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Better Environmentally Sound Transportation e-News August 2014

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Hello friends of BEST!

If you have been out and about on Metro Vancouver's streets this summer you can't help but notice the abundance of cyclists -- what a fantastic summer for people of all ages to ride a bike, not to mention walk and otherwise perambulate!

BEST has been very busy this summer -- The Bicycle Valet in particular has been going full tilt, attending events around the region -- we'll be at 100,000 parked bikes before we know it! Read about this as well as a veritable potpourri of other news -- including road stories from our Living Streets coordinator and former ED -- in this our August newsletter. It's all here, so grab your refreshing beverage, jump on your flotation device, and read on!

The Bicycle Valet: Zeroing in on 100,000 bikes!



As the summer rolls along [The Bicycle Valet](#) is getting closer and closer to the milestone of 100,000 bikes valeted since we set up shop in 2006 -- so very very close! As of press time we were at a whopping 90,282 bikes! You can help -- and put yourself in the running for some amazing prizes -- by:

- Riding your bike to [one of our events](#) and using our service. We count every bike we park, and every single one makes a difference.
- Taking a photo of yourself at The Bicycle Valet and using #BikeValet100K. You'll be entered to win amazing prizes, all summer long!
- Spreading the word! Let everyone know we're trying to hit 100,000 bikes successfully valeted. Find @TheBicycleValet on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and [Better Environmentally Sound Transportation on Facebook](#).

As for the 100,000th rider, in addition to the fame & glory you will win some fantastic prizes from [TravelSmart](#), AND a gorgeous bicycle courtesy of [Reckless Bike Stores](#)! You lucky person you!



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Living Streets visits the "North East Kingdom"

By Dinah Steele, BEST [Living Streets](#) Coordinator

This July I had the opportunity to visit family in the "North East Kingdom" of the United States, and subsequently found myself road tripping through 8 New England states in a matter of 10 days. Despite road trips not being the most sustainable form of vacation travel, along the way I did find myself face-to-face with some innovative sustainable and active transportation planning that I thought was worth sharing!

The first instance of active transportation planning that I found intriguing was in Burlington, Vermont, a small university city where a good example of the common demographic is my youngest brother, a recent Environmental Science graduate currently living in a communal home where it is commonplace to make your own kombucha.

The striking thing about Burlington is just how pedestrian-friendly it is. Many university towns have been known to implement urban planning designs that aim to incorporate community building and foster walkability so as to best accommodate their student population as well as their local economy.



Burlington is no exception to this rule, with Church Street pedestrian mall extending the length of 4 main blocks in the downtown core, and encompassing approximately 90 storefronts. The average commute time in Burlington is 15 minutes, and while this first and foremost has to do with its size and population, ongoing sidewalk-improvement initiatives such as these are also important contributing factors of note! Read about Burlington's sustainable transportation planning initiatives [here](#).

The second and third striking sustainable transportation initiatives I came across were Boston's Hubway and New York City's Citibike bike sharing programs.

Bike sharing programs have become much more prolific in North America in recent years and both Boston and NYC have taken initiatives to make this popular form of public transportation available to their residents.

Not having used either system on my trip, here I just want to provide some interesting information with regards to the programs' implementation.

Boston's Hubway service has been in operation for 3 years with over 100 stations and 600 bicycles available to the greater Boston area. One innovation of note regarding this system is that in April of this year Bostonian doctors implemented a program for health-concerned patients in which they provide prescriptions to receive annual Hubway memberships for \$5, a reduction of \$80 from the regular



annual fee! Read about this program [here](#).



In New York City, Citibike's implementation was met with much skepticism and outright disapproval, but in just 13 months it has seen over 100,000 annual membership registrants compared to Washington D.C.'s 24,000 over its 3 year run. This is not to say that there aren't other factors affecting these statistics, such as population and density, but it should be noted that in a city plagued by congestion any initiative to assist commuters should be met with less initial criticism and instead with more curiosity, especially when it is at no cost to taxpayers! Read about Citibike [here](#).

I am looking forward to my future travels taking me places where I can witness even more innovative sustainable transportation initiatives! I hope yours will too!

The Bicycle Valet: Part of your summer!



Summer is roaring along and [The Bicycle Valet](#) is roaring along with it, parking bikes at events all over the Lower Mainland and Squamish.

In August you will continue to find us at our new permanent digs on Granville Island every Thursday-Sunday, at the Food Cart Fest and Kits Farmers Market every Sunday, and at all the Whitecaps home games.

New this year: find us at the Pride Sunset Beach Festival, and a special edition of Bike to the Nat on the Labour Day weekend!

Also look for us at these great events: Bike to Bard, Celebration of Light, Powell Street Festival, Pride Sunset Beach Festival, Squamish Valley Music Festival, Lululemon Outdoor Yoga on Kits Beach, Chariot Festival of India, Sunset Beach Social and The Garlic Festival.

For more information on these great local events, and new events as they are added, keep an eye on our [calendar](#). Keep on riding, and see you at The Bicycle Valet!

Road Story: Go Slow for Elephants

By Margaret Mahan *



The last time I was in India was 12 years ago, at which time the country's first freeway was being built on the old Grand Trunk Road from Delhi across the northern Gangetic plain. There were at that time lots of scooters in the cities, lots of transport trucks on the inter-city roads, and the majority of people got around on a combination of foot, 3-wheelers (called tuk-tuks in much of Asia), bicycle, and in some places bicycle rickshaw. (For those of you who recoil at the notion, be assured that bicycle rickshaws were sustainable for both environment and rickshaw wallah). Buses both intra and inter city were taken for trips that would take you outside your neighbourhood - and were cheap and plentiful. Private cars were really restricted to the very wealthy, and to very special trips - perhaps a yatra (pilgrimage) to a distant location. You rented a car with the driver.

The India of today is full of cars of every possible make and description, from the teeny weeny Tata to large scale SUVs that would be recognizable anywhere in North America. Motorcycles have exploded in number, though no one wears helmets yet. We still have lots of buses on the roads, which still belch diesel fumes but are surely less polluting on a per person/kilometre travelled than anything else that is motorized.

What has disappeared? Bicycles, and foot traffic. A sad story to be sure, to see India going down the path of being in the clutches of the worldwide auto industry. I am reminded of the Ford Canada VP who told me that the company didn't really care about the North American industry recovering from the 2008-2010 recession, since their strategic plan was counting entirely on China to drive sales. Mercedes, Fiat and some of the other companies might have India in the same vision.

So, what is different in rural India, where I am now living? Well, first, rural people are generally, as everywhere on the planet, less wealthy. And so the majority here still travel by bus to get anywhere. I'm in a very hilly region, and so bicycles have never been a major mode of transport, but people do still regularly walk 5-10 km to get into the little town, or back, or to work. Yes, we see motorcycles (probably the most numerous vehicle on the roads), but motorcycles, cars, buses and trucks all know to expect people walking on the side of the narrow two lane, non shouldered road that passes as highway, and so in a profound way pedestrians, and their goats, and occasionally cows, have a right of way that cannot be removed.

What I miss most? There used also to be bullock carts and horse-drawn carts for heavy and light loads respectively, in every town in the south and much of the north of India. These are no more, they have virtually disappeared as the urban roads have been taken over by auto and motorcycle traffic.

What I'm most grateful for? The 25 km ride from downtown Coimbatore to Anaikatty, where I live, costs 16 rupees - about 28 cents - not cheap, for a person

who may make only 100 rupees a day, but it is something that is subsidized heavily by government, as it should be.

What I am happiest about? The wonder of India persists in things like this – the road signs as you climb up off the plains into the hills of the Western Ghats say: *Entering forest preserve. Elephants have right of way. Do not obstruct. Drive Slow.*

And yes, I miss BEST, and The Bicycle Valet. We'll be looking for an Indian version of BEST here soon. Any takers?



** Margaret Mahan was the Executive Director of BEST for eight years. She now lives in a rural community in southern India. This could be her bike.*

Lions Gate Bridge cyclist and pedestrian alert

From approximately mid-August to mid-December one sidewalk only on the Lions Gate Bridge will be open for two-way cyclist and pedestrian traffic between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is upgrading the north approach to the Lions Gate Bridge (the part over land). The project will replace 25 joints and 40 bearings along 670 metres of viaduct linking Marine Drive to the bridge. Sidewalk closures will alternate as required, with pedestrians and cyclists being directed to the open side by signs on all approaches.

Lights, reflective gear, caution and slower speeds should be employed by all using the bridge during these times.

Community notices will be posted during the project and more information can be found on the ministry website:

http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/highwayprojects/LGB_North_Viaduct/

SFU/Surrey Transportation Lecture Program

This fall the SFU City Program is once again presenting the popular [Transportation Lecture Program](#) in conjunction with the [City of Surrey](#).

This nine-week course – which comes highly recommended by several BEST staffers – provides a comprehensive introduction to transportation in the Lower Mainland with a particular focus on Surrey. Participants learn about a range of transportation issues, including roadway planning, the relationship between transportation and land use, and the operation and management of our transportation systems.

The course begins on Wednesday September 10. For more information, visit the SFU City Program [website](#).

Bicycle gears are amazing!

We love Carmen Mills' [Bicycle Buddha](#) blog – it's alternately (and sometimes simultaneously) informative, witty, deep, and fun. In case you haven't read it, check out [this post](#) on bicycle gears, in which Carmen lays out the what's, why's and how's of this amazing and often sadly-misunderstood human invention.

Thank you for your continued interest in BEST!

Our Mission: To advance the transformation to sustainable transportation
Our Vision: Vibrant, healthy communities built around sustainable modes of transportation

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As Canada's new [Anti-Spam Legislation](#) came into effect July 1st 2014, we are in the process of updating our mailing lists and documenting subscriber consent. We currently send you electronic communications that you have opted into in the past, or because you have participated in one of our events, utilized our services, or supported us in some way. We will continue to send you news and updates about our organization, but please note that you are free to unsubscribe at any time. If you would like to give us your permanent (until you unsubscribe) express consent, please click [here](#).

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