



September 30, 2019

Lehran Hache, Landscape Architect, Vancouver Park Board
Tiina Mack, Manager of Park Development, Vancouver Park Board
cc: Paul Storer, Manager of Transportation Design, City of Vancouver
(By Email)

Re: Proposed Cooper Park Expansion

Dear Lehran and Tiina;

We are writing to express our significant concerns about aspects of the proposed Cooper Park Expansion. We participated in the first round of public engagement for this project but were not notified of this latest round of consultation. Further to our joint Park Board/HUB Cycling quarterly meeting held last week, where we raised these issues, today we want to summarize our concerns.

Firstly, we understand the benefits and potential of expanding Cooper Park into the empty space under the Cambie Bridge. We do not object to the project in principle. Our concerns relate to the safety of park users, and those people cycling who are currently relying on the direct off-street connection from the northbound Cambie Bridge protected bike lane and ramp, to the Seaside Greenway bike path. This development proposes to remove that connection, without specifically addressing a replacement connection. It is not acceptable that people cycling are shifted away from the current safer and more comfortable off-street connection without an alternative being provided first. We raised this concern during the first round of consultation on Cooper Park expansion but have not seen it addressed.

- 1) The current bike path connection between the Cambie Bridge northbound MUP and the Seawall bike path is shown in blue in Figure 1, from the ramp and crossing of Cooperage Way at the intersection with Marinaside Cres, to the Seawall bike path. This route connects two key protected bike lanes, and eliminating it, pushing vulnerable road users (in some cases families with children) into the roadway greatly reduces the value of these existing protected paths. There are conflicts evident today between people walking and people cycling on this short connection; some users assume it is a sidewalk, but there is no access to the Seawall walking path, only to the Seawall bike path, and in fact temporary fencing has been erected between the bike path and walking path, to stop people crossing to the walking path. As can be seen in Figure 2, the new equipment is likely to block this important cycling connection. We note the reference in the Open House concept drawings to a future bike lane along Marinaside Crescent. We agree that if this is a protected bi-directional bike lane that this could be designed as a workable solution, but it is important that the new bike lane be completed before the existing path is changed. It is not enough to rely on others for that path, in this case the City of Vancouver engineering department, as we have heard expressed by Park Board staff several times when we have raised this concern. Rather, the works must be coordinated as to timing and interconnections. That means delaying any park construction in the space until an alternate route is designed and built. Any new on-street bikeway must also include connections to the Seawall bike path, presumed to be just west of the current access point.

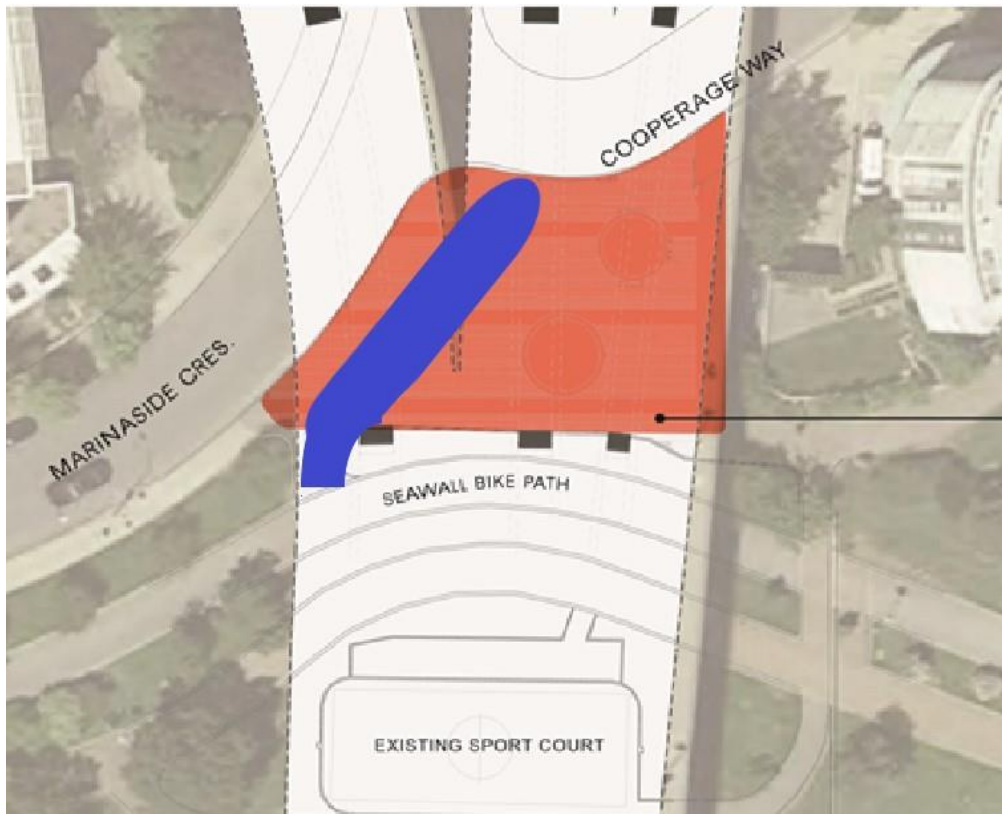


Figure 1 - Proposed Cooper Park expansion area, with current bike path connection in blue

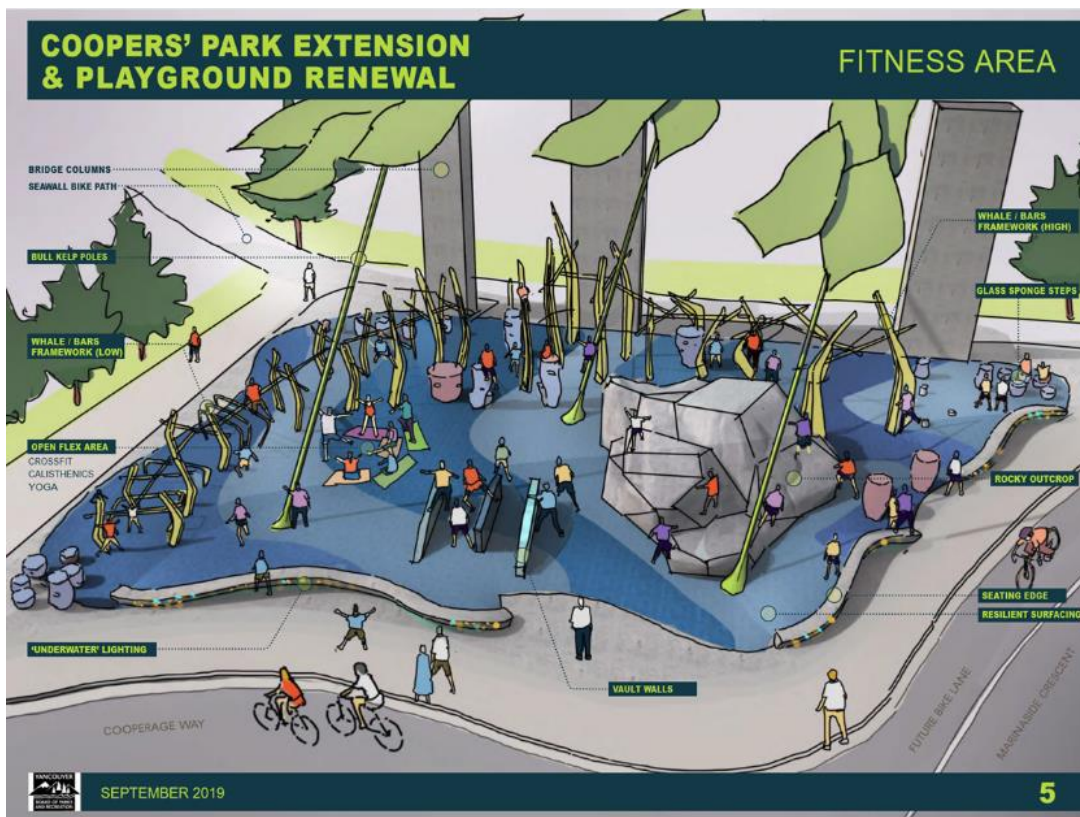


Figure 2 - Concept for the Playground Renewal

- 2) We know that today there are conflicts with people stepping into the Seawall bike path from this area, and from the sports court to the south, putting themselves and others at risk. This is made worse by the large bridge piers which obstruct visibility right next to the bike path. The recent removal of the large storage racks opened the space and added walking traffic. Adding additional people into this area is likely to make this problem worse, and the existing plantings are not enough to deter people cutting through to the south. We recommend the inclusion of low fencing, or similar design features, to direct people crossing to use the existing Seawall bike path crosswalk just east of this area, and potentially to any new bike path crosswalk on the west side of this area. If other improvements are being considered to Cooper Park immediately to the east, the problems inherent in locating a dog park immediately next to a busy bikeway should be recognized. At Charleson Park, when the Seawall bike paths were rebuilt, this was addressed with a low fence. That fence appears to work well and something similar should be included along the length of Cooper Park.
- 3) As this facility is located immediately next to a busy bikeway, we recommend that sufficient bike racks be incorporated in the design, for the use of people travelling to the park by bike, and for those simply passing by who want to stop and enjoy the park. These racks should consider that families with children may be using them, so bike trailers should be accommodated. It would be appropriate to utilize some of the designs recently completed by the City of Vancouver as part of their Bike Rack Design Competition, as these fit well with the seawall, and have already been included on the south paths. These racks should be located off the bikeways so as not to create obstructions.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues. We would like to meet and discuss the above at your convenience and ask that you contact us to set up a time.

Sincerely,

Jeff Leigh
Chair, Vancouver UBC Local Committee, HUB Cycling
Vancouver@bikehub.ca

HUB Cycling is a not-for-profit charitable organization that works to make cycling better through education, events, and collaboration. We are Metro Vancouver's leader in making cycling an attractive choice for everyone and have close to 3,000 members and more than 38,000 direct supporters. HUB Cycling has 11 volunteer committees across Metro Vancouver that encourages cycling for all ages and abilities (AAA) in municipalities across Metro Vancouver.