



Date: October 9, 2012

TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Stanley Park Cycling Plan Implementation Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

- A. That the Stanley Park Cycling Plan be adopted to provide direction for further cycling improvements;*
- B. That the Implementation Strategy for the Stanley Park Cycling Plan, generally as laid out in Appendix A to this report, be approved; and*
- C. That staff report back on projects requiring further study or further capital funding.*

POLICY

- Greenest City Action Plan (2009)
- Climate Change Action Plan (2005)
- City of Vancouver Bicycle Plan (1999)
- City of Vancouver Transportation Plan (1997), and Downtown Transportation Plan (2002)
- Stanley Park Transportation & Recreation Report (1996)
- City of Vancouver Greenways Plan (1995)
- Park Board Strategic Plan – Improved Inclusivity and Accessibility and Enhanced Participation and Active Living (2012)

PURPOSE

This report seeks approval of an Implementation Strategy for the Stanley Park Cycling Plan. The Stanley Park Cycling Plan, prepared by a consultant team, is a comprehensive document containing over sixty recommendations ranging from simple quick fixes to more complex capital-intensive projects, addressing a wide array of concerns around cycling in the park. The Cycling Plan can be accessed at www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/stanley-park-cycling-plan.aspx.

Staff evaluated the Cycling Plan's recommendations to determine how to best implement them in a fiscally responsible way. The Implementation Strategy is intended to be a living document to realize the intentions of the Stanley Park Cycling Plan noting that

staff will report back to the Board as appropriate on projects requiring further study or extraordinary capital funding.

BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Park Board has greatly improved the facilities for cycling in Stanley Park since 1996, focusing on the Seawall (Seaside) loop around the perimeter of the park which is the biggest draw for recreational cyclists. The popularity of Stanley Park has resulted in issues on the Seawall, at entrances to the park, and environmental impacts on trails within the interior of the park. Consequently, it was recognized that a comprehensive cycling plan was required to identify and integrate further cycling improvements which encourage greater use of bicycles to access the park while enhancing the experience of the park for all users.

A consultant team offering joint services of landscape architecture, engineering and planning (Lees + Associates, ISL Engineering and Land Services and Drdul Community Transportation Planning) was engaged in August 2011 to review existing infrastructure, solicit stakeholder input, and collect input from the general public to form recommendations for improvements to the Stanley Park cycling system.

A primary tenet in the development of the Stanley Park Cycling Plan was to actively involve members of the public, affected Park Board and City Engineering staff (including the Park Rangers), stakeholder groups (including the Stanley Park Ecology Society, the Brockton Cricket Pavilion, Tourism Vancouver, Vancouver Aquarium and The Fish House in Stanley Park) and advisory committees (City of Vancouver Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition). A project staff technical team was established and some stakeholders, such as the Park Rangers and Stanley Park Ecology Society, were consulted during key phases of the study. Engagement included:

- Six meetings with the staff technical team;
- On-site public open house held in the park on September 10, 2011 (two locations, 118 completed questionnaires);
- On-line questionnaire available from September 1 to September 30, 2011 (434 responses);
- Three rideabouts (with the staff technical team, Park Rangers and the Stanley Park Ecology Society);
- Stakeholder input and review of the February 8, 2012 draft plan which was available on-line on the Park Board website from February 7 to February 28, 2012; and
- Letter and email feedback.

The draft plan was revised based on the extensive comments received and the consultants submitted a final plan in March 2012. A comprehensive summary of the consultation undertaken and comments received is included as Appendix C to the final plan in a separate document.

On May 28, 2012, Park Board directed staff to work with Engineering Services to develop strategies to minimize conflict in high volume pedestrian and cyclist interface areas along the Seawall and that the City of Vancouver's Active Transportation Policy Council be given the opportunity for feedback on staff's recommendations prior to the Board's consideration. The recommendations for the Stanley Park Cycling Plan were presented to the then Vancouver Bicycle Advisory Committee and their comments are included in Appendix C: Consultation Summary (p.141) along with those of the then Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (p. 142 -143). The implementation strategy proposed in this report has been developed in cooperation with the Active Transportation Bicycle Program Coordinator to ensure proposed implementation strategies are consistent with the City's practices elsewhere and especially along the rest of the Seawall and other waterfront pathways in Vancouver.

DISCUSSION

The Stanley Park Cycling Plan sets out a vision for the future that ensures improvements are based on a balance between functional recreational cycling access, safety, ecological integrity and overall park user experience. Proposed solutions are intended to enhance the cycling experience while respecting the identity and "sense of place" that is so valued in Stanley Park

The Stanley Park Cycling Plan is comprised of a wide range of recommendations to be implemented over time as capital budgets permit. Some are fairly easy to implement while others will require significant funding, further study and/or approval from other agencies. A few recommendations are contingent on the implementation of others.

General Themes for Recommendations

The Stanley Park Cycling Plan contains both system-wide and site-specific recommendations grouped under six general themes:

1. Challenge of the one-way system

The one-way bike path around the Stanley Park Seawall is a commitment to cycle for at least 8.8 kilometres. To allow for shorter bike rides, a number of recommendations propose new shortcut routes, for example, creating a connection from the Seawall east of Beaver Creek to Beaver Lake Trail, designated for bikes, via Tunnel Trail.

2. Facility constraints

Facility constraints include insufficient bike parking at major attractions and pinch points at locations along the Seawall. As a result of the plan, furnishings at pinch points have been removed or relocated and a cost-effective proposal for providing parking for large numbers of bikes at Third Beach is being pursued.

3. Conflicts between users

The most common conflicts in Stanley Park are between pedestrians and cyclists. The plan contains many recommendations to reduce these conflicts, some of which have already been implemented. Examples are the installation of pedestrian zebra crossings along the Seawall bike path, a special treatment at Brockton Point using inexpensive stenciling, and adapting the lookout north of the totem poles to increase accessibility and to gently prevent direct pedestrian access onto the bike path.

4. Ecological concerns

Impacts of cycling on the ecology of Stanley Park are a major consideration for all proposals in the Implementation Strategy, and the Stanley Park Ecology Society will be involved in reviewing any plans to ensure ecological integrity can be maintained or enhanced.

5. Lack of connectivity

Connections into and within the park can be unclear, indirect or confusing, particularly to tourists unfamiliar with the park. Recommendations include some relatively simple solutions, such as an improved connection from the Causeway to North Lagoon Drive proposed for construction in early 2013 and the designation of Hanson Trail to provide more direct off-road access for commuters to the Causeway.

6. Ineffective signage/wayfinding

Wayfinding through the forest trails can be difficult for all park users while regulations and advisories affecting cyclists are often confusing. Staff have begun to introduce more directional signage, for example, the yellow arrow at the Hanson trailhead directing cyclists up to the Causeway, and will explore other options to increase wayfinding in the park.

Implementation Strategy for the Stanley Park Cycling Plan

The Implementation Strategy, included as Appendix A, was developed by staff to ensure the highest priority projects are implemented or designed on the basis of priority, impact, other benefits, and ease of or cost of implementation. It is intended to provide general direction in implementing the Stanley Park Cycling Plan recognizing that some recommendations can be achieved relatively quickly while others are intended for longer-term consideration.

The recommendations from the Stanley Park Cycling Plan are included in the Implementation Strategy in Appendix A under the following categories for priority or special consideration:

- **Early Implementation:** relatively low-cost recommendations from the consultants' plan or ideas suggested through the public consultation that have already been implemented to improve cycling in Stanley Park.
- **First Priority Implementation:** those recommendations considered high first priority currently underway or undergoing design, to be implemented in the next six months; many of these have additional benefits such as improving ecological functions or providing accessibility.
- **High Priority Recommendations Requiring Additional Funding:** recommendations identified as being high priority but likely requiring additional funding; these will undergo a design process in hopes of attracting other funding towards their implementation.
- **Signage and Other Directional Information/Wayfinding.**
- **Ecological Protection or Enhancement.**
- **Recommendations Requiring Traffic Studies:** projects that would require traffic and parking impact studies to fully evaluate all options and impacts on the park.
- **Recommendations Requiring Other Agency Approval (e.g. from the Ministry of Transportation in regards to the Causeway).**
- **New Sidewalks to Reduce Pedestrian/Cyclist Conflicts.**
- **Recommendations Requiring Sponsorship Partners.**
- **Recommendations to be Considered Across the City (not specifically for Stanley Park).**
- **Other Recommendations:** those that don't easily fit into other categories.

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the Stanley Park Cycling Plan be adopted to provide direction for further cycling improvements and that the Implementation Strategy, included as Appendix A, be approved to be used as a living document to realize the intentions of the Stanley Park Cycling Plan noting that staff will report back to the Board as appropriate on projects requiring further study or extraordinary capital funding.

Prepared by:
Planning & Operations
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
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AD/ad

Implementation Strategy for the Stanley Park Cycling Plan

The Stanley Park Cycling Plan Implementation Strategy was developed by staff to ensure projects are implemented or designed on the basis of priority, impact, other benefits and ease of or cost of implementation. It is intended to provide general direction in implementing the March 2012 Stanley Park Cycling Plan recognizing that some recommendations can be achieved relatively quickly while others are intended for longer-term consideration.

References to the recommendation numbers in the Stanley Park Cycling Plan are included in parentheses. The plan can be accessed at www.vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/stanley-park-cycling-plan.aspx.

The recommendations are organized below into eleven categories. The first three categories are considered the highest priorities for implementation. The first category comprises the relatively low-cost recommendations from the consultants' plan or ideas suggested through the public consultation have already been implemented to improve cycling in Stanley Park. The second category comprises high priority recommendations currently underway; many of these projects have additional benefits such as improving ecological functions or providing enhanced accessibility. The third category comprises recommendations identified as being high priority but likely requiring additional funding; these will undergo a design process in anticipation of attracting other funding towards their implementation. Other categories are those whose implementation may occur over a longer period of time or apply to a wide range of other recommendations.

A. Early Implementation

These recommendations from the consultants' plan or ideas suggested through the public consultation that have already been or are being implemented at low cost.

A.1. Designate Hanson Trail as a shared pathway (18e): This recommendation was suggested repeatedly and strongly supported through the public consultation process, in particular by the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (now HUB), to provide easier and more direct cycling access through Stanley Park to the northbound sidewalk of the Causeway due to the relatively constant grade of Hanson Trail. Most northbound commuter cyclists would likely be accessing the Lions Gate Bridge during the period when vehicular access to the Causeway is closed (weekday rush hours) and so is considered a safe approach. This route was included in the 2012 Stanley Park map and directional signage was installed at the Hanson trailhead at Pipeline Road.

A.2. Use consistent crossing treatments at crossing/conflict zones in the park (6a). To ensure crossing treatments are consistent with crossing types and materials/markings elsewhere in the city, sixteen new zebra crossings as well as for Watch for Bikes stencils have been installed around the Seawall, e.g. at the north terminus of Pipeline Road (15a),

to reduce conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians. A special treatment with a line demarcating the bike path with stencilling and zebra crossings was also installed at Brockton Point to reduce conflicts in this particularly challenging location.

A.3. Implement consistent treatments for wayfinding and connectivity interventions at Second Beach (6a and 14a). Wayfinding and connectivity are being improved for pedestrians and cyclists by retrofitting two crossings west of the Second Beach concession.

A.4. Implement a Gateway node at the east entrance to Stanley Park (12a). Improved accessible pedestrian and bicycle access to the east Causeway sidewalk just north of the North Lagoon Drive underpass is under construction.

A.5. Improve the Park Drive exit onto Georgia Street (8c). The cyclist crossing where Park Drive exits the park onto Georgia Street was painted green to increase safety and to be consistent with current city standards.

A.6. Create curb cuts (5a). Curb cuts were or soon will be installed in a number of locations where pedestrians and bikes cross roads or other pathways to facilitate bike movements and ensure accessibility (5a).

A.7. Remove site furniture at Seawall pinch points (4a). Site furniture located at pinch points on the Stanley Park Seawall has been removed or relocated.

A.8. Use advance warning signage at beginning and end of dismount areas (7a). A Resume Cycling sign was installed at Third Beach to clarify the extent of the dismount area.

B. First Priority Implementation

A number of recommendations identified as being high first priority are undergoing design and will be implemented in the next six months. Many have additional benefits, e.g. improving ecological functions or providing accessibility. These include:

B.1. Create a connection from the Seawall to Tunnel Trail and Beaver Lake Trail (1c). This connection, which will require designating a short length of Tunnel Trail for cycling, will provide cycling access across the centre of the park and improved access to the Causeway via Hanson Trail. It is the easiest and most cost effective way to provide a return loop across the park that will benefit pedestrians and provide a loop route for people in wheelchairs.

B.2. Use consistent treatments at crossing/conflict zones (6a). The lookout north of the totem poles is being reconfigured, with the addition of a new zebra crossing across the bike path, to improve cyclist and pedestrian safety in this busy tourist area as well as to provide accessibility to the totems and washrooms from the Seawall.

B.4. Reroute the bike/rollerblade path at Lost Lagoon stone bridge south of the planted island (6c). Further discussion of this recommendation led to the idea of decommissioning and revegetating one of the two walking trails leading north first as a more cost-effective way to alleviate the problem of cycling around Lost Lagoon while increasing ecological connectivity in the park. It is anticipated that this work will be conducted before the end of 2012.

B.5. Improve Rawlings Trail cycling access to Third Beach concession (2a). The proposed trail upgrade will improve pedestrian and bicycle access from the forest trails to Third Beach concession while increasing safety, enhancing the ecology by eliminating a redundant trail and hopefully reduce wrong way cycling on the Seawall.

B.6. Enlarge bike rack area at north end of Third Beach (3d). Further discussion of this recommendation led to a more effective, lower cost and less ecologically disturbing solution which is to install a galvanized railing or drape chain along the Seawall itself below the cap to provide lock up opportunities for extremely high volumes of bicycles during fine weather.

B.7. Implement wayfinding and signage interventions at Second Beach Node (14a). A connection for cyclists only from the westbound lane of Stanley Park Drive to Bridle Path trail head north of Second Beach concession will provide easy access into the forest trails.

C. High Priority Recommendations Requiring Additional Funding

A number of recommendations were identified as being high priority but requiring significant funding. The following projects will undergo a design process to allow for attracting other funding towards their implementation.

C.1. Construct a separate pedestrian sidewalk between Second Beach and English Bay (10a). This new pedestrian path, above the Seawall, will add clarity to wayfinding and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists in this heavily used area of the park.

C.2. Implement a Lumbermen's Arch return route for cyclists to exit the park without having to cycle all around the park (1a, 2c and 12a) in conjunction with a bypass around the children's spray park bypass (7c). This will provide a new major shared path that will provide a shorter more direct return route to the downtown while eliminating a congested dismount area and improving accessibility to the spray park from the Lumbermen's Arch area of the park.

C.3. Allow pedestrians to utilize tunnel at Ceperley underpass while providing other options to cyclists (9a). Creating a new cycle path from Second Beach to the bike path east of the creek feeding into Lost Lagoon will provide a more direct and less confusing return route to the Georgia Street entrance to the park and restore pedestrian use of the tunnel at Ceperley meadow (under Park Drive) as there is no other convenient or safe pedestrian option.

C.4. Create cycling access from Third Beach concession to Seawall (2b). Creating a shared pathway access from Third Beach concession to Seawall by switchback path at accessible grades will provide accessibility for a wide range of park users to washrooms and the concession and hopefully reduce wrong way riding on the Seawall.

D. Signage and Other Directional Information/Wayfinding

The Cycling Plan has two recommendations to implement signage programs. There are other related recommendations throughout the plan that should also be done as part of those programs.

D.1. Implement a warning and interdictory signage program (19c) and a wayfinding signage program (20a). A comprehensive signage plan for the park should be undertaken in consultation with Engineering to ensure consistency across the city and the region.

D.2. Install advance warning signage at Seawall pinch points (4a). Park Board and Engineering staff will collaborate on solutions that can be consistently applied around the rest of the waterfront pathways and across the city in similar circumstances.

D.3. Improve cyclist wayfinding to and from the totems (6d). This should encourage short cutting by providing a shorter loop for cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchairs.

D.4. Use a textured paving strip and advance warning signage at beginning and end of dismount areas (7a). Staff will investigate the use a textured paving strip and advance warning signage to indicate beginning and end of dismount areas in conjunction with Engineering to ensure consistency across the city.

D.5. Install signage directing pedestrians to the Seawall from English Bay (10b, contingent on 10a).

D.6. Implement a Gateway node at the east entrance to Stanley Park (12a). Improving wayfinding and connectivity at the Gateway node will help to create clear decision points for people to choose routes through the park.

D.7. Implement the Prospect Point access node (15a). A staging area and decision point with signage and other amenities should be built at the north end of Pipeline Road as a potential return route to downtown and to highlight the plaque commemorating this site where the park was first dedicated in 1888.

D.8. Install signage to and from Stanley Park on Alberni Street and Haro Street bike routes (17a).

E. Ecological Protection or Enhancement

E.1. Discourage cycling on non-designated trails (11a). This can be achieved through a number of ways, including improved signage, using natural barriers such as logs to deter cyclists and increased enforcement.

E.2. Upgrade surface of path around Beaver Lake to prevent gravel sloughing into lake (11b). This will require further study.

E.3. Create clear single path where multiple unsanctioned paths exist (11c). This is a goal for other trail recommendations in the Cycling Plan to reduce ecological fragmentation.

E.4. Remove redundant paving wherever possible (11d). Removing paving is also a goal for other trail recommendations in the Cycling Plan so that even with new trail construction there should be a net reduction in hard surfacing in the park.

F. Recommendations Requiring Traffic Studies

These projects would require traffic and parking impact studies to fully evaluate all options and impacts on the park.

F.1. Implement “Loop2” Pipeline return route (1b). Reconfiguring Pipeline Road to provide a return route from the Seawall back to the downtown (1b) would require the removal of parking and may impact pedestrian movements. Staff feel that the proposed Lumberman’s Arch return route is a higher priority but Pipeline Road should be considered if Lumberman’s Arch return route cannot be achieved. Pipeline Road north of the wooden bridge would not require any changes and could be decommissioned without the need for a traffic study to increase ecological connectivity and improve access to Hanson and Beaver Lake Trails.

F.2. Create two-way bike access on Park Lane and intersection upgrades (17b). Three options to create two-way bike access on Park Lane between Beach Avenue and Nelson Street with upgrades to the intersection of Beach Avenue and Park Drive are proposed to connect to the Comox/Helmken Greenway.

F.3. Create two-way bike access on North Lagoon Drive (14b). Two options for creating two-way bike access on North Lagoon Drive were proposed which would change traffic movements in the park and impact parking. Another option was to close one lane of North Lagoon Drive to provide a connection between the Causeway and Tatlow Walk (8b/13a). This would allow Tatlow Walk between North Lagoon Drive and Lovers Walk to be designated for cycling (18d).

F.4. Make Stanley Park Drive safer for training cyclists to reduce Seawall congestion and conflicts (6b). Changes to make Stanley Park Drive safer for training cyclists would require further consultation with Engineering and possibly a traffic impact study.

G. Recommendations Requiring Other Agency Approval

G.1. Widen the Seawall at pinch points and at the Prospect Point Lighthouse (4b and 7b). Widening the Seawall at pinch points into the foreshore would require federal environmental approvals.

G.2. Create “jug handle” crossings at the Causeway (8a). Creating “jug handle” crossings at the Causeway entrances and exits to the park to increase safety for cyclists would require changing the existing sidewalks.

G.3. Improve the Park Drive exit onto Georgia Street (8c). The proposal to install a speed table where Park Drive exits the park onto Georgia Street would require Engineering input on design and Translink approval.

G.4. Remove centre railing and overhead signs on Causeway Equestrian/Pedestrian overpass (16a). Removing the centre railing and overhead signs from Causeway overpass to reduce conflicts between users and to recognize that this is part of a route designated for cycling would require Provincial approval.

G.5. Create new or formalize pathways to Causeway sidewalks (8b/13a, 16b/18b, 16c/18c and 18a). Creating new or upgrading existing informal shared pathway connections to and from the Causeway to improve access into and out of the park will require Provincial approval.

H. New Sidewalks to Reduce Pedestrian/Cyclist Conflicts

The Cycling Plan contains a couple of recommendations for new pedestrian pathways that would reduce conflicts by improving pedestrian access (so pedestrians don't walk on the bike path) and by more clearly defining places for pedestrians to cross bike paths.

H.1. Create a new sidewalk along Stanley Park Drive at Second Beach (9b). A new sidewalk along Stanley Park Drive would facilitate pedestrian access into the park and to the pay station. Many people now parking along Park Drive walk down the slope onto the bike path.

H.2. Create new walking paths at Ceperley playground (9c). The proposed paths would recognize existing pedestrian movement patterns in the area and define a single crossing of the bike path to increase safety.

I. Recommendations Requiring Sponsorship Partners

A number of recommendations would likely be realized through sponsorship partners. These include:

I.1. Liaise with bike rental shops on cycling etiquette (19d).

I.2. Explore opportunities for cycling events and programming (19e).

I.3. Consider installing bike repair stations in the park (19f).

I.4. Create and distribute a cycling map for Stanley Park (20a).

J. Recommendations to be Considered across the City

Some recommendations in particular around special events should be considered across the city, not just for Stanley Park. These include:

J.1. Create a bike valet policy for special events (3b).

J.2. Use temporary bike racks during special events (3c).

K. Other Recommendations

K.1. Close one lane of Park Drive for returning cyclists following special events (2d). Event organizers for Voices in the Park on September 15, 2012 tested exiting for cyclists after the event by a counter flow lane. It appeared to have worked well so it will be considered again for the next large event in the park.

K.2. Monitor bike usage on existing racks on an on-going basis and add or relocate racks as necessary to meet demand (3a). Monitoring would have to be done by Park Rangers and operations staff.

K.3. Use consistent treatments at crossing/conflict zones (6a). Part of this proposal was to move the bike path south of the totems towards the road to create a gathering place for tourists. A zebra crossing was recently installed on the bike path so staff suggest that the situation be monitored to assess if the zebra crossing has alleviated the problem of tourist congestion in this area before moving the path.

K.4. Increase enforcement, especially during peak times (19a) and promote park stewardship (19b). Both proposals would require reallocating Park Rangers during peak times or increasing enforcement resources or developing ways for volunteer groups or individuals to work with Park Rangers to promote more positive behaviours.

K.5. Undertake a lighting study for Stanley Park (20b). Lighting of the Seawall in Stanley Park has been considered in the past but not endorsed so staff recommend that it not be considered at this time.