



August 21, 2016

Malcolm Bromley, General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Re: Bicycling Connectivity Improvements – Stanley Park Causeway South End

Dear Malcolm;

HUB Cycling is a 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. We are writing to request connectivity improvements for the recently upgraded Stanley Park Causeway bicycling paths.

Overview

Following recent improvements by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) to the walking and cycling paths on the Stanley Park Causeway, a long standing issue with lack of safe connections for the southbound path has become even more critical. Particularly for new users attracted by the protected bike lanes, the improvements made by MoTI along the Causeway end abruptly, forcing people on bikes to make a quick choice in between proceeding on the Causeway in an unprotected painted lane through the S curves to Georgia St, or taking a narrow path down onto North Lagoon Drive.

We recommend that bicycling way finding and connectivity improvements be made to this area, in line with the recommendations contained in the Stanley Park Cycling Plan completed (and subsequently adopted) by the Vancouver Park Board in 2012. Our proposed route is indicated by the red line in Figure 1. This route would give people on bikes arriving at the end of the protected bike lanes, labelled Point A in Figure 1, the option of carrying on in the painted bike lanes, or dropping down to North Lagoon Drive, proceeding under the underpass and then accessing a short section of existing paved path to reach the Seawall Entrance Hub, Point E.



Figure 1 - Causeway southbound cycling connections - South End

The Challenge

When travelling southbound on the west Causeway bicycle path, people on bikes encounter an abrupt transition from a protected bike path (shown in Figure 2) to an unprotected painted bike lane, often with heavy motor vehicle traffic (shown in Figure 3). This is complicated by the S curve, which doesn't allow people on bikes to see what is ahead when they are at the decision point.



Figure 2 - Causeway southbound (west) bicycle path



Figure 3 - Causeway southbound (west) - Unprotected painted bicycle lane

People on bikes are forced to make a route choice at Point A on the above map, as shown in Figure 4. They can carry on along the Causeway in a painted bike lane, with no separation from traffic through the S curves, to reach Georgia Street. People on bikes in this painted lane are often squeezed by motor vehicles through the corner. While this section is posted with a 50 km/hr speed limit, vehicles are often observed travelling much faster. Alternately, there is a narrow path down to North Lagoon Drive. The green sign on the lamp post is the only information people on bikes are provided, apart from a warning that the path may be steep.



Figure 4 - Causeway southbound south end - decision point

Confident cyclists accustomed to the route may be comfortable carrying on in the painted bike lane. However, the new protected bicycle paths along the Causeway are attracting people on bikes, both residents and tourists, who stop at this point and are unclear as to what they should do next.

Ideally, the protected bicycle paths should be extended along the Causeway and through the S curves. But for people on bicycles who want to continue on in the Park, or travel along the Coal Harbour Seawall bike path, or go up the Chilco bicycle route into the West End, the choice is not clear.

Improvements to this area of Stanley Park were recommended in the Stanley Park Cycling Plan (SPCP) in 2012, with prioritized recommendations. A significant recommendation was made to implement a Gateway Node (SPCP Issue #12, Recommendation 12a). Lack of connectivity in the park was a major theme in the Cycling Plan. The concept of the Gateway Node is shown in Figure 5.

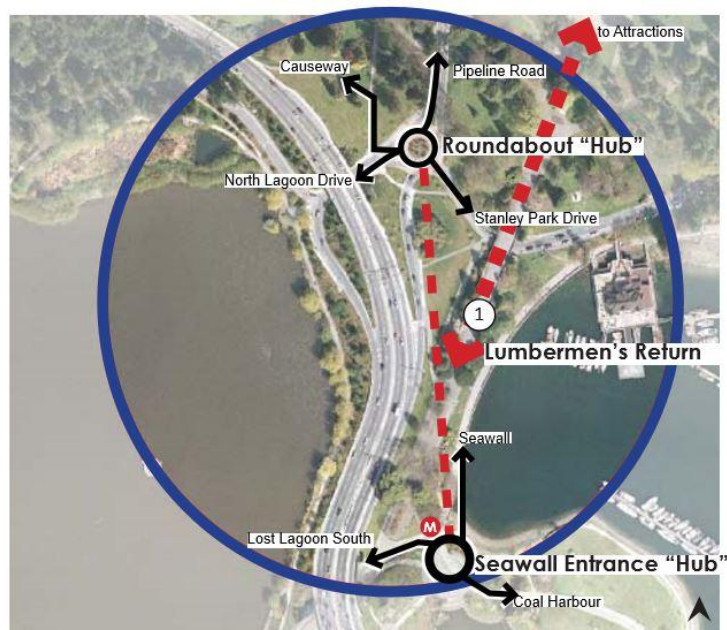


Figure 5 - Proposed Gateway Node (SPCP Recommendation 12A)

Without implementing all of this recommendation, providing a connection from the southbound Causeway bicycle path to the Seawall Entrance Hub, and a similar connection from the Seawall Entrance Hub to the northbound Causeway bicycle path, would be a great step forward. These changes do not result in additional paved space in the Park, they are low cost, and they would improve safety for both people on bikes as well as people walking in the Park.

In addition to providing a direct benefit to people on bikes, the above connection would provide an alternate route for those who find themselves on the Seawall but don't necessarily want to be there. This would reduce congestion along a busy portion of the Seawall paths.

The route suggested in this proposal (indicated in Figure 1 by a red line running from point A to Point E) generally follows the alignment recommended in the above Gateway Node concept from the Stanley Park Cycling Plan. The route is currently being used by many people on bikes, and thus represents a desire line, but is not legal due to the lack of permitting for people on bikes to use the existing paved paths. This is despite the fact that the paths are wide and do not present risks of pedestrian conflict.

The following sections walk through the issues that need to be addressed along this route.

Issue 1

When reaching the end of the southbound Causeway protected bike path, improved signs are required to clearly indicate route options. Signs should be positioned well in advance, and also at the decision point. The choice to proceed along the Causeway should have a warning indicating that it is not a protected lane. The alternate route, into the Park, should be labelled as connecting to Park Drive, the Seawall, and the Chilco Bikeway which connects into the West End. The current sign is shown in Figure 6. As this is an MoTI roadway at this point, presumably the signs could be provided by MoTI with Park Board and/or City Engineering coordination on a signage plan.



Figure 6 - Causeway southbound - signs at south end

Issue 2

The path leading down from the southbound Causeway (From Point A to Point B in Figure 1) is paved and safe. The Stanley Park Cycling Plan recommended that a separate path be constructed at this point, directly to North Lagoon Drive (SPCP Recommendation 8b, short term priority). With the removal of pedestrians from the southbound Causeway bike path, this new path may no longer be required. However, the current path (shown in Figure 7) should be labelled as a bicycle path with stencils, and an evaluation done of the curb cut

where the path ends at the T junction. Consideration should be given to marking the crosswalk at the T junction with elephant feet, permitting people on bikes to use it.



Figure 7 - Unused pedestrian path along North Lagoon Drive

Issue 3

Signs are required that indicate to people on bikes how to reach the Seawall, how to reach Park Drive, and how to reach the Chilco Bikeway into the West End. These signs should be posted along the route marked in red, from Point B to Point E on Figure 1; at the T junction, under the underpass, around the traffic circle onto Park Drive, and along the paths back to the Seawall Entry Hub. Signs should indicate that the route connects to the Seawall, the Coal Harbour Seawall, and the Chilco Bikeway into the West End via the Chilco Underpass,

Issue 4

A curb cut is required for people on bikes to access the existing paved path at Point C on Figure 1. This location is shown in Figure 8. This path, shown in Figure 9, and leading to the area shown in Figure 10, is commonly used by people on bikes to avoid the S curves on the southbound Causeway. Stencils should be applied to the path (labelled as Point D on Figure 1) advising that riding a bike is permitted.

The formalization of permitting bikes to be ridden on this short connecting stretch of paved path will greatly improve safety for people walking on the seawall, where people on bikes are regularly found proceeding against the signed direction, for a lack of any alternative way to return to the Seawall Entrance Hub.

Other than the specific paths proposed to be labelled as bike paths, stencils should be applied to joining paths and sidewalks, indicating that no cycling is permitted, for the safety and comfort of pedestrians.



Figure 8 - Curb cut required at path to Seawall Entrance Hub



Figure 9 - Path leading back towards Seawall Entrance Hub



Figure 10 - Path leading back towards Seawall Entrance Hub

Upon reaching the Seawall Entrance Hub (labelled as Point E on Figure 1), people on bikes will have the option of joining the Seawall Bike path around the Park, joining the Seawall Bike Path proceeding East along Coal Harbour, or taking the Chilco Underpass to reach either the Lagoon Bike Path or the Chilco Bikeway (labelled as Point F on Figure 1). People on bikes travelling south on Pipeline Road or along North Lagoon Drive will also be able to use this path connect back to the Seawall Entrance Hub. This will enable people on the Seawall to return via Pipeline Road, reducing congestion on the western portion of the Seawall.

Issue 5

A portion of the above route is also useful for people on bikes travelling in the opposite direction, and wishing to reach Park Drive, Pipeline Road, or the access path to the northbound Causeway bike path. This would reduce bike volumes on the Seawall Bicycle Path for the benefit of all users. Signage is required at the Seawall Entrance Hub, and at the north foot of the Chilco Bikeway, directing people to the east Causeway northbound bicycle path. Stencils are required along the path to the point labelled G on Figure 1.

Thank you for considering these low cost and easy to implement improvements. They address issues raised in the 2012 Stanley Park Cycling Plan which have yet to be resolved, and which have been made even more critical by the completion of new and safe protected bike paths along the Causeway. We would be pleased to meet and discuss the above at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jeff Leigh
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August 19, 2016

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