

April 24, 2023

Paul Storer, Director of Transportation, CoV paul.storer@vancouver.ca

Donnie Rosa, General Manager, Board of Parks and Recreation, CoV pbgmo@vancouver.ca

Re: Reopening the West End Waterfront Seawall Path from Hornby to Bidwell

Dear Paul and Donnie,

We are writing to request that the West End Waterfront Seawall Active Mobility path be reopened between Hornby Street and Bidwell Street in time for summer 2023. Now that the barge has been removed, access has been successfully restored to the public right of way through the rear of 1000 Beach Avenue, and other pandemic restrictions have been lifted, it is important to restore recreational active mobility access to the West End Waterfront Seawall path.

The Beach Avenue Bikeway has proven to be an incredible success, with daily trips in the vicinity of 15,000 on peak days, making it among the most successful active mobility routes not only in Greater Vancouver, but in North America. The Beach Avenue Bikeway is wide and provides direct access to West End Waterfront destinations between Bidwell Street and Stanley Park, so it makes sense to continue to allocate the Seawall path to people walking in this high-traffic area, both alongside the water and on the paved path immediately adjacent to the sidewalk.

However, the section of the West End Waterfront Seawall route between Hornby Street and Bidwell Street provides access to the beaches and patios, to Sunset Beach and its events area and concession, and to the Aquatic Centre ferry dock. People cycling should have their access restored to this path to reach these destinations without having to dismount or commit an offence.

The parallel route on Beach Avenue will help to alleviate the conflicts that sometimes arose on this route in the past. However, leaving it closed will not stop non-compliance since the access to these areas is so desirable and people are often travelling fully loaded with families, making it a very desirable cycling route. Consequently, retaining a cycling ban in this area will continue to contribute to the unfortunate view of some that people cycling are all scofflaws. Providing an alternative option to recreational riders and tourists who are looking for a slower and more scenic ride will enhance the experience and safety of people cycling on Beach Avenue, which is a more direct and thus a preferable route for commuter and sports cyclists. In addition, the section of the Seawall cycle path between Hornby Street and the Aquatic Centre provides a higher level of safety and comfort for tentative or inexperienced cyclists than the parallel section of Beach Avenue, due to the multiple driveways with motor vehicles entering and exiting condos and the Aquatic Centre car park.

The restoration of access to the West End Waterfront Seawall path will provide better access to families with small children riding their own bikes, riding cargo bikes, or riding with child trailers to conveniently access the beaches and amenities along this stretch of the West End Waterfront, as well as disabled people who use e-trikes or mobility scooters as mobility aids. As you know, many people who suffer

with conditions such as osteoarthritis are able to move more easily using a bike as a mobility aid than on foot. We have observed that people walking and running on the Seawall path along this stretch are generally using the signed walking path as opposed to the cycle path which is still marked with stencils, even while the cycle path is still restricted. We suggest that improvements could be made to the patio areas close to the Burrard Bridge and the City.

Restoration of access to the Seawall cycle path at Hornby Street would also facilitate the removal of the inaccessible and unsightly temporary trestle and orange pylon barricade blocking access to the ramp down to the Hornby Street ferry dock. This barricade currently blocks access to wheelchair users and people using strollers and shopping carts attempting to travel to and from Granville Island by ferry. Restoring access would also facilitate the removal of the effective but unsightly jersey barrier that has been put in place to divert active mobility users up Hornby Street to Beach Avenue. There should be signage at this point that directs people to the Beach Ave Bikeway, promoting it as a direct route, with the waterfront route indicated as an alternative. At Jervis, there should also be signage directing people on the Seawall path on to the Beach Avenue Bikeway.

The Imagine West End Waterfront initiative is an enormous project that is only in its initial stages of public consultation. It is unlikely to be completed within the coming years. We are concerned that the longer the Active Mobility Seawall path is closed, the more the benefits of active transport through parks will be lost here.

Restoring access is also a great opportunity to collect more data to improve the experience of active mobility users through this route and identify conflicts, pinch-points and other design issues such as drainage issues and the safety concerns caused by the vertical separation between the walking and active mobility paths.

Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Jeff Leigh and Anthony Floyd
Co Chairs
Vancouver/UBC Local Committee
HUB Cycling
vancouver@bikehub.ca

Lisa Slakov
Park Board Liaison
Vancouver UBC Local Committee
HUB Cycling
lslakov@telus.net

About HUB Cycling

HUB Cycling is a charitable not for profit organization that has spent 25 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.