



Better Environmentally Sound Transportation e-News February 2013

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Greetings from Stockholm!

-- Bicycle Valet Manager Stephanie Williams was on holiday in Stockholm over November and December and while there she jumped at the opportunity to investigate some of the features of the city's transportation system. These are her impressions ...

Although I had visions of myself peddling through Gamla Stan or Old Town cloaked in an H&M woolen coat, scarf and toque, the weather in Stockholm when I arrived in November (yes, I'm aware this was an interesting time to go to a Nordic country) quickly made me re-evaluate my transportation choice. During my visit I would explore all 14 islands via bus, train, tram, metro and ferry – I'm pretty sure I only made it to about half of the islands, but I did manage to try all of the transportation modes!

The helpful woman at tourist information advised me to buy a month pass for unlimited travel on all forms of transit within Stockholm and suburbs for the cost of about \$100 CAD. Great deal! Did I mention I could start it in the middle of the month? Just one advantage of having an electronic fare card system. Another: the turnstile machines being able to read the card without it being removed from your wallet – especially important when you are always wearing gloves! I for one say good riddance to ripping a ticket out of a book as I run for the bus.

Alas, not all is perfect in the planned world of Stockholm; sometimes, trains are late! But they've thought of that too. If the train you are waiting for is going to be more than 20 minutes late (you can tell by the numerous signboards in the station if you don't have an app on your phone), the system will reimburse you for the fare of the cab to your destination. All you do is email them a form. Seriously. And people actually do get their money back! Or at least my friend claimed to have done it numerous times. Now there's accountability to the public.

While waiting in the enclosed waiting area for the electronic sign to tell me when I should step onto the platform through the automatic sliding door, I realized the Stockholm public transportation system reflected the residents of Stockholm in general: reliable, scheduled, organized, and quiet. Well I'm not personally one to book all social events two months in advance, I'm happy to leave the spontaneity out of public transportation.



A tram in Swedish Blue pulls up to a Stockholm station.

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Living Streets Volunteer Stories

BEST's Living Streets program relies on its team of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. This month two of these volunteers, **Fola Adeyemi** and **Edward Houghland**, share their experiences working for Living Streets.

Fola Adeyemi

I became involved in Surrey street audits for the Living Streets program while volunteering with the [Lower Mainland Green Team](#). I have a strong background in Environmental Management (a Masters from UNB) but still felt I learned a great deal from Beth's presentation and the audit exercise. Because my experience of Living Streets has been so positive I have looked for additional ways to volunteer, and am now doing the mapping and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analysis of the audit data. This is an exciting opportunity and has been great so far, and will continue to be as far as I can see.

One challenge I have experienced is the fact that I have typically used ecosystem-type applications, so working with this program is a learning curve. Another challenge is the need to juggle my own time so that I have enough time to do the work, as GIS work can be very time intensive. Another snag is that some of the audit data is not taken down properly and lacks location, position and attribute – this can make it hard or impossible to identify the correct location. Whatever the case, there is a lot of data to work with, and so we will get results.

I see the Living Streets program as playing a valuable role in supporting communities as they move towards implementing better practices in transportation. It is a practical approach to modelling realistic improvements that can lead to transportation efficiency. I think it will be good to see the program in more municipalities and communities as a tool for sustainability.

Edward Houghland

I became involved with BEST in the fall of 2012 in order to gain experience working with the public on transportation issues in Metro Vancouver. I participated in and led walking tours in two community audits at Surrey City Centre and Guildford and helped tabulate the results of these audits so they could then be plotted visually in GIS.

I believe programs like Living Streets are important because they provide the public an opportunity and a voice in the decisions that affect people's daily lives. Further, the partnership with the City of Surrey is significant because it indicates that the City cares about promoting alternative modes of transportation, which isn't always obvious when observing how car dependant the city is.

I noted that many of the youth who participated in my walking tour groups suggested that bike lanes be added on many of the roads but also indicated that they themselves never ride bikes. They felt that even if simple, painted lanes were added to roads it would still be too risky to ride with such fast-moving traffic. Thus I feel that if the City of Surrey is seeking to find ways to get the next generation out of cars they will be challenged and they will need to seek bold solutions like barrier-separated bike paths and off-street routes.



Fola Adeyemi (right) with Living Streets Program Coordinator Beth Hurford (left) with a group of Lower Mainland Green Team volunteers.



Edward Houghland (left) leads a group of Green Team volunteers past the Guildford Public Library.

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The Bicycle Valet Gearing Up for 2013

BEST's Bicycle Valet, Metro Vancouver's beloved (or at least we like to think so), professional provider of secure, coat check-style bicycle parking will once again be at a variety of events throughout the spring, summer and fall. Plans are now well underway to make 2013 our best year ever!

We look forward to working with our 2012 events again, as well as welcoming new events who want to offer their attendees an environmentally-friendly transportation option. To find out more about hiring The Bicycle Valet for your event, visit our [website](#) or fill out an [inquiry form](#) for a quote.

Our presence at events also offers a unique opportunity for companies and organizations to showcase their support for a community-driven, green initiative. For more information on The Bicycle Valet's Sponsorship Opportunities for 2013, visit our [website](#) or contact us for a Sponsorship Package.

And of course, we're stoked to see all of our loyal patrons again this year! In super exciting Bicycle Valet news, we're pleased to announce that we'll be introducing a weekly update during our busy season of which events we'll be at, where you can find us at the events, and any other details you may want to know. As always, stay tuned to our calendar of events, [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) for updates as we begin announcing details for this year's events.

Finally, previous volunteers can expect a heartfelt plea-coming soon to an inbox near you to help out again this year. For the rest of you who have had the smooth Valet experience, and have wondered how you can be the one parking bikes, here's your chance to [find out](#). No regular time-commitment necessary, fun in the sun, community involvement and feeling good are just a few of the positives of joining the team. And did we mention the appreciation nights?



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Join BEST!

Thinking of joining BEST? There are lots of good reasons to become a member.

As a member of BEST you will be able to help guide the Society by voting at our **Annual General Meeting on April 10**. BEST is committed to making our communities healthier places to live and the AGM is a great opportunity to meet and share your ideas with the Board, staff, and other members.

And there are other benefits to BEST membership:

- Members of BEST receive an invitation to [MEC](#) Club Nights, where BEST / MEC members receive great discounts on fabulous MEC gear.
- When BEST members join [Modo The Car Co-Op](#), the \$20.00 registration fee is waived.
- BEST members receive 10% off all products and services at [Bikes For All](#).
- And as a member of BEST you will be entered in draws for excellent prizes!

It's easy to join – just click [here](#). Or contact our office at 604 669 2860 and we will be happy to send you a membership form.

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Intern with Commuter Challenge!

BEST's Commuter Challenge is looking for an enthusiastic, well-organized and well-spoken intern to help with this year's Challenge. The position is part-time and will begin in February and last for about three months. For more information visit the BEST [website](#).



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