

BURNABY BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: BC PARKWAY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council support the conclusions of the report from the Bicycle Advisory Sub-Committee.
2. **THAT** a copy of the attached report be forwarded to Council for approval with the recommendations that the conclusions be supported and that the report be forwarded to TransLink and the six agencies, Committees and/or associations noted within this report.

REPORT

The Burnaby Bicycle Advisory Committee, at its meeting held on 2000 January 27, received and adopted the attached report providing the Committee with a copy of the report prepared by the BC Parkway Improvement Committee regarding improvements to the BC Parkway.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor N. Harris,  
Chair

Mayor D. Drummond,  
Vice Chair

<p>:COPY - CITY MANAGER - DIRECTOR ENGINEERING - DIR. PLNG. &amp; BLDG. - DIR. PARKS, REC. &amp; CULT. SERV.</p>
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TO: **BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2000 January 19

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: **BC PARKWAY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE - DRAFT REPORT**

PURPOSE: To provide the Committee with a copy of the draft report prepared by the BC Parkway Improvement Committee regarding improvements to the BC Parkway.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** Bicycle Advisory Committee support the conclusions of the **attached** report from the Bicycle Advisory Sub-Committee.
2. **THAT** a copy of the **attached** report be forwarded to Council for approval with the recommendations that the conclusions be supported and that the report be forwarded to TransLink and the six agencies, committees and/or associations noted within this report.

**R E P O R T**

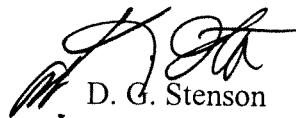
At the 1999 March 30 regular meeting of the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC), it was recommended that two members of the BAC be nominated to attend future meetings of the BC Parkway Improvement Committee (BCPIC) in a sub-committee capacity. This recommendation was adopted by the BAC and subsequently approved by Council. The BCPIC's general goal is to improve the Parkway mostly in terms of safety, navigation and use-ability, and members include municipal and agency representatives as well as Parkway user stakeholder groups.

Since April 1999, the BCPIC has collected considerable information regarding the current status of the Parkway between the New Westminister Quay and Vancouver's Science World and has produced the attached draft report: "The British Columbia Parkway - A Multi-use Non Motorized Transportation Facility For The GVRD". The draft report conclusions are that interim improvements could be implemented quickly at a moderate cost to address known deficiencies, while long range improvements would involve greater capital outlays and inter-agency cooperation but create a facility with the potential to significantly increase the amount of walking, cycling, and other non-motorized transportation in the GVRD.

Bicycle Advisory Committee  
BC Parkway Improvement Committee - Draft Report  
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It is the recommendation of the BCPIC to forward the draft report to TransLink for inclusion in TransLink's developing Municipal Bicycle Plan and that a copy be sent to each of the following agencies, committees and/or associations: BC Hydro, GVRD Parks, Cities of New Westminster and Vancouver Bicycle Advisory Committees, Canadian Paraplegic Association of BC, and the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition. In order to do so, the BAC and Council must support the conclusions contained within the report as the BCPIC is considered to be a sub-committee of the BAC.

Please note that the report appendix "Photo Inventory of Existing BC Parkway Issues" has not been included with the attached report for reasons of size. The appendix can be viewed in the Planning Department. Please contact Martin Pardoe (294-7216) to arrange a viewing time.



D. G. Stenson  
Director Planning and Building

MP:lf  
Attachment  
a:\BCPIC Report.wpd

cc: City Clerk  
Director Engineering  
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

**The British Columbia Parkway  
A Multi-use Non Motorized Transportation Facility For The GVRD**

**BC Parkway Improvement Committee  
2000 January 19**

# The British Columbia Parkway

## A Multi-use Non Motorized Transportation Facility For The GVRD

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The BC Parkway was constructed as part of original SkyTrain development in 1985-1986 and is generally considered to be made up of two trail systems parallel to the current SkyTrain alignment. The John Molson Trail was originally intended for walking and jogging, while the 7-11 Trail was originally intended primarily for bicycles. Over the years, issues have arisen regarding certain safety aspects, maintenance, and design issues of the Parkway.

The BC Parkway Improvement Committee (BCPIC) was formed in 1995 to address the issues of safety, maintenance and design problems in order to create a safe, direct and effective multi-user transportation facility building on the usable parts of the original Parkway concept. These early efforts led to a number of improvements, particularly in the Vancouver segment of the Parkway.

In early 1999, the Vancouver and Burnaby Bicycle Advisory Committees (BAC), in conjunction with the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC), reinitiated the BC Parkway Improvement Committee with participation of staff and citizen volunteers from Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster. The primary focus of the Committee has been to work with TransLink in developing the Parkway as the natural backbone of a regional cycling network consistent with the GVRD's Livable Region Strategic Plan.

## 2.0 MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a safe, convenient, direct and accessible multi-user<sup>1</sup> route along the BC Parkway alignment, supportive of a wide variety of non-motorized trip types with consistent, high quality design standards that reflects the role of the Parkway as the backbone of the existing and future regional Greenways and Bikeways networks.

## 3.0 BACKGROUND

As mentioned earlier, the BC Parkway was originally designed for segregated pedestrian and bicycle use and identified each trail accordingly, i.e., gravel surface for the pedestrian facility and paved asphalt surface for the bicycle facility. Since implementation, the gravel trail has proven to be less popular with pedestrians to the point of being almost completely overgrown in some areas. This has resulted in the paved trail becoming a heavily used mixed-use facility that is generally narrower than the Transportation Association of Canada's (TAC) desirable standard width of 4.0 metres. In addition, maintenance budgets for the Parkway have been significantly reduced, which has exacerbated use and safety issues.

The right-of-way used by the BC Parkway presents a number of complex ownership, jurisdiction and utility issues. As a result, known deficiencies in the Parkway have persisted and maintenance standards have suffered.

The BC Parkway's popularity is expected to increase as transit-oriented neighbourhoods surrounding SkyTrain stations redevelop, as recreational and commuter cycling and in-line skating gains popularity<sup>2</sup>, and as the GVRD Parks Department implements the Regional Greenway Plan for the Burrard Peninsula, Richmond and the Northeast Sector. Data from the 1996 Census, which included a question on travel mode in the section on the journey to work, indicate that over 6% of commuters are now cycling to work in the more dense and

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<sup>1</sup> Multi-use includes pedestrians, bicycles, in-line skaters, wheelchairs, scooters and small pets

<sup>2</sup> "Transit, road costs forecast to soar", The Vancouver Sun, Page A1, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1999.

central GVRD neighbourhoods, such as Vancouver's Kitsilano and Mount Pleasant. Given that the agencies responsible for maintenance of the BC Parkway do not have the resources to enforce segregated trail use or to make improvements to accommodate current user demand, there is a growing potential for user conflicts and liability issues in some parts of the Parkway. There is little historical accident data available regarding conflicts between Parkway users or with traffic where the Parkway utilizes streets accessible to motorized vehicles. Nevertheless, anecdotal information from users, staff observation, and input from Bicycle Advisory Committees indicates that there are safety concerns for all users in some areas and that the facility does not meet one of its original goals of providing a safe, pleasant experience for pedestrians and cyclists. These conflicts can be expected to increase with additional use, and anticipated intensification in surrounding land uses.

While there has been ongoing maintenance of the facility, a number of inherent deficiencies in the original design have been exacerbated by increased use and a lack of major repairs and capital investments since the Parkway was originally constructed. The BCPIC formed in an attempt to address these concerns.

#### **4.0 POLICY REPORT AND REGIONAL BENEFITS**

One of the four policy levers of the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP), which TransLink has a legislated responsibility to support, is to increase transportation choice. Unfortunately, with the ongoing domination of the automobile and the dedication of most regional financial resources to transit and the Major Road Network, few resources have been allocated to the higher priority non-motorized transportation choices since the adoption of the LRSP. An improved BC Parkway would be a major initial step towards addressing this deficiency.

Two specific LRSP policies strongly supported by the regional bicycle network include:

- Partnering with member municipalities and agencies of the provincial and federal governments to plan and deliver a transportation system that supports the protection of the Green Zone, the development of complete communities and the realization of a compact metropolitan region.
- Enhancing and/or retrofitting local streets and infrastructure to favour transit, bicycle and pedestrian uses.

The secondary benefits to the region of a major alternative transportation corridor are numerous and include:

1. Reduced automobile traffic, congestion and air pollution;
2. Promotion of compact, walkable and cyclable communities within the GVRD's Growth Concentration Area (GCA);
3. Non-motorized access to employment centres, goods and services;
4. Enhancement of opportunities for "Safe Routes to School" (walking and cycling) to avoid indoctrination of children to automobile-oriented lifestyles;
5. Reduced need for expensive road and transit systems;
6. Low-cost, environmentally friendly transportation for GVRD residents;
7. To have intermodal facilities (i.e. Bike lockers/racks) at each station to increase the SkyTrain catchment area;
8. Non-motorized access to the regional Greenways network;
9. Improved recreation facilities within the urban core;
10. Creation of safe areas to acquire and practice bicycle skills.

## 5.0 CURRENT ISSUES

Although not originally designed as a shared use, the BC Parkway has become one. It starts in New Westminster at the Quay and connects to Science World in Vancouver via Burnaby. Recognizing that the BC Parkway is the backbone of the regional network of existing and future Greenways and Bikeways, and is heavily used where appropriate design guidelines have been applied, the Parkway needs immediate attention to address safety concerns. To increase the usefulness and safety of pathway users across the three municipalities, the following broad design categories need to be addressed:

- Route signs, warning signs, pavement markings and bollards need to be reviewed with a view towards completeness and consistency and replaced or upgraded as necessary;
- Curb cuts need to be installed at number of strategic locations, particularly where the Parkway intersects streets at crosswalks;
- Crosswalks need to be reviewed for sight lines, markings, signage and width and crossings should be as short and as well marked as is possible;
- General maintenance of the pathway is needed to cut back overgrown vegetation and to correct inconsistent pavement surfaces.



A capital funding formula is required which reflects the regional role of the facility and does not depend on the budgetary concerns of individual municipalities. For example, TransLink funds can be applied to improved access for pedestrians, persons with disabilities, and cyclists to access the SkyTrain and various transit exchanges. Individual municipalities would continue to work directly with TransLink to ensure that the design work reflects the needs of the neighbourhoods through which the BC Parkway passes.

There is also an issue of maintenance along the route. Current maintenance practices address basic vegetation needs and the occasional pavement patching as required. From what the BC Parkway Improvement Committee has found, maintenance is currently being funded from the BC Rapid Transit Company's Wayside Maintenance budget. A mechanism needs to be identified for dedicating this budget to the Parkway and increasing the amount to ensure necessary design improvements are maintained.

## 6.0 CONCEPT

Figure 1 below shows the general alignment of the BC Parkway, the major regional town centres that it links, the major connections to other regional centres and the catchment area (shaded) within a 15 minute cycle at 20 km/h. It becomes clear that the alignment, although currently substandard and discontinuous at a number of locations, is ideally situated to act as the backbone of a comprehensive regional bicycle network.

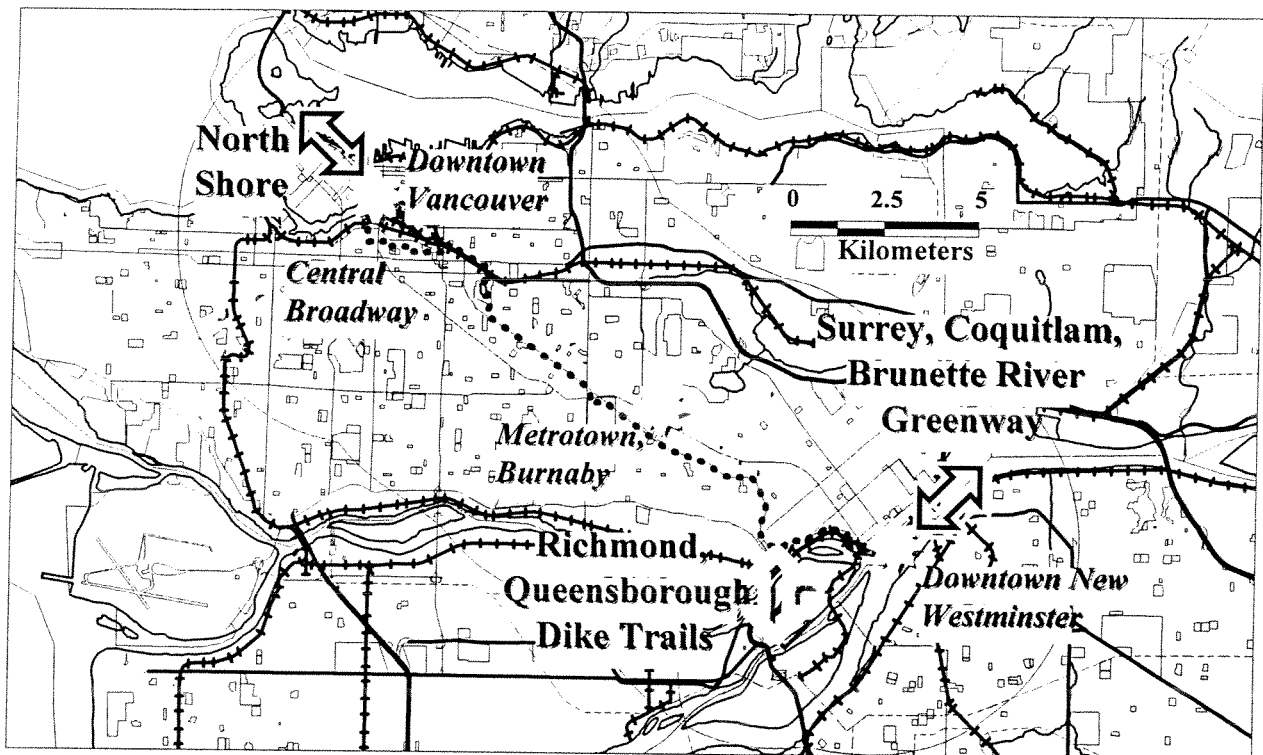


Figure 1: BC Parkway, Major Regional Town Centres, Catchment Area, and Connections

The basic concept proposal is to develop, over a five year time period, this central transportation corridor for non-motorized modes to the same levels of service currently enjoyed by motorized modes. The Committee recommends a two stage approach to the development of the Parkway as a comprehensive alternative transportation corridor:

- **Interim Improvements.** These improvements address well-known and easily rectifiable problems with the existing Parkway and could be capable of being implemented within the current fiscal year. Many of these improvements are documented in Appendix 1. For a relatively modest sum of the regional transportation budget, the GVRD would obtain a reliable 22 kilometre, multi-use route for non-motorized users.
- **Five-Year Strategy.** These improvements would address more significant route alignment, connectivity and infrastructure issues. As these improvements would be more capital intensive and potentially involve negotiations with other levels of government and private stakeholders, it is expected that a five year time-frame would be reasonable.

Each of these stages is described in more detail below.

## 6.1 Interim Improvements

### 6.1.1 Vision

The short-term vision for the Parkway is to upgrade the existing facility to create a viable alternative to motorized modes parallel to the existing SkyTrain alignment. These interim improvements would:

- Eliminate known safety problems;
- Improve continuity and connectivity;
- Standardize signage and design standards;
- Improve wheelchair, scooter, and bicycle access.

These basic improvements would encourage more people to use the Parkway for commuting, transportation, and recreational purposes. Through more effective and comprehensive signage both commuter and recreational users will find the parkway more useable for the entire length of the route.

### 6.1.2 Design Recommendations

The attached Appendix 1 provides a catalogue of known problems along the existing Parkway that impact safety and comfort for users as well as reduce its potential to act as a viable alternative to motorized modes. Many of these problems require only relatively simple and cost effective solutions. For example, a sight-line problem at a curve or intersection would be rectified by trimming excess vegetation and painting a centreline. For a road crossing problem, the recommended solution would involve installing additional warning signage for both motorists and Parkway users, a painted crosswalk, and adding curb cuts.

### 6.1.3 Implementation

The jurisdictional model for the interim improvements phase would be a partnership between TransLink and the municipalities of Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminister. The principal funding source would be provided by TransLink, potentially supplemented by grants from the provincial Cycling Network Program (CNP).

To ensure safety along the BC Parkway across New Westminister, Burnaby and Vancouver, route signs, warning signs, pavement markings, bollards, curb cuts, crosswalks need to be reviewed, replaced, upgraded, or strategically installed. In addition, the pathway needs general maintenance to cut back overgrown vegetation and to correct inconsistent pavement surfaces. An opportunity exists for TransLink to fund this work using the \$400,000 approved in the 1999 Program Plan. This work should be implemented by municipal crews using consistent standards identified in the Major Road Network model.

### 6.1.4 Cost Estimates

Costs have been roughly estimated based upon the estimated quantity of each design elements (e.g. number of signs, linear metres of centreline, curb cuts, etc) required to bring the facility up to the interim improvement standards outlined in this report. This total has then been broken down into representative municipal segments in order to provide a sense of the scope of improvements required within each municipality.

Item	Total	New Westminister	Burnaby	Vancouver
Crosswalks	\$800	\$300	\$200	\$300
Centrelines	12,000	3000	6000	3000
Curb Cuts	12,000	4000	3200	4800
Landscape Trimming	15,000	5000	5000	5000
Bollards	18,000	7000	8000	3000
New Paving (m2)	470,000	50,000	45,000	375,000
Repaving	35,000	15,000	10,000	10,000
Signs (new)	10,500	3500	5000	2000
Stencils	4,000	1000	1500	1500
New Crossing Signals	400,000	200,000	200,000	0
Pedestrian Actuated Signal Component only	60,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,037,300</b>	<b>\$308,800</b>	<b>\$303,900</b>	<b>\$424,600</b>

Table 1: Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate

## 6.2 Five Year Strategy

### 6.2.1 Vision

The long-term vision for the BC Parkway is to create a continuous, direct, safe and attractive alternative transportation route joining Downtown Vancouver to Downtown New Westminster via Burnaby's Metrotown district that promotes a shift to non-motorized modes for a wide range of trip types, including:

- Commuting, including short, medium, and long-range commutes;
- Utility, including shopping and services;
- School, including primary, secondary and post-secondary institutions;
- Pleasure, including recreation, physical fitness and tourism.

These trips would be made to and from the three major regional town centres as well as the high density, mixed-use nodes that are currently being developed around the majority of SkyTrain stations in the Burrard Peninsula. Eventually, as other regional Greenways are developed, the Parkway would provide direct, safe and attractive links between trip origins and destinations in the Burrard Peninsula, the Northeast Sector, Richmond and North Surrey.

In terms of engineering standards for commuting, utility and school trips, the goal would be to establish service levels equivalent to those of Class 1 Provincial highways or TransLink's Major Road Network. In other words, the Parkway would be designed to safely accommodate the speed of an average cyclist in free-flow traffic conditions throughout the year, to minimize travel distances and to provide prioritized crossing of arterial streets.

### 6.2.2 Recommendations

TransLink, as part of the Regional Bicycle Network Plan and in consultation with the Municipal Bicycle Committee and the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, should establish clear standards and guidelines for this "Class 1" facility. These may be based on existing standards but should reflect the concept for the Parkway and municipal, regional and provincial policies that promote travel by non-motorized modes.

The most effective means of meeting the five year goal would be to acquire the disused railway track and convert the railbed into an adequate non-motorized transportation facility. Such a facility would be similar to the successful Galloping Goose Trail in the Capital Regional District of Victoria and surrounding communities.

### 6.2.3 Implementation

It is recommended that, given the regional importance and focus of this transportation and recreation facility, a regional jurisdictional model be established and coordinated by TransLink in partnership with:

- GVRD departments, notably GVRD Parks;
- Municipalities, initially Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster, but expanding as the Parkway links to other regional and municipal bike routes and Greenways;
- Transportation and utility providers along the corridor, including BC Hydro and the BC Southern railway;
- Private stakeholders, including major employers and institutions along the route.

It is expected that TransLink would be the lead agency in the partnership, with significant support from GVRD Parks. A potential division of responsibilities is:

#### **TransLink:**

- Negotiate leases, contracts;
- Coordinate engineering work done by municipalities, contractors.

#### **GVRD Parks:**

- Landscape operations and maintenance of recreation facilities;
- Park kiosks and directional signage.

### 6.2.4 Cost Estimates

Due to the uncertainty in the final alignment of the Parkway and the completion of design standards, It is not possible at this time to provide detailed cost estimates for the full implementation of the Five-Year Strategy. Unknown factors include the acquisition of Rights of Way (ROWs), the number of major infrastructure elements needed, such as the possible need for the modification of street alignments. It is expected that some of the costs would be assumed by other agencies, such as BC Hydro, GVRD Parks and the private sector. Some of the costs, such as utility ROW maintenance, could be considered as existing ongoing costs. Assuming that all needed ROWs could be acquired at minimal or no cost, a basic capital outlay of approximately \$1-2 million could be anticipated.

These costs would be distributed over the ensuing five year period.

### **6.2.5 Possible Revenue Generation**

It may be possible for TransLink to obtain revenues generated by leasing the BC Parkway corridor to various utility companies involved in supplying commodities such as natural gas, electricity, and telephone services. These companies would obtain the rights to place pipelines and conduits underground. In return, TransLink would receive an annual fee, which would go toward upgrading and maintaining multi-use network on the surface. The City of Seattle currently has a similar program with the Burke-Gilman trail where a long distance telephone company has a fibre-optics cable underneath the trail's surface.

## **7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This report has described the history and current condition of the BC Parkway, the role and importance of the Parkway in addressing regional transportation objectives and proposals for interim and five-year workplans for Parkway improvements. It was concluded that interim improvements could be implemented quickly at a moderate cost to address known deficiencies, while long-range improvements would involve greater capital outlays and interagency cooperation but create a facility with the potential to significantly increase the amount of walking, cycling, and other non-motorized transportation in the GVRD.

The Committee looks forward to moving quickly forward with TransLink and other municipal, regional, provincial and federal agencies over the coming years to promote our common goal of supporting sustainable transportation in the GVRD.

To view Appendix 1 "Photo Inventory of Existing BC Parkway Issues" please contact Martin Pardoe (294-7216) of the Planning Department to arrange a viewing time.

