

November 3, 2016

Traffic Safety Committee
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby, B.C.,
V5G 1M2

Dear Committee Members,

I am once again writing to bring to your attention the dangerous road conditions in my neighbourhood for cyclist and pedestrians.

My issues are:

1. The new three way stop sign on Underhill and Eastlake.
2. Enterprise Street as it meets Underhill and the difficulty I encounter each evening when I come home.
3. The lack of signage under the Skytrain station at the Lake City Station for cyclists.
4. No proper cycling infrastructure in this area and,
5. Poor pedestrian walkways in and around Underhill.

I would like to see:

1. Pedestrian controlled crossing at three way stop at Underhill and Eastlake.
2. Pedestrian crossing with lights at Lake City Way and Enterprise.
3. Vehicles not permitted to park within about 10 meters on the west side of Underhill and Enterprise to allow for greater visibility when turning left, or right at this corner.
4. Improved cycling signage on poles and markings on the street, in and around the Lake City Skytrain, along Enterprise, and on both sides of Underhill.
5. Improved cycling infrastructure in and around the Lake City Skytrain, along Enterprise, and on both sides of Underhill.

Let me first bring to your attention to my most recent issue. There are two maps enclosed with this letter. Please note neither map is to scale.

Map A. I live on Forest Grove Drive and take my bike to work each day at BCIT. From my home, I take a back trail down the mountain and exit at Underhill at Broadway (east side).. I have been told by the Engineering Department there is a camera that will trip the light signal if I were to ride down (south) on Underhill (noted as Big Steep Hill on Map A) and wait at Broadway. But Underhill is too steep to ride down in the morning with the rain and the leaves in the winter. The rest of the time, it would be mostly foolhardy to attempt to wait in the middle of the street being sandwiched by cars all around me to wait for the traffic light to change.

So, I ride down and wait on the east side of Underhill. Typically I cross anywhere on Underhill near the empty parking lot near Sears and when there is a break in traffic. I do this rather than riding down to the new three way stop on the corner of Underhill and Eastlake. You may ask why I do not ride down to the new three way crossing on Underhill and Eastlake in the morning. Simply put: it is not safe. I have more time and space to watch the traffic on Underhill (east side) and cross safely than to tempt fate at the new three way stop because motor vehicles barely stop and rarely signal. My bike is well lit at both the front and rear as well as with lights on my helmet. I also wear very visible clothing with lots of reflective pieces when I ride. But motor vehicles are in such a hurry in the morning (more on the evening in a minute) and stopping for me is almost an annoyed afterthought.

I get myself across Underhill and then ride south on Underhill. Within a hundred yards, I come to the three way stop, where I actually stop. Then I proceed to Enterprise Street where I turn right onto Lake City Way and then right again onto Lougheed Highway. I also note there is no signage indicating all these roads are shared car and bike spaces. Nor are there markings on the road. A number of cyclists take the road each day, so I cannot be alone in my concerns here.

Map B.

Coming home each evening can be quite a hair raising exercise. It appears to be getting worse with the three way stop sign and drivers trying to avoid Lougheed Highway when going east. I am not sure why this is.

I ride east on Lougheed, I cross at Lake City Way. As I ride through this intersection I enter the pedestrian area for the Lake City Skytrain which is often full of pedestrians and quite challenging to get through. Where is the cyclist to go?

- Option 1. I ride through the cross walk at Lougheed and Lake City Way (going north) I could make a sharp right and travel across another cross walk on the north side of the street. This would lead me to some new asphalt sidewalk/pathway/trail on the north side of Lougheed. I don't think its a bike trail. But taking this route, will ultimately end badly because this trail/pathway simply ends just before Enterprise St., and I would still have a problem crossing Enterprise to go north on Underhill.

Or, I ride along Lougheed to Lake City Way.

- Option 2 . I cross at Lake City Way and ride (north) and along the west sidewalk. Not a good option when there are lots of pedestrians but what am I to do? I ride past the let down for the parking lot to the Skytrain and turn right onto Enterprise by Propane Depot. Again a difficult corner as there is no official cross walk, or lights or anything. There are many pedestrians walking here each and every day (I do note an asphalt sidewalk has finally been installed on the south side of Enterprise St.). I travel along Enterprise until I get to the corner of Enterprise and Underhill. See #1 on Map B. At this intersection I am facing east.

At times, motor vehicles on the west side of Underhill and Enterprise park very close to the corners resulting in an almost zero ability to actually see the traffic coming down and moving up Underhill unless I position myself well past the stop sign line. When it is dark, its pretty hair raising as those cars blazing up and down Underhill. Often as I wait, I am sandwiched beside a car wanting to turn right (south) down to Lougheed and a motor vehicle directly behind me. I always hope vehicles coming down (south) on Underhill and turning right onto Enterprise will see me with my lights blinking away.

Once I am able to turn left and get onto Underhill (going north) I must now make my way up to the Underhill/Eastlake three way stop. At this point I am completely at the mercy of cars going north on Underhill and vehicles parked along Underhill (east side). I am literally in the middle of all these vehicles with very few choices.

Tuesday November 1, was very exciting. At the three way stop, Underhill has the capacity to allow cars to continue north after the stop sign or turn right. But there is very little capacity on the road for me and my bike to move through the three way stop. I am between the vehicles going up (north) and turning right (east). As a result I was going to be squeezed into the space close to the curb. About three to four feet. Vehicles are to the left of me and vehicles are behind me. Vehicles aren't looking for a cyclist.

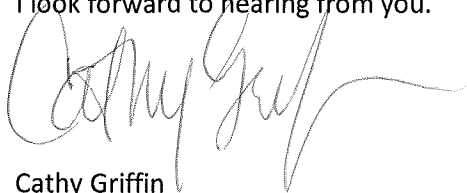
So it was time for a quick decision as to whether I get going to get through this intersection safely. The only way I felt was the safest, was to veer off at the let down to the oil company onto the grassy area (see map B) on the corner of Underhill/Eastlake.

I had ride across this grassy area for approximately 30 meters. The ground is soft and uncertain. I must re-enter the intersection and cross the street. As I exit the grassy area, I come to the the small paved/asphalt area on the southwest corner that connects to the urban trail going east/west. The capacity for me to fall and slip is very high. Its very dark. The corner (southwest) is very busy with cars going every which way. Remember they mostly slow down but aren't keen to stop. When I arrive at the intersection the vehicles don't know they should be looking for a cyclist on the corner. They certainly are not looking for a cyclist on the corner behind them.. I literally feel like a moving target and feel I have a high probability of being injured or killed by a motor vehicle.

This scenario is unbelievably unsafe. Do I need to feel I will be killed or severely injured by a motor vehicle because there is no safe cycling infrastructure in this area?

Yet I know I am not the only non-motor vehicle/pedestrian going in and around this intersection all day long. In the last few years this intersection and this area has become very busy. People walk along the new asphalt path on Enterprise to get to work on Underhill. People get off at the west bus stop across from Sears and walk south on the road along the street (Underhill) because there is no proper sidewalk. Many people walk and ride east and west along the urban trail and then need to cross the Eastlake/Underhill intersection going either west or north. It is to paraphrase someone, 'a disaster'.

I look forward to hearing from you.



Cathy Griffin

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attachments: Maps A & B

MAP "A"

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