



# Seaside Greenway South Assessment Ride 1

HUB Vancouver UBC Local Committee - *Seaside South Working Group*  
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## Executive Summary

The HUB Vancouver UBC Local Committee *Seaside South Working Group* identified the Seaside Greenway and Seaside Bypass Bike Route as important cycling routes in the City of Vancouver. Indications were given by the City that these routes would be considered for improvements in the near term, and the Working Group decided to perform an assessment of the routes in order to be able to provide constructive feedback to the City in the redesign process.

This report covers from Science World to Granville Island, a length of about 3 km. A group of interested parties including HUB members, local residents, and a member of the Active Transportation Policy Council participated in an assessment of this segment on 14 June 2015.

Both the Seaside Greenway (on the Seawall) and the Seaside Bypass were assessed. The major issues identified included:

- Confusion and conflict between pedestrians and people on bikes due to multi-use paths not having markings indicating where to walk and where to bike
- Multi-use paths that are too narrow to adequately handle the combined volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Dangerous motor vehicle interactions at Stamp's Landing and the Spruce Harbour Marina
- A dangerous crossing due to high motor vehicle/pedestrian/bicycle traffic and poor sight-lines at Anderson Street beneath the Granville Street Bridge
- Dangerous flagstone surfacing in sections
- A lack of identification and promotion of the Seaside Bypass, which has the potential to attract faster riders away from the seawall, reducing conflicts for all users
- Inadequate wayfinding signs indicating points of interest, destinations, routes, how far they are (in distance or time), and how to get to them

## Assessment Ride 1: Science World to Granville Island

The complete Seaside Greenway is almost 30 km from end-to-end. The older, less well designed section from Science World along the south bank of False Creek out to Pacific Spirit Park is almost 12 km long. In order to manage the effort involved with assessing this section, it will be assessed in smaller segments. The first assessment considers only the section from Science World west to Granville Island, approximately 3 km. This is shown in Figure 1.

The Seaside Greenway South Assessment Ride 1 occurred on the morning of June 14th, 2015. It was a sunny summer day, but early on a Sunday and Seawall usage was lighter than it was later in the day or on a typical mid-summer day.

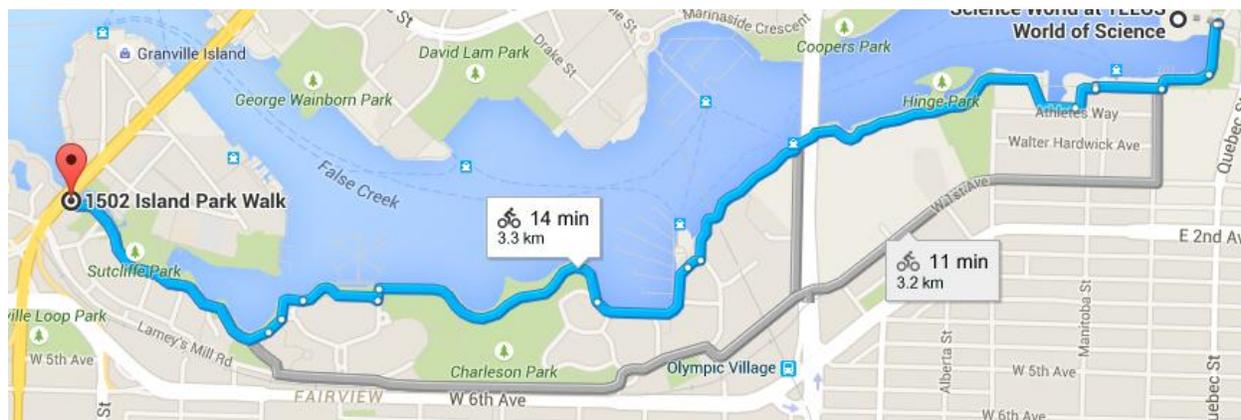


Figure 1

## General Assessment

Overall, the Seaside Greenway between Science World and Granville Island along the Seawall is a pleasant place to ride. The views are stunning, the path has a variety of different trees and flowers, and it connects a number of important destinations. ***The large volume of both pedestrians and people on bikes*** (along with a smaller number of other users such as roller-bladers, people on scooters, and people using wheelchairs) ***on the shared multi-use path creates a considerable amount of confusion of where the safest places to walk or ride are.*** Larger groups of users, whether cyclists or pedestrians, tend to obstruct the path creating conflicts. Occasionally motor vehicles in unexpected places also create problems.

***Wayfinding and other signs along the path are poor and confusing.*** There are ***no signs indicating destinations, distances, or points-of-interest.*** In particular, it is important to indicate how to get to other nearby bike routes (Adanac, Ontario, Central Valley Greenway, Seaside Bypass, Heather, Off-Broadway) and destinations (Science World, Olympic Village, Cambie Bridge, Vancouver General Hospital, Granville Island). There are occasional signs indicating which route you are on (“Seaside”) and occasional separation indicators (bikes here, pedestrians there).

## Section-by-Section

### 1 Science World to False Creek Community Centre



Figure 2

This section of the Greenway is well-provisioned. People on bikes are mostly separated from pedestrians, and the separated bike lane is clearly marked both for usage and for direction. Pedestrian crossings are clearly indicated with zebra crossings. The path is not always wide enough for faster cyclists to safely pass slower cyclists without crossing into the oncoming lane.

Beyond the Science World Plaza, the path runs past a yet-to-be-developed lot and becomes less desirable. In particular, where the Ontario Bike Route joins the Seaside Greenway, the usage and directionality indications are confusing, non-standard, or even absent. In Figure 3, even among the group of experienced users performing the assessment, there was considerable disagreement over the intended meanings of the arrows.



Figure 3

## 2 False Creek Community Centre to Western Edge of Olympic Village

This segment of the Seaside Greenway is perhaps the best on the southern section. It was built when the Olympic Village was built and features a fully-separated, wide path for people on bikes. Occasional conflicts develop when pedestrians wander into the bike path, and other conflicts sometimes occur in places where pedestrians cross the bike path. Differing ground treatment is used to indicate crossing points, but there is concern that this is not sufficiently clear for pedestrians or cyclists to indicate places where right-of-way is yielded, or crossings may occur. At the eastern edge of this segment, there is a wide open plaza. Pedestrians and people on bikes tend to use this plaza as a means to short-cut, and as a result conflicts develop.

Wayfinding and signage continue to be problems along this section. In particular the painted symbol in Figure 4 is confusing: some people read it as “pedestrians to yield” when in fact the intended meaning is completely the opposite.



Figure 4

Figure 5 illustrates how the different surface treatment and small signs high out of people’s sight are not sufficient to prevent pedestrians from using the cycle path (although we did not observe any cyclist using the pedestrian path).



Figure 5

### 3 Western Edge of Olympic Village to Cambie Bridge

This segment of the Greenway consists of two distinct sections. The first section continues the separated path that runs through the Olympic Village but it soon turns into a multi-use path of variable width. There is no indication of which users are supposed to be in which part of the path, or what direction they should be travelling. The transition is abrupt and the lack of consistency is confusing. As a consequence of the lack of markings, people use the path in unpredictable ways; this also lends to meandering where neither people on bikes or pedestrians maintain consistent travel lines. The MUP is bordered in parts by tall chain-link fences which reduce the usable width of the path considerably.



Figure 6

Figure 7

As with all sections, wayfinding signs are essentially missing. Figure 8 shows one sign in particular that is utterly confusing and is, in fact, completely misleading.



Figure 8

Note that the sign indicates to turn left to bypass the Canada Line and Cambie Bridge. What it intends to convey is to turn left to get to the Seaside Bypass, the Canada Line, and the Cambie Bridge. It is unlikely that people unfamiliar with the area will understand this intention. Further this sign is located well above most people's line-of-sight and may be entirely overlooked in the first place.

#### 4 Cambie Bridge to Stamp's Landing

This segment of the Seaside Greenway is a wide multi-use path without any direction or mode separation. Although both pedestrian and cycling volumes are high along this segment, the width of the path reduces the conflicts somewhat. The path contains many curves, however, and this causes a number of problems including restricted sight-lines for people on bikes, and meandering of both cyclists and pedestrians.



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

## 5 Stamp's Landing

Figure 13 shows the approach to Stamp's Landing from the east. All modes are expected to use the same space without any separation or guidance. The taxi is navigating the cul-de-sac, while people on bikes and on foot cross the cul-de-sac.



Figure 13

Figure 14 shows three pedestrians taking the shortest route to the continuation of the Seawall, through the middle of the cul-de-sac. Again, there is a vehicle navigating the cul-de-sac.



Figure 14

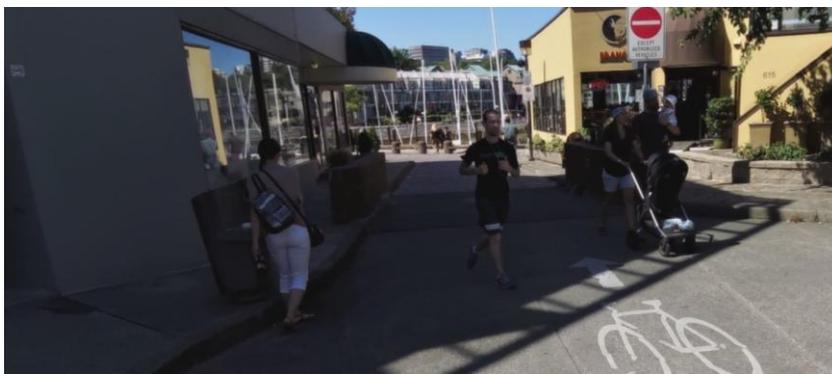


Figure 15

Figure 15 illustrates the chaos at the western side of Stamp's Landing. The No Entry sign does not mention bicycles.

## 6 Stamp's Landing to Charleson Park Eastern Edge

This segment of the Seaside Greenway is older than the previous segments. There is some mode separation using short concrete and wood bollards and seating (Figure 16). The bollards are not always obvious in low lighting situations due to a lack of contrast. The path width is excellent. While the cycling path is shared with vehicles, the vehicles are few in number.



Figure 16

The most serious issue in this section is the flagstones. The flagstones are uneven, bumpy, slippery (particularly in wet and winter conditions), and in a poor state of repair. The flagstones cause problems for bikes with small wheels, both road bikes with narrow tires, and children's bikes with small diameter wheels and training wheels.

At the western end of this segment, people on bikes are poorly directed into the same space as pedestrians, through the bollards. Alternate routes seem available (up Greenchain Road, for example) but the lack of wayfinding signs means that few people on bikes use these alternates.

Bikes such as cargo bikes, tandem bikes, and bikes with tag-alongs or trailers have difficulty navigating through the bollards safely, due to the length of the bike and the bollard spacing.



Figure 17

## 7 Charleson Park

The segment of the Seawall Greenway along the north edge of Charleson Park is characterized by a narrow multi-use path consisting of a stone-brick surface, vegetation encroaching on one side (often by more than a foot or two), and off-leash dogs. There are no markings indicating direction or mode-separation, so confusion exists on where people should be. A large portion of the park is an off-leash dog park, and there is no separation of the main off-leash field from the two paths circling the park, often causing conflicts between people on bikes, dogs, and dog owners.

The path twists and turns its way around the park, and the combination of vegetation, the width of the path, and the sharpness of the turns creates considerable sight-line issues. It often occurs that a person on a bike comes around a corner only to unexpectedly discover several pedestrians stretched across the path. This is neither comfortable or safe for the cyclist or pedestrians.



Figure 18



Figure 19

Charleson Park is a major access point to the seawall for people coming from the Fairview Slopes neighbourhood. The Laurel Land Bridge connects at the southern edge of the park, funneling people from the neighbourhood and from the Off-Broadway Bike Route to the seawall. The land bridge connects at the top of a hill, and bicycle traffic coming down the hill can cause conflicts with pedestrians (and on- and off-leash dogs due to the neighbouring dog park). Furthermore, False Creek Elementary sits on the edge of the park, and a paved path runs towards the school. This paved path provides important public access to the Seaside Bypass at Lamey's Mill Road. Teachers and parents at False Creek Elementary are concerned with commuting cyclist traffic near the school, particularly in the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up periods.

## 8 Spruce Harbour Marina to The Castings

This segment of the seawall begins at the Spruce Harbour Marina. This area is another that causes considerable conflicts. Pedestrians may divert from the paved path to the “Caesar’s Bridge” that cuts along the southern edge of the marina, but they are not directed to do so. Often pedestrians will not take this route because it looks like it intrudes on private property.



Figure 20

The seawall makes a “S” turn up a slight hill. This S-turn includes a portion of road for access to the marine. Figure 20 shows two motor vehicles trying to navigate the area with a constant flow of bicycles and pedestrians competing for the same space.

Further along the segment, the same flagstone treatment that was used near Stamp’s Landing is used once again bringing with it the same problems. Additionally, similar wooden bollards are used to provide modal-separation but at the western end of the path (which is called The Castings by this point) people on bikes and other path users are forced to share a very narrow path. To make things worse, people on bikes must navigate closely-spaced bollards to merge on to the path, and must deal with oncoming cycling and pedestrian traffic at the same time.



Figure 21

## 9 Island Park Walk to Anderson Street

This segment of the Seaside Greenway is characterized by a relatively narrow and curved mixed-use path. The portion along Alder Bay (Figure 22) is naturally separated by cherry trees, but heaving of the path by the tree roots and the narrowness space between the trees and the edge of the seawall mean that few pedestrians use that portion of the path.

The curvature of the path reduces sightlines to dangerous levels in places, and the presence of some features creates collision hazards. (Figure 23).



Figure 22



Figure 23

As the path approaches Granville Island, the volume of path users increases. In addition, the vegetation encroaches closer to the path on both sides. These gardens attract the attention of people on bikes and pedestrians alike, who often stop to admire them. The overall result is that most (but not all) traffic moves through this area slower than on other segments. Conflicts still occur, but it seems that many more people expect conflicts in this segment than elsewhere.

Vegetation encroaching on the path narrows the path considerably in places (Figures 24 and 25) and causes most people to avoid at least half of the available space.



Figure 24



Figure 25

At the western edge of this segment, the path crosses Anderson Street, the only motor vehicle access to Granville Island. (Figure 26) The MUP passes on the north side of two bridge support

columns, causing significant sight line issues for all modes looking for motor vehicle traffic coming from the south. Bikes are permitted to cross through the crosswalk here (permission granted by sign) but the crosswalk isn't painted as a cross-bike with elephant feet as in other areas of the city. Conflicts occur in this area frequently as pedestrian traffic tries to walk along the sidewalk north and south while pedestrians and people on bikes try to cross both sidewalks and four lanes of traffic. Neither motor vehicles or pedestrian traffic is controlled by a signal.



Figure 26

## 10 Seaside Bypass: Anderson at Lamey's Mill Road



Figure 27

The intersection of West 2nd Avenue / Lamey's Mill Road and Anderson Street underneath the Granville Street Bridge (Figure 27) is a difficult intersection for all users. There is no clearly marked route for people on bikes in this area, heading in any direction. For cyclists heading on to Granville Island or just trying to get on to the Seaside Greenway, the options are to either ride in the heavy traffic as a vehicle, get off and walk on the sidewalk, or to divert to Old Bridge Road in an attempt to avoid heavy motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic. However, there is no easy, safe, or comfortable way to do this.

For cyclists heading along the Seaside Bypass, westbound motor vehicle traffic is not permitted to turn north on to Anderson Street, but it happens often enough that cyclists have to be very cautious about right-hook collisions in that location. For eastbound people on bikes, they have to navigate a roadway that has traffic turning both north and south on Anderson Street, as well as through-traffic. Two lanes on the west side collapse to a single lane on the east side. Lamey's Mill Road on the east side of the intersection is narrow and takes an immediate tight turn.

## 11 Seaside Bypass: Lamey's Mill Road

The Seaside Bypass along Lamey's Mill Road from Anderson Street to the western edge of Charleson Park is a shared road, with parking on one side of the road. The Translink Route 50 bus runs along this road. The road west of Alder Crossing is narrow and on the south side of the street, the pavement has heaved and floods often.

At Alder Crossing (Figure 28) motor vehicles (except for buses) are diverted to prevent westbound through traffic. Unfortunately, this diversion is poorly observed and traffic behaves quite aggressively here. While the assessment ride was happening, a fast westbound bus honked at a westbound cyclist for no apparent reason other than to force him to the curb in a lane that the person on the bike was entitled to be in (and otherwise cycling safely in).

The advance signs indicating the diversion (Figure 29) are hardly visible due to overgrown vegetation.



Figure 28



Figure 29

There is easy access to the Seaside Greenway at two points along Lamey's Mill Road; at Old Bridge Road for access near Granville Island, and at The Castings. Neither of these access points are indicated by wayfinding signs. Furthermore, as can be seen in Figure 29, the access at The Castings of people on bikes heading on to the Seaside Bypass eastbound is impeded by poor visibility caused by parked cars on the north side of Lamey's Mill Road.

## 12 Seaside Bypass: Charleson Road

Charleson Road is a straight stretch of road bookended by stop signs. The stop sign at Lamey's Mill Road is poorly observed by motor vehicle and cyclist traffic. It serves very little purpose at the moment and disobeying the sign seems to have become the normal behaviour.

Charleson Road passes under the Laurel Street Land Bridge (Figure 30). There are two pedestrian paths leading up to the land bridge at this point, but neither path is suitable for bikes. One path is surfaced with wood chips and is unlit; the other is more suitable but gates at the bottom of the path prevent bikes from using the path. This would be a popular place for faster cyclists to get on and off of the Seaside Bypass if it were improved. Keeping faster cyclists on the Seaside Bypass serves to improve the safety and reduce the conflicts on the seawall. The Seaside Bypass needs to be identified, and promoted as a safe and fast alternative both with sufficient infrastructure and wayfinding signs in order for that to occur.



Figure 30



Figure 31

Along the whole of Charleson Road, motor vehicle traffic moves quickly. There are no sidewalks along the road, nor is there any bike lane. The narrowness of the road, high speed of the vehicles, and potential conflicts with pedestrians make this stretch uncomfortable for many people on bikes.

### 13 Seaside Bypass: Moberly Road/Commodore Road/Spyglass Place

The segment of the Seaside Bypass between the end of Charleson Park and the Cambie Street Bridge is a relatively quiet residential road (Figure 32). Parking is only permitted on one side of the road. As Commodore Road passes under the Cambie Street Bridge, a painted bike lane begins.



Figure 32

This section of the Seaside Bypass could provide better access to the Olympic Village Canada Line Station. And again, way finding signs are poor or non-existent.

### 14 Seaside Bypass: W 1st to Ontario

The segment of the Seaside Bypass from Spyglass Place to Ontario Street runs through the heart of the new Olympic Village development. There is a painted bike lane with parking on the curb side (Figure 33). Unfortunately both the parking and travel lanes are narrow so people on bikes end up in the door zone of the parked cars. There is a large median along this route, suggesting there is sufficient room to provide more separation and better protection for people on bikes.



Figure 33

## Summary

In general, the Seaside Greenway along the seawall from Science World to Anderson Street and the Seaside Bypass from Ontario Street to Anderson Street are better cycling routes than other areas of the city. The high volume of pedestrians and people on bikes, the confusion over where to walk and where to ride, the narrowness of the path at places, and the complete lack of wayfinding signs lead to conflicts. The major issues identified include:

- Confusion and conflict between pedestrians and people on bikes due to multi-use paths without markings indicating where to walk and where to bike
- Multi-use paths are too narrow to adequately handle the combined volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Dangerous motor vehicle interactions at Stamp's Landing and the Spruce Harbour Marina
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- Dangerous flagstone surfacing in sections
- A lack of identification and promotion of the Seaside Bypass, which has the potential to remove faster riders from the seawall, reducing conflicts for all user
- Inadequate wayfinding signs, indicating points of interest, destinations, routes, how far they are, and how to get to them

The HUB Vancouver UBC Local Committee would be happy to talk further about these issues. We can be reached at [vancouver@bikehub.ca](mailto:vancouver@bikehub.ca)

Sincerely

Jeff Leigh  
Co-Chair, Vancouver UBC Committee  
HUB Cycling

Lisa Slakov  
Co-Chair, Vancouver UBC Committee  
HUB Cycling

Hub - Your Cycling Connection  
1 - 828 West 8th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 1E2  
T 604.558.2002  
F 604.648.8975