

Minutes from the Zoom Meeting on Traffic and Parking Problem in Blueridge

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Minutes taken by Amy Pankratz

In the January 2021 bulletin, we advertised a Zoom Meeting on Traffic and Parking in Blueridge. The following is an update of the Thursday, January 14th Zoom meeting. The Zoom meeting was attended by 46 participants, including Mayor Mike Little and Councillors Betty Forbes and Jordan Black.

The intent of the meeting was to initiate a dialogue respecting traffic and parking in the Blueridge area, and to discuss potential, Blueridge-wide solutions to the issues. General consensus arose that:

- The trails are to be shared by the public;
- The affected groups need to work collaboratively in coming to possible solutions; and
- Residents and their homes need to be respected.

Some of the key increased traffic and parking issues include:

- **Safety:**
 - Obstructed views and unsafe exits from driveways;
 - Narrow “choke points” including at Berkley Avenue between Blueridge Park and Hyannis Drive;
 - Unsafe driving including speeding, U-turns and reversing into intersection at Hyannis and Berkley Avenue, and forced driving in oncoming lanes due to inappropriate parking; and
 - Lack of a crosswalk for the overwhelming pedestrian traffic at Hyannis and Berkley Avenue.
- **Crowds:**
 - Limited street parking available for residents;
 - Trails are busy;
 - COVID concerns about physical distancing and mask-wearing where physical distancing cannot be maintained and is not being respected (particularly at Berkley and Hyannis); and
 - Bad behavior including littering, lawn and property damage, and noise (particularly early in the morning and late at night).
- **Bylaws:**
 - Calling bylaws is becoming a “necessary evil” to manage the parking situation as cars regularly park within the disallowed 2 metres from driveways, 6 metres from a stop sign or crosswalk, 11 metres from an intersection, and 5 metres from a fire hydrant (all of which are DNV parking bylaws).

Discussion on possible short-term actions included:

1. What we can do: Educate visitors about DNV parking bylaws (i.e., verbally and through development of a pamphlet to be left on vehicles in collaboration with NSMBA); and
2. What we can ask for: Request DNV to provide a consistent approach to these issues at all DNV residential trailheads so that one location is not incentivized over others; request DNV provide more no parking signs in compliance with existing bylaws (especially around Berkley and Hyannis); ask DNV bylaw officers to be more proactive and reactive in enforcing violations; engage with DNV on best approaches to other safety and traffic issues (e.g. speeding on Berkley, Hyannis, Sechelt; “choke point” opposite Blueridge Park, *et cetera*).

The discussion on possible medium to long-term actions included:

1. More trail access points and recreational options be developed in other DNV neighbourhoods to encourage users to stay local (see the District of Squamish “Adventure Hub” solution) (<https://squamish.ca/yourgovernment/news/new-adventure-hubs-offer-amenities-to-trail-users-to-help-mitigate-neighbourhood-and-environmental-impacts/>);
2. Request DNV to implement resident-only parking areas, parking only on one side of the street, using existing parking areas (Blueridge Park parking lot) and expanding parking options with signage (i.e. Seymour Heights Elementary, McCartney Park, and Windsor Secondary); and
3. Continuing BCA’s engagement in the Seymour trail development process and addressing parking in that forum as well.

The residents on Hyannis Point and the east side of Hyannis Drive (west of Berkley Avenue) were able to work with the DNV to obtain traffic and parking restrictions. Resident Maria Zarjav spoke about their experiences. However, the parking restrictions have done nothing to change the traffic and congestion at the trailheads and have only increased traffic and parking congestion on the rest of Hyannis Drive, Berkley Avenue, and neighbouring streets. Bylaws complaints are made frequently on busy days and are often not acted on quickly enough.

The open discussion part of the meeting gave participants an opportunity to provide comments, voice their concerns and provide solutions. As well, many participants used the Zoom chat to add their comments. In addition, the BCA also received numerous comments from residents and other stakeholders on the traffic and parking problems in Blueridge via other means. We have included a summary of the various comments below.

- DNV Mayor Little and Councillors Forbes and Black acknowledged the work of Blueridge residents. The traffic and congestion problems we are seeing in Blueridge are indicative of what they are seeing in other areas of Metro Vancouver – Belcarra, Coquitlam and other areas on the North Shore. The Mayor indicated that DNV will work with the residents and the BCA to improve the situation.

- The parking issues were identified by several residents of Upper Blueridge including Hill Drive and the surrounding streets. In addition, safety (near misses between cars and children/pedestrians), crowds, COVID concerns (people congregating and not wearing masks and/or physical distancing) and noise (early in the morning and as late as 10 pm) were all mentioned as concerns. More education and enforcement are needed. Residents shared suggestions for a number of possible steps, including no parking zones, speed limits, crosswalks, 4-way stop signs, and other speed control and safety measures.
- Many concerns were raised about the danger created by people parking too close to driveways. This impedes sightlines and is a safety issue because residents can't see oncoming traffic when coming out of their steep driveways. Comments about near misses. Because of congested parking at the top of Berkley, one elderly resident is not able to enter/exit her back driveway and has given up driving her car. Instances of disrespectful behaviour were discussed. Hikers do not always dispose of their dog waste appropriately, and visitors of all types sometimes gather and socialize on private property, sometimes drinking alcohol openly. Trail users have been observed changing their clothing in public, doing bike maintenance on roads and sidewalks, and obstructing traffic while loading and unloading. The latter is especially problematic in the narrowed stretch near Blueridge Park.
- Property damage to lawns and a garage door, as well as littering and garbage was noted in the area from Blueridge Park to the trails due to the masses of people using the trails.
- Congestion on the nearby streets and on trails themselves is a growing concern. Heavy foot and bike traffic has resulted in damage to the grass bordering nearby sidewalks, and even some of the trails are showing signs of wear and tear.
- The NSMBA acknowledged that mountain bikers' actions have contributed to the situation in Blueridge. They also noted that if Blueridge offered amenities (such as washing stations and bathrooms) at parking areas (as is happening in Squamish), it would give bikers an incentive to park further away from the trailheads and likely reduce many of the aforementioned problems.
- It was acknowledged that more education is needed and NSMBA will be collaborating with BCA to develop a pamphlet to be placed on cars providing information on parking bylaws, parking areas, etc.
- The situation in Blueridge is inevitable. Nicer parking lots will bring more people to the area so urban planning needs to be involved.
- Parking for families with young children, and mobility-limited users needs to be reserved closer to the trails to provide for accessibility.
- Traffic, congestion and illegal parking (not providing enough room at the bus stop) impedes the 214 Blueridge bus, which sometimes has to cross over to the oncoming lane for clearance causing a safety problem. It was suggested that having no parking signage from the bus stop to the Berkley/Hyannis intersection would help the bus to travel safely.
- Resident-only parking in Upper Blueridge may not solve the traffic problem, and will likely only displace the problem into other areas of Blueridge. Having resident-only parking on one side of upper Blueridge streets might help to distribute traffic and parking

more evenly on multiple streets. If coordinated properly, perhaps it could also reduce the number of u-turns and 3-point turns taken by visitors looking for parking. Although most of the comments we received were supportive of parking restrictions, some residents and non-residents are opposed to any street parking restrictions.