

Cycling Network and Greenway Plan – Proposed Changes East of Oxley Street

In a previous message, which included a description of the proposed Village Bike Loop, the Keith Road bike route to North Van and the Collingwood Loop, I had suggested and gave reasons for the removal of the following sections of designated bicycle routes from the existing (2007) West Vancouver Cycling Network and Greenway Plan:

- 11th Street between Marine Drive and Keith Road;
- Esquimalt Avenue between 14th and 20th Streets; and
- 14th Street between Marine Drive and Mathers Avenue.

After a recent ride on the indicated bicycle routes on the Plan, from Oxley Street east to the Capilano River, I would now like to add to the list the removal of the following sections:

- Radcliffe Avenue (south of Marine Drive at West Bay);
- 20th Street between Bellevue and Fulton Avenues;
- through the middle of and east of Hugo Ray Park (north of the Upper Levels Highway);
- 26th Street between Upper Bellevue and Queens Avenue; and
- Skilift Place, west of Chairlift Road (north of the Upper Levels Highway).

Radcliffe Avenue is a dead end, no exit road. The only way to get to Marine Drive by bicycle at the end of Radcliffe Avenue is to proceed up a short, steep incline on Maple Lane, then carry a bicycle up a steep set of wooden stairs to Marine Drive. It could, however, remain on the map in a modified form if we wanted to include dead end connector bicycle routes to parks such as, in this case, the West Bay Park at the end of Radcliffe Avenue.

The problem with 20th Street is that between Bellevue Avenue and Marine Drive, it is basically a parking lot for the Memorial Library with a very narrow, one-way entrance off of Marine Drive. North of Marine Drive, it does not connect as well as 21st Street with the Community Centre.

It is not currently possible to proceed by bicycle along the proposed route through Hugo Ray Park to get to Keith Road. At the south end of 3rd Street there is a dirt road going uphill eastward for about 80-100 m to a fence with a locked gate. The simplest way to get to Keith Road is go to the bottom of 3rd Street and proceed south-eastward along the edge of the Upper Levels Highway, staying outside of the concrete barrier blocks. The first 20-30 m SE of 3rd Street along the north edge of the highway is very narrow but quickly improves to an increasingly wider section of pavement (separated from the traffic lanes by concrete barrier blocks) that leads down under the bridge over the Capilano River and onto Keith Road. Improving the 20-30 m narrow section from 3rd Street could be a possible low-hanging fruit project that would require the cooperation of the MoT.

At the bottom of 26th Street, the only direct connection to Lower Bellevue Avenue, where I believe most cyclists who want to avoid Marine Drive currently travel, is a narrow wooden overpass and with stairs at each end. This may not be a problem in the future if it is decided that the route for the Spirit Trail will be adjacent to Upper Bellevue Avenue. North of Marine Drive, there is currently a paved pathway and stairs through a vacant lot to reach the paved road up 26th Street. The District is currently looking for ideas on what to do with this lot. If it were made into a park with a curved paved pathway through the full width of the lot, it could be more bicycle friendly. However, north up 26th Street is, what I feel, one of the longest, steep climbs that I have experienced. I could only manage a speed 4-5 km/hr which is basically walking speed. Going downhill would be wearing on bicycle brakes and could be dangerous. Queens Avenue, as indicated on the Plan, is a good east-west bike route so connecting it to 26th Street northward and across the Upper Levels Highway overpass makes sense.

There are problems with the currently indicated routing on the north side of the overpass from 26th Street which crosses the Upper Levels Highway. Skilift Place is a dead end road so there is no way to connect to Cypress Bowl Road as shown on the 2007 Plan. The only way to get to Cypress Bowl Road would be to go east on Skilift Road then down onto the Upper Levels Highway and proceed west on it to Cypress Bowl Road. Chippendale Road, further up the hill, is a good east-west bicycle route, so a connection from the overpass to it could be made via Chairlift Road. This would have the advantage of passing by Collingwood Elementary

School. Chippendale Road has not only been paved as far west as Chairlift Road but has now been extended westward (but not yet paved) across the top of Cypress Lane to intersect with Cypress Bowl Road (see photo below). I wonder if it is not too late to ask that it be widened so that when paved it will be safer for cyclists? It would make sense to include, as a bicycle route, this new section of Chippendale Road and all of that section of Cypress Bowl Road between its intersection with Chippendale Road and the Upper Levels Highway.



View eastward on Chippendale Road at its intersection with Cypress Bowl Road

The indicated bicycle route continuing east from Chippendale Road through the British Properties to Stevens Drive looks fine to me as is the indicated bicycle route along Eyremount Drive and Cross Creek Road connecting the upper bicycle route to the Upper Levels Highway at 15th Street. I particularly like the Cross Creek Road section as it has the new traffic circle at its intersection with Chartwell Drive and passes by the Hollyburn Country Club, a fire hall and is in close proximity to Sentinel Secondary and Chartwell Elementary Schools. Another interesting feature of Cross Creek Road between Tyrol Road and the Upper Levels Highway is the marked paved shoulder and, on the north side, concrete dividers separating the roadway from a paved pathway which could be designated as a multi-purpose path for cyclists and pedestrians. Putting bicycle route signage on Cross Creek Road could be another low hanging fruit project. We may even want to consider creating and marking another bicycle loop to include the aforementioned bicycle routes in the Upper Lands of West Vancouver. It could be called the Upper Lands Bike Loop.

It seems to me that Taylor Way, south of the Upper levels Highway, should be included as a bicycle route even though, like most of Marine Drive, it is not bicycle friendly in its current state. The entire SE corner of the Cycling Network and Greenway Plan map needs to be updated to show the recent and planned changes in bicycle infrastructure which would include the Capilano Road bike lanes, those changes around Park Royal and the bicycle route connections to the Lions Gate Bridge. It may also be a good idea to distinguish on the Plan those routes that have bike lanes, bicycle signage and those that are separated from automobile traffic. This would make it more or less consistent with the North Shore bicycle route map that is currently under development. A final comment on the Plan is the fact that the Upper Levels Highway is a marked bicycle route through all of West Vancouver but is not so indicated on the Plan. I assume that this is because it is under the jurisdiction of the MoT.

This completes my review and suggested changes to the indicated bicycle routes on the Cycling Network and Greenway Plan that are east of Oxley Street.