

February 1, 2022

Assessment Ride Report - Central Valley Greenway

The Vancouver UBC Local Committee of HUB Cycling has identified the Central Valley Greenway in East Vancouver as being in need of improvements. The City of Vancouver has announced interim improvement plans for the section from Clark Drive to Lakewood, and connections to John Hendry Park along Lakewood. These plans include car-free spaces, a new signalized crossing, and new protected bike lane connection.¹ This section links up to the False Creek Flats, which has plans for an active transportation connection from the Central Valley Greenway at Clark, across the Flats towards Main St.² We conducted an assessment ride in July 2021, covering the 7-kilometer Vancouver section of the Central Valley Greenway (CVG), from 1st Avenue and Main Street to Burnaby at Boundary Road. We present here our observations, and recommendations on how this route can be made safer, and more comfortable.

Summary

The main issues we identified with the Central Valley Greenway (for the Vancouver portion) are:

1. Key intersections, including with Clark, East Broadway & Victoria Drive
2. Conflicts at Skytrain station plazas, including the Rupert Skytrain station
3. Missing, faded, or misleading signage

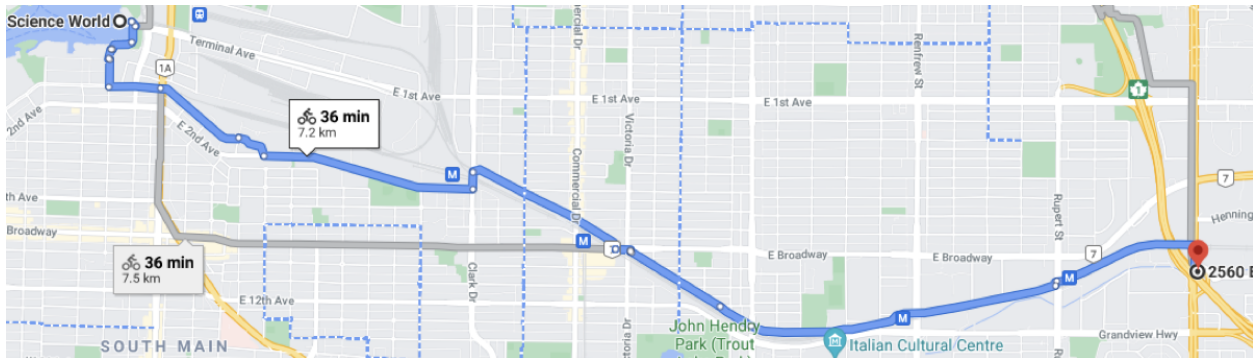
The section of Grandview Highway from Clark Drive to Commercial Drive is busy with vehicles, and requires protection for people cycling. We are very happy to see the plans to construct a protected bikeway along this section, and reduce vehicle traffic with diversions.

¹ [Central Valley Greenway Improvement Plans, City of Vancouver](#)

² [False Creek Flats Plan, City of Vancouver](#)

Maps:

The Central Valley Greenway (CVG) runs from Ontario Street to Boundary Road.



It is indicated on the the City of Vancouver cycling map:



Ride Notes

We started at Science World, and headed east to Boundary Road, and then returned along the same route.

1. Eastbound ride

Traveling eastward on 1st Avenue from Ontario, signs should be erected to indicate the beginning of the Central Valley Greenway.

Main St to Scotia St

This section has not been calmed to vehicle traffic. There are faded bike stencils on the road. Given that the balance of the Central Valley Greenway has been calmed and made comfortable for most people cycling, consideration should be given to addressing the section from Main St to Scotia St.

Detour on Scotia Street to Thornton

This is a recent temporary detour to accommodate construction of the Broadway Subway station at Thornton. It is generally well marked and is protected from vehicle traffic. Entering the segment on Scotia is difficult because its opening is very narrow. A generous transition is needed at the bottom. Turns at the uphill end are complicated by a misalignment with the sidewalk ramp

At Thornton the temporary cycle lane should be signed to indicate a slight turn left, to avoid the sudden step off the pedestrian crossing. Ideally there would be a curb ramp aligned with the bike path and the crossing.



Looking eastwards at Thornton St. The bikeway does not align with the ramp down onto the crosswalk



Looking westwards at Thornton St. The paved bike lane on the west side is not properly aligned with the ramp down onto the crosswalk/crossbike

Thornton to Clark

This includes various designs of mixed use segments, with numerous drives and parking lots on the left (north) At Glen Drive, the signage is ambiguous, with options to both go straight or cross Great Northern Way.



Ambiguous signposting at Glen Dr.



Along this path, the tree branches require trimming. The last block before Clark is very steep and the pavement is rough. Consider erecting warning signs for uphill riders, providing a marked dismount area before the grade uphill steepens sharply, marking a lane for people walking bikes, and posting warnings to mounted riders “watch for riders walking bikes.”

The section would ideally be replaced by a ramp from Clark and Grandview Highway, down to the VCC-Clark station, with a more moderate grade, and connections to the proposed False Creek Flats path network, as envisioned in the False Creek Flats planning documents.

Crossing Clark Drive

The signage does not make it obvious that after crossing Clark Drive the bikeway goes north to connect with North Grandview Hwy as opposed to continuing east on 6th Ave. There are many cars turning right and crossing the path of people cycling here; consider a delayed turn signal for vehicles.



Looking westwards at Clark Dr. There is an electrical box that partially obstructs the bikeway

Note regarding this segment:

In its 2017 [False Creek Flats Area Plan](#) the city recommended a ramp connection from the CVG at Grandview Hwy, to include a new crossing of Clark and then a ramp down to the Flats to connect to the new proposed path network. Those paths would carry along the Skytrain right-of-way to Emily Carr, and then down to the new St. Paul's Hospital, with further connections to the Dunsmuir Ramp for access to the downtown peninsula. They would also connect north across the tracks to other existing cycling routes. The crossing and ramp would separate active transportation from the very busy Clark and 6th Ave. That ramp has not been designed yet, but just woven into the plan as a building block. (see page 38 and 98 of the plan)

Clark to Victoria

We observed numerous people cycling on the sidewalk, and vehicles traveling quickly that appeared to be taking shortcuts, along this segment. The City has announced plans to construct protected bike lanes along Grandview Highway from Clark to Commercial, and we welcome this addition to the cycling network. [The project map is here.](#)

Better signage will be required to direct people cycling westbound to turn left at Clark Drive.

The Victoria- East Broadway intersection

An alternate crossing of Broadway was planned as part of the referenced improvements, using 8th Ave and Lakewood Drive. Due to local opposition, that portion of the project has been changed.

As it is now, and likely in future, the eastbound greenway rider must cross Broadway North to South with virtually no protection. There are seven active traffic lanes and vehicle speeds often exceed the legal limit. The wide sidewalk on the south side beckons, but there is a high curb and no access for bikes. Escape is a narrow painted bike lane, sharp to the left, leading to the complex main intersection. Even at a quiet time (late Saturday morning) it was impossible to cross without vehicle-bike conflicts. People on bikes have to stop for cars and cars for people on bikes.

This is a very dangerous crossing. People on bikes are seduced by green paint to cross Broadway west of Victoria, but there is no signal to stop the vehicles. Broadway is far too busy to have an unsignalized crossing at a major greenway. A push button signal coordinated with the signals at Victoria and Commercial would improve safety with minimal effect on traffic. Westbound cyclists should be directed to cross Broadway on the east side of Victoria to reduce congestion with eastbound flow at the southwest corner.



Crossing East Broadway just west of Victoria Dr. The intersection is uncontrolled (no signals)

We await construction of the pending improvements to see how this will be addressed, with recent changes to the plans to not utilize Lakewood.

From the unsignalized crossing of Broadway to the continuation of the off street paths east of Victoria, there is no clear bike lane or accommodation for people cycling.



Looking eastwards along Broadway at Victoria Dr. It is unclear where people on bikes are intended to go after crossing Victoria Dr.

Victoria to Renfrew

Rigid bollards can be more a danger for bikes than help. HUB Cycling has published information on this practice³, and recommends alternative designs be implemented.



Bollards between Templeton Dr. and Garden Dr.

At Lakewood, more prominent signage or pavement markings are required to indicate the junction with the BC Parkway.

³ [HUB Cycling position on Rigid Bollards](#)

At the Slocan St crossing, the path has a jog. It should be indicated more clearly that eastbound walking and cycling traffic merges here. For people cycling westbound, the bike crossing markings lead directly to the walking path, whereas the cycling route continues on the roadway. The sign to indicate that people cycling should continue on the roadway is on the roadway side, not the path side. This is confusing, and better signage is required to indicate where people using each mode should be. Where the path is split east of Slocan, on either side of the Skytrain supports, people cycling could be directed to one side, and people walking to the other.



Looking westwards at Slocan St, with the marked bike crossing leading only to the walking path.



Looking westwards at Kaslo St.

Renfrew Skytrain Station

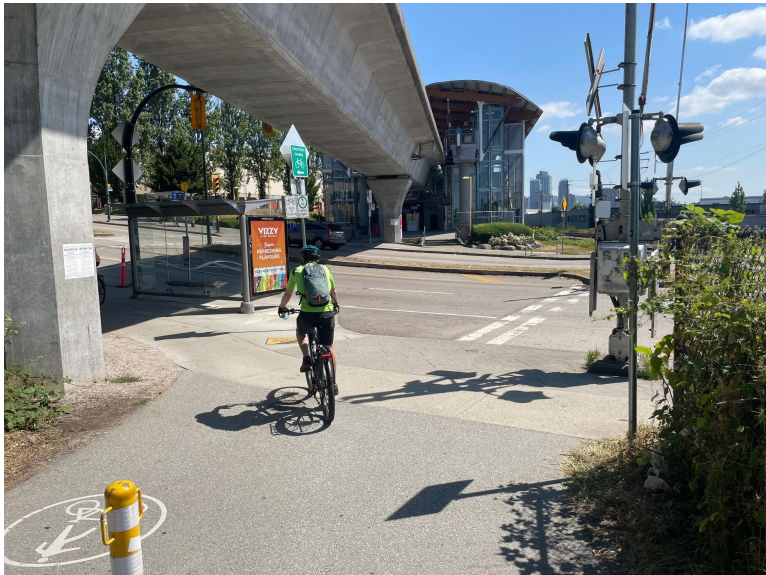
There should be larger and clearer signage to indicate how people walking and people cycling should share this space. Any assistance, such as a green-painted path for bikes, would be helpful to separate people using different modes. People cycling are directed to ride on the sidewalk, which can be confusing to people walking. The bollard in the sidewalk on 12th Ave at the station should be removed..

Renfrew to Rupert

The path pavement is buckling in several locations; the blackberry bushes should be trimmed. At separated pathways between Nootka and Rupert, consider designating one side for eastbound, the other for westbound.

Rupert Skytrain Station

This is a very busy and dangerous intersection, particularly at peak commute hours. There is a jog in the path to the north, where people on bikes are directed to ride on the sidewalk. This can be dangerous or uncomfortable for people walking to the Skytrain or bus stop, who may not expect people on bikes. Consideration should be given to moving the southbound bus stop 50 meters further north, and to paint the bikeway all the way through: across Rupert and on the north side of the train station.



Looking eastwards at intersection with Rupert St.

Looking westwards at intersection with Rupert St. Bikes and pedestrians share the same crosswalk



Rupert Skytrain Station concourse. The bikeway passes through this area but there is no separation between bikes and pedestrians



Rupert to Boundary

The pathway pavement is buckling in several locations. Vegetation should be trimmed back to not encroach on the path.



Unnecessary bollard between Rupert St. and Boundary Rd.

2. Westbound ride

Boundary to Renfrew

Just before Renfrew there is a dangerous bollard that serves no real purpose.

Renfrew to Victoria

The Victoria Drive intersection is even more confusing for those not familiar with it, than when travelling east. The directions for people cycling westbound to cross Broadway on the east side of Victoria are logical, but there is no protection on the north side of Broadway for people who do follow these signs.

Victoria to Clark

This section is planned to be improved with the current project.

Clark to Main

At Lorne street, there is insufficient space to accommodate people both walking and cycling.

Conclusion

There are many opportunities for small improvements along this route that would make a significant difference to the comfort and safety of people cycling, but also for people walking and those accessing the Skytrain stations and transit stops. The upcoming CVG improvement project should address some of these issues, but it is recommended that the project design be checked against the issues raised here, and that a post construction audit be conducted to ensure that all items were addressed.

It is understood that there are multiple jurisdictions responsible for this route, including the City of Vancouver for much of it; Translink for their stations and plazas; and private landowners, including building owners who have trimmed back vegetation upon request to improve sightlines and safety. This can make improvements more of a challenge, but the volume of users and significance of the route demand that the issues identified be addressed.

HUB Cycling plans to review this route again following planned 2022 improvements, and looks forward to the provision of a route that is safe and comfortable for even more people.

More Information: vancouver@bikehub.ca

About HUB Cycling

HUB Cycling is a charitable not for profit organization that has spent over 22 years removing barriers to cycling in Metro Vancouver, while cultivating the health, environmental, and economic benefits that active transportation can bring. HUB has educated thousands of people, motivated thousands more, and championed improvements that [#UnGapTheMap](#) to create a connected cycling network. HUB Cycling's mission is to get more people cycling more often. HUB Cycling has close to 3,000 members and more than 45,000 direct supporters. HUB Cycling has 10 volunteer committees across Metro Vancouver that encourage cycling for all ages and abilities (AAA) in municipalities across Metro Vancouver. For more information, visit bikehub.ca.