



## Metro Vancouver's Cycling Advocates

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Port Metro Vancouver  
City of Vancouver

### Dear Consultation Team:

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition - North Shore Committee VACC – North Shore Committee) is pleased to present our feedback to the proposed design for the re-alignment of the Low Level road and limit comments to those aspects of the design that would impact cyclists.

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The VACC - North Shore Committee recommends the organizations and governments involved in the North Shore Trade Plan take this as an opportunity to implement the **first ever, purpose-built, safe, well-lit, regularly-maintained, separated bike lane on the North Shore**. A flat route across the hilly North Shore that follows as closely as possible the lowest contour will go a long way to promoting active transportation as a serious way to go to work, school, and shops.
2. The current completed portions of the Pacific Spirit Trail remain undisturbed.
3. The new Low Level Road should incorporate design elements that reduce traffic speed.
4. If no alternative to the 8% grade can be found, that the bike lanes moving east to west on the hill be widened to accommodate passing.
5. Ensure the proposed underpass at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Cotton is a see-through, safe, well-lit and regularly maintained design.

### **Increase Trade *and* Commit to Healthy Communities**

The Low Level road project objectives include increasing truck access to rail and marine terminals to facilitate increased importing and exporting goods. In addition new train tracks with more capacity and increased marine transportation are planned. While contributing to economic growth, increases in all these forms of transportation will also contribute to increased air pollution, noise and truck traffic through our community.

As well as being committed to economic growth the provincial, federal and municipal governments are all advocates of reducing green house gas emissions and promoting **active transportation** as part of their long term plans for healthier communities.

The VACC - North Shore Committee recommends, the organizations and governments involved in the North Shore Trade Plan take this as an opportunity to implement the **first ever, purpose-built, flat, safe, well-lit, regularly maintained bike route on the North Shore**. A flat route

across the hilly North Shore that follows as closely as possible the lowest contour will go a long way to promoting active transportation as a serious way to go to work, school, and shops.

\$273 million taxpayer dollars will be spent on the six proposed improvements to the roadway to increase motor vehicle flow and truck access to port and rail facilities. Surely we can find the money to engineer a better way to accommodate cyclists on **a flat, safe, well-lit, regularly maintained, route across the North Shore.**

## **PLAN REVIEW RESULTS**

There are some positive elements to the design as proposed and we thank the design team for taking into consideration cyclists as serious roadway users.

### **Positive Elements**

We note in particular, several positive elements from a cycling perspective

- 1) 2 meter bike lanes on both sides of the new roadbed
- 2) Rolled curbs
- 3) The proposed new road will be well drained – even in winter storm season
- 4) New and improved lighting

### **Potential Improvements**

#### **Division from Traffic**

The current design calls for a wide 2 m at grade cycling lane. To improve safety, this design should incorporate physical barriers between cyclists and vehicular flow. Permanent barriers are preferred over painted lines. If this is not feasible, then a 200mm painted white line between cyclists and vehicles instead of a 150mm painted white line would be preferable.

#### **Wide See-through Underpass**

Many underpasses cause safety concerns for cyclists. Sometimes they are too narrow, many are very poorly lit, can include blind corners and attract “inhabitants” seeking shelter. We recommend the underpass be a wide, see-through design such as the one under the causeway in Stanley Park. It should easily accommodate cyclists and pedestrians and feel safe.

### **Elements of Concern**

- 1) Building a hill
- 2) Spirit Trail re-alignment
- 3) Potential increase in traveling speed of motorized traffic

#### **1) Building a Hill**

The project proposes to introduce a **hill on the only flat route** to and from the Iron Workers Memorial Bridge and across the eastern portion of the North Shore. If the new Low Level Road introduces a substantial hill it reduces the impact of the other benefits for cyclists. Currently, the Low Level Road is the only flat east-west connection in the area. On every other route (3rd Street, Keith Road or trails) cyclists must climb very steep hills.

Taking into account the disincentive of overall hill height which looks like an 8 meter maximum, another important question is “what are the proposed grades to get up to and down from that height as, cyclists travel east and west along the new route?”

**Grade East-to-West:** Though there are no drawings detailing the grade from Cotton Road up to the new Neptune overpass (marked D on the map) at a stakeholder consultation meeting (Feb 9, 2011), project manager Chris Hall indicated the grade would be up to 8% in order to get the road up to full height for a new rail overpass—a stiff climb for any cyclist.

**Grade West-to-East:** It would appear that the grade from Esplanade through to Moody (roughly the top of the hill) will be gentler than the hill from the new proposed Neptune overpass on the east side due to the longer run up.

Because the Low Level road is currently the only flat route across the North Shore, the VACC – North Shore Committee believes the introduction of a grade of 8% may act as a deterrent to aspiring cyclists. Every barrier created to making cycling easier and safer reduces the percentage of people who will make cycling a daily form of transportation.

We suggest that if no alternative to the 8% grade can be found, that the bike lanes moving east to west on the hill be widened to accommodate passing.

## **2) Spirit Trail Re-alignment**

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition -- North Shore Committee does not agree with the proposed alignment for the western portion of the Spirit Trail. The part of the trail up for realignment is the most attractive of the whole section. It runs through the wooded area away from traffic, and provides beautiful views of Burrard Inlet and downtown Vancouver. The proposed relocation along the new Low Level Road is far less attractive (no trees, noise and exhaust from traffic). Moving the other part of the trail to Alder Street is also less attractive than the current alignment in the green space.

The consultation guide cites as benefits views of the port and south shore. However these views already exist from the current trail. Another cited benefit is the connection to the south side of Esplanade. A connection can be provided quite easily through other means than relocating the trail, such as a signalized crossing on Esplanade.

The drawings of the Spirit Trail along Low Level Road in the consultation guide are uninspiring. It looks like a sidewalk next to an arterial road. We suggest a more attractive design and landscaping that includes:

- Shrubs between the sidewalk and the road
- Wooden railings towards the port
- Wider areas for viewpoints

- Artwork and interpretative signs that explain the history of Moodyville and the port, the First Nations history at this site and the natural history of the escarpment and of the beach underneath the present-day port.

### **3) Potential increase in traveling speed of motorized traffic**

The realignment and widening of the road along with improved lighting will lead to an increase in driving speed by car and truck drivers. The higher the speed, the more separation and distance cyclists require from motorized traffic. The new Low Level road should incorporate design elements that reduce traffic speed.

We thank Port Metro and the City of Vancouver for hosting the stakeholder and public meetings and for this opportunity to provide feedback to the Gateway plan improvements to the Low Level Road in the North Shore Trade Area.

We welcome any correspondence with regard to this submission and offer our ongoing assistance in project reviews as detailed designs become available.

Best Regards,



Heather Drugge, Member,  
Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition -- North Shore Committee

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*funding partners* Government of Canada, the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Port Metro Vancouver, TransLink, the District of North Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver, Kinder Morgan Canada Terminals L.P., Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railway.

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