and it is worth saying which and why rather than letting their absence read as an oversight.

Telephone numbers and email addresses

There are no telephone numbers and no email addresses in these files, deliberately. Website addresses are here, and every listing's page on our own site is one, so a person who wants to make contact can. A bulk file of contact details for fifteen thousand small businesses is a different object with different uses, and we would rather not have made it.

Our internal scores

The directory carries a couple of internal ratings we use to decide what to show first. They are not here. They are our opinion about named businesses, expressed as a bare number, with no published rubric that would let anyone argue with them, and a number like that in a file others can redistribute is a small unfair thing that we could not take back.

Our notes on why a place is interesting

Same reasoning, one step stronger, because those notes are free prose about a named business. They appear on the places' own pages, where we can correct them the day somebody tells us they are wrong. In a share-alike file we could not.

10. Limitations: what this does not tell you

The honest list, unsoftened.

- **It is not a census.** We can tell you what is in the directory. We cannot tell you what is missing, and for most of the province nothing exists to check it against.
- **Coverage follows OpenStreetMap, not need.** The places best represented here are the places best mapped, which is not the same as the places where a cyclist most needs to know what is open.

- **Most descriptions were written by a language model** from the place's own marketing copy, and were not checked line by line. They will sometimes flatter.
- **The largest group of amenity answers comes from a rule rather than an observation.** Sound as a class, wrong here and there, and the source column is the only way to tell which is which.
- **A tier is about bicycles and nothing else.** It says nothing about whether a place is any good.
- **Nothing here is a timetable, a price, or an opening hour.** The price band is a rough sense of what a place costs, not a menu.

Businesses close, move, and change what they offer. An amenity recorded in 2026 may be gone, and a place listed here may no longer exist. Every amenity row carries the date we recorded it. Read the dates, and check before you rely on a washroom being there at the end of a long day.

We do not run, own, or represent any of these places, and almost none of them know they are in here. Corrections are welcome, from anyone, including from the businesses themselves: heather@bccycletourism.ca

The research here uses AI assistance (Claude models, Anthropic) for data collection, analysis, and writing. Feel free to ask for more details if you are interested. The code that produces these files is not secret either: ask and we will share it.