



June 4, 2012

City of North Vancouver
141 West 14th Street
North Vancouver, BC
V7M 1H9

Port Metro Vancouver
100 The Pointe, 999 Canada Place
Vancouver, BC
V6C 3T4

Dear Mayor and Council, Port Metro Vancouver Low Level Road Project Team

Re: Low Level Road Project

Thank-you for your response to our letter dated March 30, 2012. I am interested to see that your team thought that we were requesting raised cycling facilities on both north and south sides of the new roadway.

After receiving your response, which suggests that to meet our request for a separated bike facility, the roadbed would need to be widened by 2.6 m on both sides, and reviewing the May 2012, preferred project design, the HUB-North Shore Committee is wondering if you understood our recommendation? We hope clarification may alter your response.

Clarifying our Request

We recommended building a multi-use path for cyclists and pedestrians on the South side while retaining a painted bike lane on the North side. We did not recommend a raised or barrier separated facility on the North side.

Refining that Request

After reviewing the preferred design, we would like to refine that recommendation as follows:

HOW TO FIT A PROPER CYCLE PATH ON THE LOW LEVEL ROAD

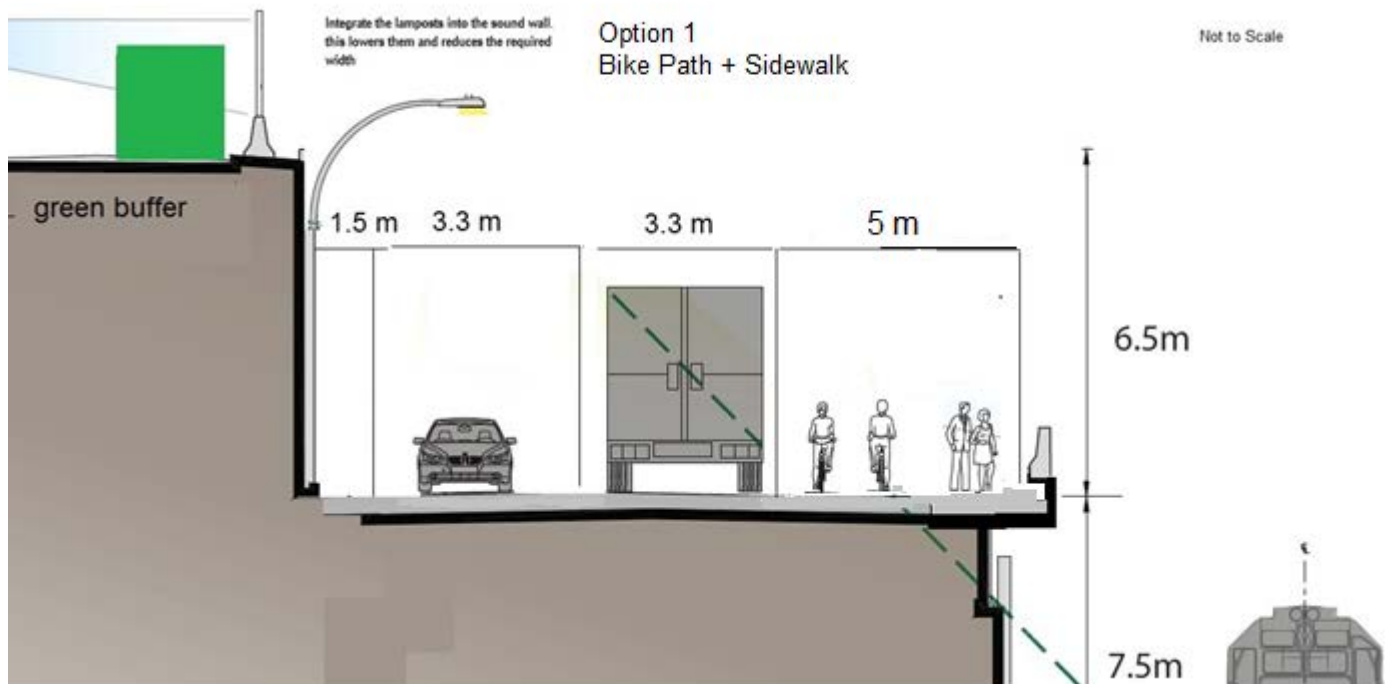
We suggest providing separated space on Low Level Road for non-motorized users. This could be achieved by adjusting the current preferred design, as follows:

- Integrate the lamp posts in the retaining wall to the north (below residential view) so they do not take up road space.

- Eliminate the inside barrier of the two barriers on the south side of the road. The outside barrier can be made high enough to prevent people from falling off and/or jumping over.
- Narrow the barrier. For example, the new Highway 1 overpasses have narrow barriers.
- Use the space south of the road for a cantilevered path.
- Reduce the shoulder width and possibly the posted speed limit.
- Make the bike path accessible for vehicles in an emergency, by separating it with a concrete mountable curb or a rolled curb.

Option 1: Bike path and sidewalk (4.5 metres + .5 metre shy distance)

Option 1 separates vehicles from bikes and bikes from pedestrians and other sidewalk users. To obtain more space, we recommend a cantilever where feasible. Note that even with this cantilever design, we are asking only for an increase on the South side NOT 2.6 metres on both sides as stated in the response. If the roadbed is currently 11 metre we are asking for a total increase of 2.1 metres, assuming the north side shoulder width is reduced to 1.5 metres. If the other suggested design adjustments are made, the working surface would be closer to 12 m in which case require only 1 additional metre.



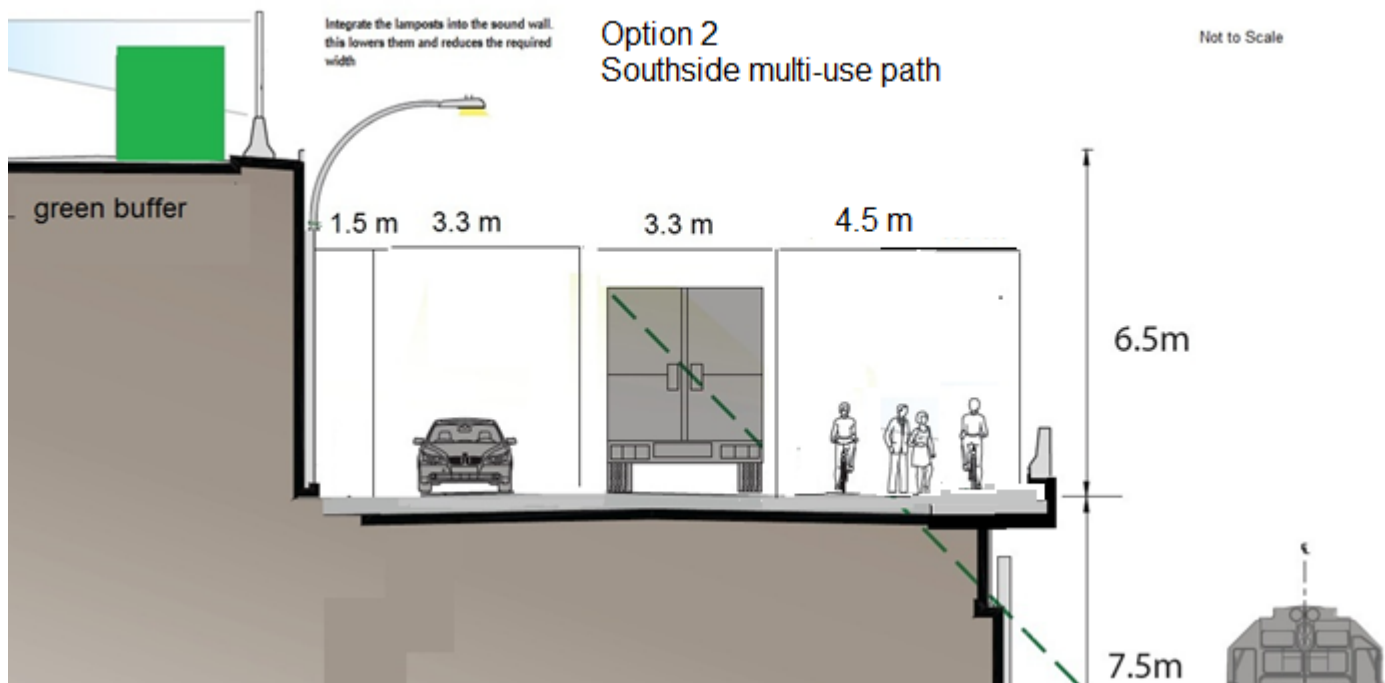
Cross Section Bike Path Plus Sidewalk



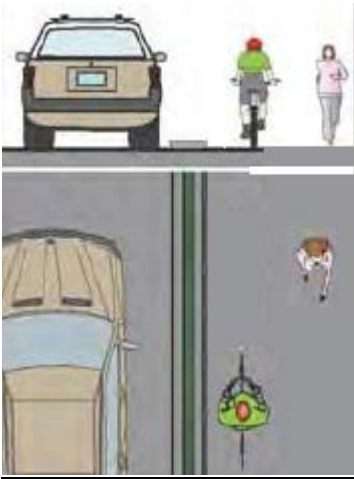
Two-way Bike Path and sidewalk – Aerial view

Option 2: Multi-use path (4 metres + 0.5 metres shy distance)

To accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians, we recommend a cantilever where feasible to provide a separated multi-use path. This type of path would also provide a good route for people in wheelchairs and personal mobility devices as well as other active forms of transportation including skate boards and in-line skates. Note that even with this cantilever design, we are asking only for an increase on the South side NOT 2.6 meters on both sides as stated in the response. If the roadbed is currently 11 m we are asking for a total increase of about 1.6 metres on ONE side only, assuming the north side shoulder width is reduced to 1.5 metres or other equivalent design adjustments are made. If the other suggested design adjustments are made, the working surface would be closer to 12 m in which case this design requires only .5 additional metres.



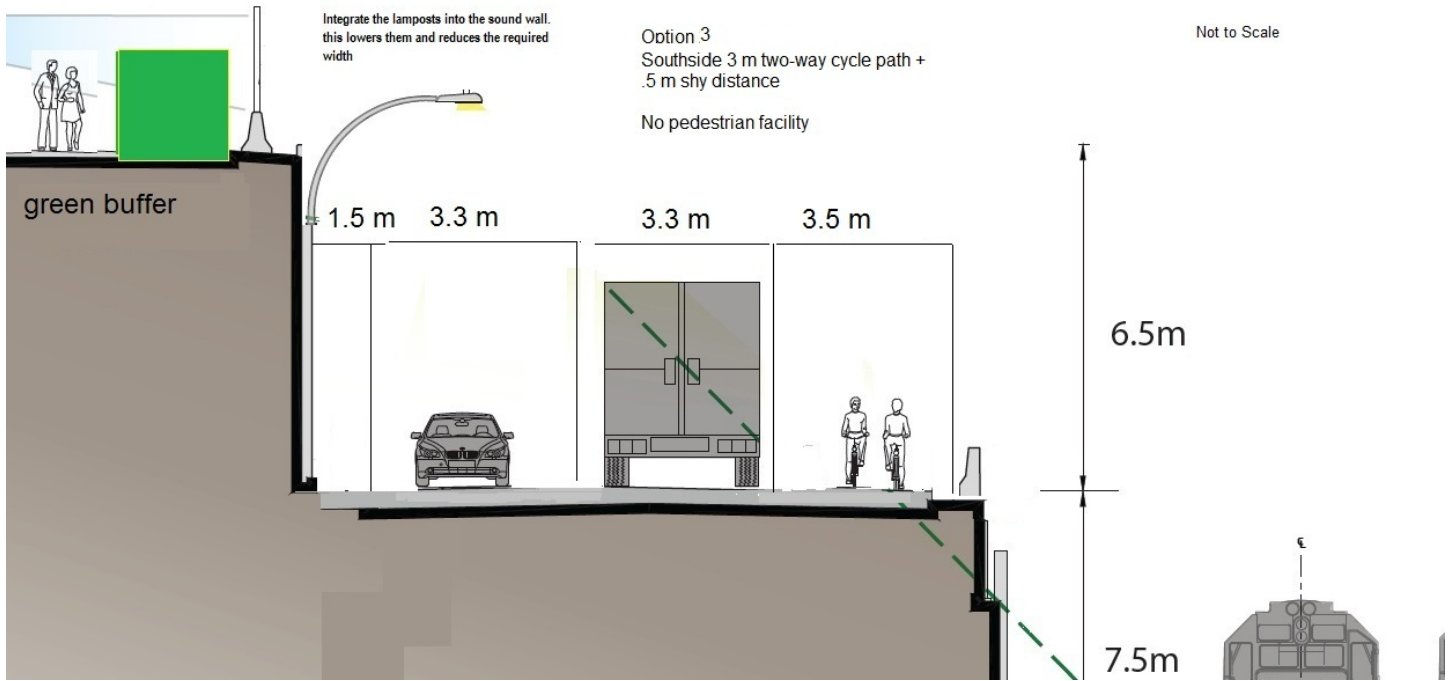
Cross Section Bike Path and Sidewalk



Multi-use path elevation and aerial view

Option 3: Bike path only (3 metres + 0.5 metres shy distance)

In option 3 we suggest keeping almost the same road bed size and including a two-way south side cycle path with some kind of separation. This design would require less width than either Option 1 or Option 2, however it assumes pedestrians will not have a dedicated space. If the roadbed is currently 11 m we are asking for a total increase of ~ 0.6 metres on ONE side only, assuming the north side shoulder width is reduced to 1.5 metres or other equivalent design adjustments are made. If the other suggested design adjustments are made, the working surface would be closer to 12 m in which case NO additional space is required.



Cross Section Bike Path Only

WHY NOT INCLUDING PROPER BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES IS THE WRONG THING

The proposed design is very unlikely to support an increase in transportation by bike in North Vancouver and across the North Shore.

If, as stated in the City of North Vancouver's municipal transportation plan, we want to encourage active transportation, we need to build cycling and pedestrian facilities that encourage people to get on their bikes and on their feet. This design will not do that. While the same few people who ride Low Level Road now will be marginally safer and drier, this design will not encourage people who are not BRAVE to take this as a route.

The new Low Level road is being designed for 60 km/h. Cycling beside fast moving vehicles, especially semi-trailer trucks, can be very intimidating. Especially when traveling west, cycling on a painted bike lane between fast moving traffic and a high retaining wall would be frightening to most people. The problem is there are no good alternate routes.



A Screen Capture from the Low Level Road Preferred Design video

A Regional link of importance beyond the North Shore

The Low Level Road project has the potential to provide a safe and direct cycling route that links Lower Lonsdale with the future Lower Lynn Town Centre. The Low Level Road is also part of the North Shore's main east-west connection for cyclists. It is a regional route, not just a local connector, linking North and West Vancouver with Burnaby and Vancouver. As members of the larger Metro Vancouver area, we need to be aware of providing cycling facilities for travelers moving through the region.

ALTERNATE ROUTES

Spirit Trail

While the recently built Spirit Trail above Low Level Road is a good addition to North Vancouver bike and trail network, it adds significant elevation gain and distance to trips. The secluded nature of the trail is ideal for recreational use, but many cyclists will not use it in the dark. The trail is unlit and not a good connector to the east toward Iron Workers Memorial Bridge as it continues North over Third Street. Cycling the current Low Level Road is twice as fast as using the Spirit Trail between Esplanade and Cotton.

Third Street

Third Street moving west is very steep and unlikely to encourage new cyclists, especially without separated facilities and motorized traffic moving much faster than bikes when going uphill. Moving east it places cyclists on a peninsula between lanes of traffic – a difficult to navigate situation for the most seasoned cyclist.

TECHNICAL or POLITICAL

Given the number of taxpayer dollars being spent on this \$104M project which will improve conditions for port workers and improve rail traffic flow for commercial operations, shouldn't more consideration be given to other forms of transportation? Even if the minimal widening suggested herein results in increased costs, building a facility that makes sense for all forms of transportation will pay back in the long term. Retrofitting adequate facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and other users is much more expensive and often impossible as seen with the Ironworkers Memorial Second Narrows Bridge. The new Low Level Road will be there for many decades and the design should include appropriate infrastructure to facilitate active, accessible transportation across the North Shore instead of presenting a barrier to current and future users.

IN CONCLUSION

The Low Level Road project should incorporate a multi-use path on the south side that would satisfy the needs of cyclists and pedestrians of all ages as well as users of wheelchairs and personal mobility devices. This path, because it will be significantly flatter, more direct and less secluded than the Spirit Trail will see more use as a transportation (not recreation) route than the Spirit Trail. As an alternate, we recommend a narrower two-way cycle path. We are asking the project team to review the road design and identify facilities and construction methods that would provide the required width.

Best Regards,



Heather Drugge, Member,
HUB - North Shore Committee
(formerly Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition)

cc/

Doug Pope, City Engineer

Tony Barber, Manager, Engineering, Planning and Design

Dragana Mitic, Assistant City Engineer, Transportation

Members, Integrated Transportation Committee, City of North Vancouver

North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
Cloverly Residents Association
Andrew Saxton, MP
Naomi Yamamoto, MLA