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BEST Turns 20!

BEST Turns 20!

A lot of non-profit organizations (and for-profit for that matter) have come and gone over the years but BEST remains. And dare we say, "Stronger than ever!" Thanks to a dynamic and always engaged Board of Directors—past and present, the tradition continues!—a grant or sponsorship along the way, passionate supporters and members and, lest we forget, preternaturally dedicated volunteers and staff, BEST continues to help shape and design Greater Vancouver's sustainable transportation landscape. Flashing back to a kinder, gentler 1991, it's easy to see that the BEST mandate of sustainable transportation solutions is more important, more urgent than ever before. And with 20 years of education, activism and outreach behind us, BEST remains your go-to guide for getting around Greater Vancouver in the greenest possible way. And we work at all levels, too: Bicycle Valet at a lively party for the Golden Ears Bridge opening—or representing your views in a boardroom at City Hall—BEST is there—We love it all!

Highlights? Too numerous to mention in this limited arena; and far too varied to bundle up all in one place. But if you were to force it upon us, if you were to make us talk, we'd have to cite the **Central Valley Greenway**,



the magnificent 24 kilometre cycling and walking path that runs from Vancouver's Science World all the way to the Quay in New West, with strategic links to major transit hubs all along the way. The kind of urban planning

behind the Central Valley project will be, as we know, the foundation of our future green cities, and BEST's role in this groundbreaking effort is a legacy of which we are unabashedly proud.

And there's **The Bicycle Valet**, our "coat-check for bikes—a perfect solution for big events (i.e., the Olympics!) that are fantastic for our region but that also generate odious amounts of traffic, the Bicycle Valet lets you park your two-wheeler in a safe, guarded area—and it lets you park it there for FREE. Yet another BEST incentive to ride, not drive.

There's **Living Streets, Bike Month, the Commuter Challenge, Mobility Matters.**

When it comes to great ideas to educate and engage the citizenry around our core issues, if we don't think 'em up ourselves we're quick to spot the good ones thought up by others and hop aboard, helping our fellow forward thinkers by acting as ambassador for actions and happenings in Greater Vancouver.

But even more than all this, the reason why BEST is still going strong after 20 years is because enough people think the issues we bring to the fore are important. And based on the fact that you are simply reading this newsletter, there's a good chance you care about many of those same issues. To what degree doesn't matter that much. You may be a political hardliner who wants to challenge laws and ordinances and topple existing power structures and take back your streets; or you may just love the sensation of sucking in a huge lungful of fresh, clean oxygen as you coast down a big, long hill on your brand new bike. Or maybe you recently discovered the pleasures of reading your morning paper on the train while your car sits home in the driveway, not bothering anyone. BEST is here for all of you. We want all of you to join BEST. We'd like to hear from you. We want your feedback and suggestions and ideas. If you can afford it, your financial support is welcome, too. Point is, we're now discussing our next 20 years and it would be great to have you in on the conversation!

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Save the Date!

Our AGM-cum-Anniversary Party is on Wednesday, April 13, 6:30-8:30 pm at the Heritage Hall (3102 Main Street, Vancouver).

We'd like to celebrate our 20th year by sharing with friends, past and present, and a great chance to do exactly that is at our Annual General Meeting, which will take place from **6:30-8:30 pm on Wednesday, April 13, at the Heritage Hall (3102 Main Street, Vancouver)**. Given we've hit "The Big Two-Oh," this year's meeting promises a somewhat more festive atmosphere than AGMs past. So if you've ever worked at BEST (or with BEST), if you've ever put in some time on the Board, if you've ever volunteered, if you've ever made a donation, if you've ever been a member, or if you're just looking for something to do on a Wednesday night—please stop by! Really, there's been so much good work done, our history is so rich, that we're in the mood to celebrate and would love to see some familiar faces. And if you've lent a hand to BEST in any way, in any year, we'd love to toast you (There Will be Wine) and extend our thanks. In addition to beverages and snacks there'll be storytelling, door prizes and other fun, Hump Day distractions. So please save the date. We hope to see you there!

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Bicycle Valet Bookings Are Filling Up!

[BEST's "coat check for bikes"](#) is in for another busy year.

'Tis a year of milestones. With BEST ringing in its 20th year of operation, one of BEST's best ideas—The Bicycle Valet—celebrates its 5th anniversary in 2011 and celebrates it in style. Which is to say, by being used! Lower Mainland event

planning companies have become quite smitten with our free--to-the-user “coat check for bikes” and this has resulted in a jam-packed schedule right through to September. Next event for the Bicycle Valet? **Surrey’s annual extravaganza of arts, culture and sport—Winterfest! For a full-on, bring-the-family style Saturday, set aside February 26. Festivities kick off at high noon and don’t wind down until 10pm. Winterfest’s HQ is On the Plaza at Central City Mall** and we’ll set up the Bicycle Valet in close proximity. Take it from us (yeah, we were there last year, too!) Winterfest’s a blast! Enjoy outdoor skating, the Downtown Surrey Kids Craft Zone, the Sustainability Zone and more. Admission is free. Learn more at www.winterfest.surrey.ca. (And please accept this advance notice that the Bicycle Valet is booked into **Vancouver’s 125th Birthday Live Celebration on April 6 at Jack Poole Plaza**, a big, all-day party about which you may read more in future editions of BEST E-News).



Thanks to [TravelSmart](#) and [MEC](#) for their continued sponsorship of this great program!

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We’re back at the helm of the ICBC Commuter Challenge

[ICBC](#) sponsorship means this year’s CC is FREE!

After a one-year hiatus to tweak and tinker, rethink and re-jig, realign and redesign, BEST is returning to its role as Lower Mainland quarterback for the momentous, nation-wide sustainable transportation do-it-yourselfer—**The ICBC Commuter Challenge!** Our friends at ICBC have come aboard as Title Sponsor, which means that it is FREE for companies to register this year. That said, we expect more companies than ever before will be signing up to walk, bike, ride, roll, hop, skip, jump, car pool, rollerblade, skateboard—anything but drive by themselves!—to work. So our profound thanks to ICBC for supporting this event! And we’re sure that you, dear reader, will be doing your part to support it, too, by signing up and taking part.

Oh right... when is the **ICBC Commuter Challenge**, anyway? Be sure to save the date: This year’s event will be the week of June 5-11, which also happens to coincide with National Environment Week. Across Canada, from Sunday to Sunday, breathe easy everyone, as those nasty auto emissions will be in free-fall! We hope you’ll get active and help to make this year’s ICBC Commuter Challenge the fantastic and overwhelming coast-to-coast success it deserves (and needs!) to be! Keep an eye on future editions of BEST E-News for more updates as they come in!

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Otesha Project Performance

“Your bike is your stallion; theatre, your sword.” So goes the call-out for volunteers from The Otesha Project for its “performing and cycling tours,” where you’ll valiantly cycle from performance to performance, connect with communities along the route, brave the elements, and explore all the ups and downs of directly addressing

environmental and social justice issues through every day actions. The play that your team performs will educate others, and others will educate you. C'mon, climb on your bike and change the world! No bike touring, theatre, or other such experience necessary. Just a willingness to give it your all! Sound like fun? Learn more at: www.walkingthetalk.bc.ca/node/3538

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Closing Notes

Living Streets

The Living Streets project, generously supported by the [Vancouver Foundation](#) and the [Real Estate Foundation of BC](#), with terrific in-kind assistance from the City of Surrey, has produced 6 neighbourhood maps derived from the street audits of more than 60 people in Surrey. Another 20 audits are expected to be completed by the date of the Design Charette, which will be on March 23, and will have Surrey City transportation planners in attendance.

Bike Month

Plans for Bike Month are well underway, with three municipalities already signed up for a new twist on getting folks onto their bikes for local neighbourhood activities. BEST will work with selected Business Improvement Associations and will be generating activities, promotions, prizes and more. Stay tuned for more!

Cycling Troubadour Donates to BEST From CD Launch Sales

And finally, [Shera Kelly](#), a Vancouver based singer/songwriter, (and former Bicycle Valet Coordinator!) will release her debut CD, "A Bicycle Commuters Anthem," on Thursday, February 24 at the Media Club in Vancouver. The album is dedicated to all of Shera's fellow cyclists and she will donate 5% of CD sales at the release party to BEST and 5 % to the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition! Thank you, Shera!

Going Green In Dunbar!

Experience the new Bike Lanes in Dunbar with Free Pedi-Cab Rides, Saturday March 12th, as the [Dunbar Village BIA](#) celebrates St. Patrick's Day and Dunbar's Bicycling Culture.

[Visit us at best.bc.ca](http://best.bc.ca)

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