

Dear Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission c/o Kathryn Matts,

I live on Burnaby Mountain in the University development and am writing to urge the city to revise trail signage and **please restrict at least one Burnaby Mountain trail to foot traffic only**.

Mel's Trail is a good candidate for this.

I have many times been almost run down, or sworn at, or otherwise verbally abused to "get the f*\$k off the trail bitch!" and so on while walking on Burnaby Mountain trails on the north and east sides of the mountain with my dogs (on leash). Many mountain bikers are speed freaks wearing a lot of body armour, riding while high, or otherwise recklessly--it's sociopathic. The problem is so bad that, for many years, I have only gone on the trails on rainy weekday mornings from October to March. Otherwise, it is too dangerous or just a horrible experience. I have even been run off the trail by a family of four with little kids -- even those parents seemed to think that hikers are not really supposed to be on the trails and should jump into the bushes to get out of the way of anyone on wheels.

Many seem to believe that the trails were built only recently by mountain bikers and are solely for the use of mountain bikers, so anyone else there doesn't belong. I told a few that I've met that the trails were there for decades before mountain biking even existed as a sport (I hiked them as a kid in the 1970s). They were flabbergasted -- it hadn't even occurred to them.

The City of Burnaby signage at the trailheads and the naming of at least one of the trails perpetuates this myth, eg: "Gear Jammer."

Solutions possibly:

1. **Mel's Trail is for hikers only.** At all the various entry points onto Mel's Trail, erect wooden fence barriers that allow people on foot but block cyclists. Post loud signage telling riders to stay out so as to prevent environmental damage and allow hikers a safe space. This would help to convey the idea that mountain bikers are not the sole owners of the mountain. (UBC Endowment Lands have this and it works well.)

2. **At the top of Gear Jammer there must be new, large-print signage where riders stop to check their equipment before rolling down the hill -- ie. right at the roadside.** The small notice with tiny print that is there, stating that cyclists must dismount and give right of way to people on foot, is universally ignored because it is posted down the trail about 40 metres, at which point bikers are already going at least 10 km/hour so do not even see the signage and certainly won't stop to read it. (Let me know if you need a photo).

Note:

Staff have contacted the writer and advised that at the 2021.05.18 Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission Open meeting, Commission received correspondence on the same subject and it was referred to staff for a report. Staff are in the process of consultation and review and the report will be presented at the July Commission meeting. Staff are aware of the illegal trails and are working on ways to mitigate this issue.

3. The new signage in some key locations (at the most busy trailheads) should include a brief note telling the history of the mountain, how that trail got its name, and how people used it in the past (ie. hunting and travelling, scouting lumber, hiking, etc. -- perhaps a graphic timeline showing the stages?). This could be a good opportunity to collaborate with the City Archives and perhaps the Tsleil Waututh Nation. A historical note would go a long way in getting people to realize that the trails had a long history before mountain bikes existed, so should be respected.

4. The new signage everywhere should say that bikers are riding on hiking trails and do not have the right of way. The current signs are written in such a way as to make it sound like hikers and runners are an afterthought -- interlopers. (Let me know if you need a photo).

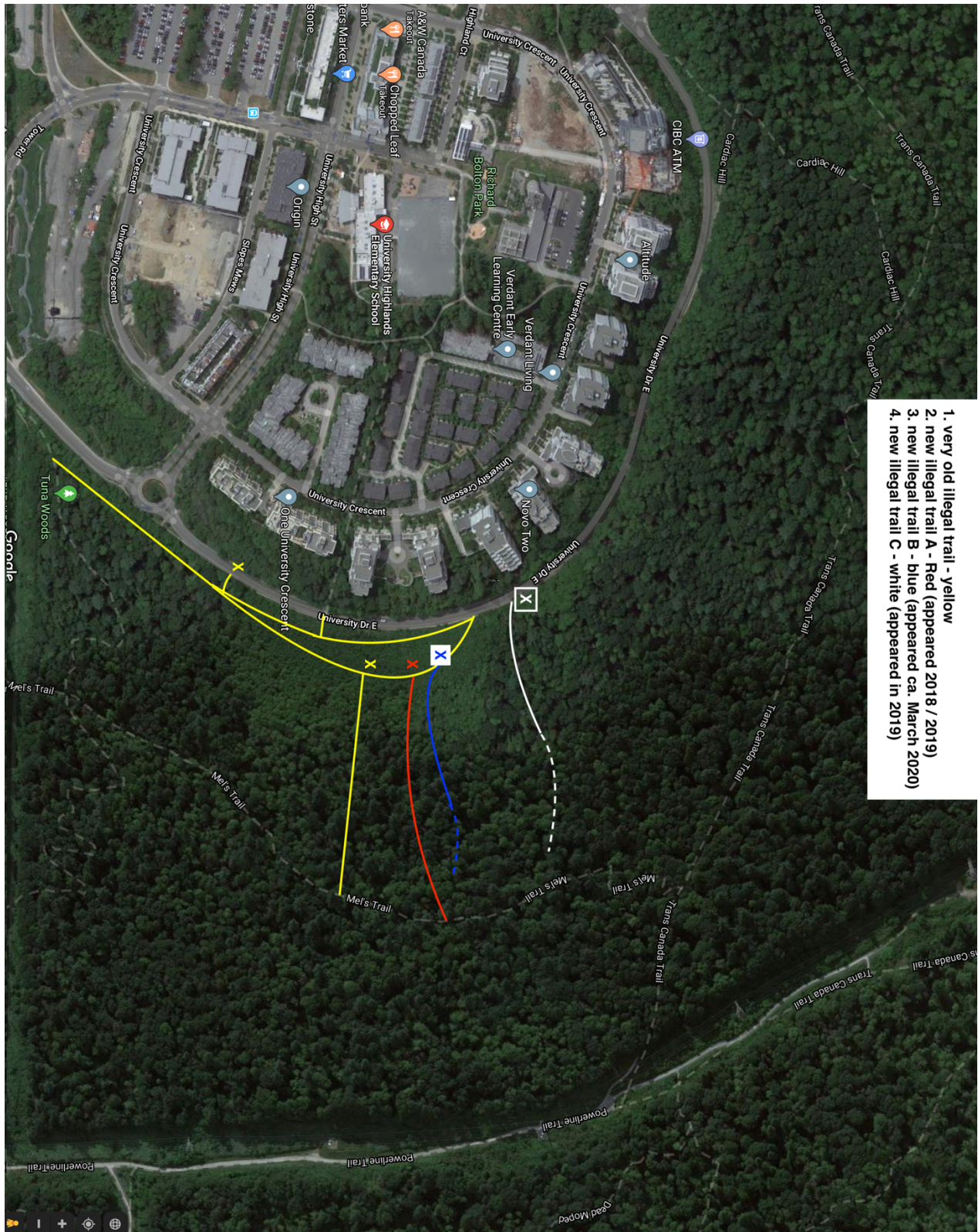
If you need someone to sit on a citizens' committee or whatever else, please let me know. I would be happy to volunteer to help design new signage or otherwise consult on how to create a safe space for hikers to use the trails. Also, I am a historian (University of Guelph) so would be happy to help with any historical projects about the trails and the mountain. Please seriously consider that idea.

Thanks very much for your attention to this.

By the way, I have attached a map of illegal trails up here that I made last summer and sent to your office. I'm not sure if anyone ever followed up. A number of times I have seen young riders going into these trails with axes and shovels attached to their backs, so there is a lot of destruction going on as these guys have come to build new trails or make old illegal trails more elaborate.

Susan Nance





* I have also emailed this map as a separate file since it may be easier to print in a large format.



Yellow X - entrance to very old illegal trail at south fork, just downhill from One University Crescent north building



Yellow X - entrance to very old illegal trail (Yellow) downhill section going to Mel's Trail



Red X – entrance to **new illegal trail A** (Red) downhill section going to Mel's Trail [photo taken at entrance from western bend in old illegal trail (yellow)].
At the top of this trail, the track goes straight down.



Blue X –entrance to **new illegal trail B** (Blue) downhill section – going to Mel's Trail? [photo taken at trail entrance from western bend in old illegal trail (yellow)]
At the top of this trail, the trail entrance bends to the right.



White X – entrance to **new illegal trail C** from University Drive East – leading to Mel's trail?



View of University Drive East when standing at White X – entrance to **new illegal trail C**.
Note trail entrance on left and, on the right in the distance, the yellow sign just before the crosswalk to the south.