



June 14, 2017

Park Board Commissioners (sent by email)

Dear Park Board Commissioners

I am writing to provide an update on HUB Cycling's long-standing concerns regarding the Seaside Greenway in the area west of Burrard Bridge to Balsam Street through various parks.

Recently a committee member of HUB Cycling, Anthony Floyd, and Lynne Kent from the Kits Point Residents' Association met and discussed concerns regarding cycling & walking at the corner of Balsam St and Cornwall Ave, as well as other active transportation issues in the Kitsilano Beach and Hadden Park area. It is apparent that both HUB Cycling and the KPRA have common aspirations for the area. At the heart of this commonality is the desire to ensure the safety of everyone, including people on foot and people on bikes, while preserving access to the parks, beach, and facilities -- no matter the mode of transportation that people use to travel to, and through, the park.

The fencing that was put up to restrict access to a desire line path near the south-west corner of Kitsilano Beach Park has had the opposite effect. It has created safety issues for people on bikes and pedestrians, especially those young and less experienced cyclists who must now deal with a complicated, confusing, and dangerous intersection. People dealing with the corner who are travelling east and attempting to access the multi-use path on the southern edge of the park are at risk as they are forced into conflict with both unsuspecting pedestrians and unsuspecting motorists.

Anthony and Lynne agree that this fencing has achieved nothing but remove the only safe alternative for people to deal with this corner. HUB Cycling believes that the fencing should be removed as soon as possible and all park users should be permitted to use the path indicated by the desire line.

The Park Board has previously proposed several solutions to managing pedestrian and cycling traffic in this corner, most recently with two options "1a" and "1b". Both options follow the existing desire line, with "1a" proposing a separated 3m cycling paved path and a 2m pedestrian paved path, and "1b" proposing a 4m-wide shared paved path. Both options enable park users to avoid the conflict area right at the corner. HUB Cycling prefers separated paths for the comfort and safety of all users, and in this case favours option "1a". This preference is based on [research](#) that shows that multi-use paths are a more dangerous route type. However, we recognize that option "1b" would have the advantage of requiring less pavement to be placed, a concern of the KPRA.

One of the biggest concerns of the KPRA regarding option “1a” is the additional asphalt required to create a separated path. Perhaps natural surface alternatives could be considered for the pedestrian path; however, unless the pedestrian path can accommodate those with mobility aides, we are concerned that people with mobility devices may choose to use the paved bike path, which could lead to conflict and safety issues. We do also recognize that there are many other hard surface alternates for people walking in the area.

The discussion between Anthony and Lynne was congenial and productive. They discussed issues concerning the whole area, from Hadden Park through to Balsam St. Both recognize the value in considering connectivity through the whole area, which allows for consistency in design, and flexibility to give-and-take along the whole route. There is considerable common ground between the two groups, and both are optimistic that a resolution to the existing gap in the cycling network as well as measures to ensure the safety and comfort of all users can be achieved.

Open and frank discussion is needed, and it must involve those groups with interest in the area being given both the opportunity to speak to their concerns and to be heard. The model of engagement and consultation used in the South False Creek Seawall improvements process can be a role model for this area. That process was led by staff from both the City Engineering Department and the Park Board and involved convening a focus group with involvement from multiple key interest groups in the city such as HUB Cycling, residents’ groups, the Senior’s Advisory Group, Persons with Disability Advisory Group, the Active Transportation Policy Council, Vancouver Public Space Network etc in addition to a thorough public consultation process. The focus group worked very well and what was particularly successful was that everyone had the opportunity to hear and understand the concerns of others, and everyone had their say. By hearing others in an open, loosely-structured environment, it was easier to build trust and to find commonalities.

Safety issues involving people on bikes and walking (when on the shared path) from the Burrard Bridge west to Balsam St. must be addressed. The most effective immediate change as identified by both HUB Cycling and the KPRA, is to remove the fencing near the corner of Balsam St and Cornwall Ave. HUB Cycling endorses a permanent separated path (option “1a”) soon, and understands that the pedestrian portion may not need to be asphalt. HUB Cycling also recommends initiating an open, collaborative, and inclusive consultation process to address safety and access considerations for the whole area starting as soon as possible.

Best regards,

Lisa Slakov

Chair, Seaside South Working Group of the HUB Cycling Vancouver-UBC Local Committee

cc: Tiina Mack, Park Board
Lynne Kent, Kits Point Residents Association
Paul Storer, Manager of Transportation Design, City of Vancouver