Price Tags

Great Trails

The Delta Loop
DELTA LOOP

Thank God for sewage. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be able to cycle through Delta so easily. Find out the connection by …

Clicking here.

Quite a week in Seattle, as two pre-eminent Vancouver planners appear before City Council

Click here.

Brits weigh in on what architectural masterpieces they’d take down if the BBC gave ‘em a D9 Cat.

Click here.

Comments from readers. Aw shucks.

Click here.
DELTA LOOP

DISTANCE: about 50 km / TIME: 4 to 6 hours on bike
Some Qualifications

The Delta Loop isn’t exactly a Great Trail: it’s a pretty good trail.

It isn’t exactly a trail: it’s a combination of road, dyke and right-of-way.

It’s isn’t exactly complete: there are still some spots, particularly from Mud Bay to the Delta Greenway, that don’t quite join up. (The GVRD is working on it.)

It’s not exactly the most scenic trail in the Lower Mainland. Hey, it’s flat. That’s kind of the point: you experience the broad sweep of farm, estuary and, yes, industrial landscape.
And it’s not exactly new. This map from an exhibition at the West Vancouver Museum purports to show the explorations of Jose Maria Narvaez, the first European to explore these waters in 1791.

But the identity and purpose of that guy on the right – well, I couldn’t find out what he was up to. But just possibly, he’s the first European pedestrian in British Columbia. At any rate, he’s walking the route of the Delta South Surrey Greenway!
START: Burrard Station

BUS: 601 to Ladner Exchange

DISTANCE: Vancouver to Ladner - 25 km

TIME: 50 minutes

COST: $4.50
Take a bus to Ladner Exchange – a desolate stretch of blacktop with a structure that looks like a reject from IKEA. From there, head east on the Ladner Truck Road (the shoulder makes room for bikes), and then south on 72\textsuperscript{nd} Street.
Agriculture is an industry.

72nd Street has both the bucolic and otherworldly landscapes of industrial agriculture: mega-sprinklers for turf farms, moonscapes of manure, and greenhouses that can be seen from space.
You’ll also see the most extraordinary contrast between one of the oldest homes in the region – the Henry Dean Benson house of 1874 (above left) – and the newest megamansions.
The dyke along Boundary Bay is the seawall of Delta. A rough gravel surface restricts it to mountain bikes, but it gives you miles of unbroken pleasure, with connections to Tsawwassen and, maybe eventually, to Crescent Beach and White Rock.

When you get to Mud Bay Park, however, you’ll come to the trickiest part of the route. The GVRD hasn’t acquired a legal right-of-way to connect with the greenway, so you’ll have to make your way along a narrow path by the railway line until you get to a trail that takes you into Watershed Park, just north of 58th Avenue, and back down to the sewer service road. Good luck.
SOUTH SURREY INTERCEPTOR

The SSI a pipe (and it’s huge) laid down between 1971 and 1973 (above) to collect sewage from Langley to Tsawwassen, and then carry it all to the treatment plant at Annacis Island.

It’s the plumbing you never see, that you take for granted, that you pay for begrudgingly in your property tax and could not live without – literally.

The pipe is now being twinned, allowing the greenway to be extended from the Fraser to Boundary Bay.
It seems obvious now, but the GVRD didn’t always utilize such corridors for greenways. As part of its sustainability initiative, the region now designs utility rights-of-way for both infrastructure and recreation, leveraging capital funds for multiple purposes. How enlightened!
At the end of the greenway there is a meandering connection to River Road, where the shoulder serves as a bike lane. It’s a busy route with lots of trucks. Eventually: the South Fraser Perimeter Road.
River Road industrial parks are where old Expo ’86 pavillons (below) went to be reborn. And apparently it’s where certified general accountants (right) are considered an industrial use. Which illustrates one of the key failures in the GVRD’s strategic plan: when business can find cheaper rents in industrial parks, why go to a regional town centre?
Accountants in industrial parks aren’t the only sign of inappropriate land use. A new housing subdivision mere metres from Highway 99 at the entrance to the Deas Island tunnel provoked Ken Cameron – past planning director for the GVRD - to heatedly reply to the Vancouver Sun when it did an admiring piece on the project.

“Is it a good idea to put homes in the floodplain two metres below the level of the dykes in a tidal part of the Fraser River when ocean levels are rising? … The fact that the municipality and the province exacted covenants to attempt to protect themselves from flood liability speaks volumes about the inappropriateness of this location …

“…these homes are four kilometres by road from even the most basic shops and services. All the daily travel will be by private automobile for all the residents, including school children who are becoming more obese because walking or cycling or transit are not travel options in isolated developments like this.”
The new Millennium Bridge and Trail takes you under Hwy 99 – and eventually by road back to Ladner Exchange.
Vancouver’s Great Trails

Click on each issue.

The Grouse Grind
Issue 41

The Seymour Trailway
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The Heights Trail
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Hastings Creek Trail
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The Stanley Park Seawall
Issue 45
The bond between Seattle and Vancouver tightened considerably last week. Vancouver planners Larry Beasley and Ray Spaxman appeared before Seattle City Council to critique Mayor Greg Nickels’s Center City strategy motivated in part by visits to Vancouver by Seattle’s leadership. The press, as you can see in the following pages, was abundant.

As one who has spoken to many Seattle groups, including a forum sponsored by the Mayor, it seems to me that the Emerald City is just now awakening to its inner-city possibilities – if it can forge the needed consensus. As Larry Beasley said: Seattle is too good to get it wrong.
Time To Grow Up

Mayor Greg Nickels says a taller, denser downtown is inevitable, even desirable. But critics like Peter Stein-brueck say bigger isn't better unless you do it right.

by Philip Dawdy

Vancouver, B.C., and Portland, Ore., are the exemplars that Mayor Nickels and many others in urban planning point to as evidence that big cities can absorb many thousands of new residents in their urban core. Both Northwest cities largely pulled off the trick of getting more people living and working downtown and limiting suburban sprawl, while making the whole thing look damn good in the process. Both cities worked overtime to create residential housing that made the new construction an integral and revitalizing part of downtown neighborhoods.
Steinbrueck isn't exactly in love with the mayor's plan. No sooner had the details hit his desk last spring than he hired two consultants to look it over. These weren't any old consultants, either. They were Ray Spaxman and Larry Beasley, the planners credited with making modern Vancouver, a city of glass and urban neighborhoods, as vibrant as Manhattan or San Francisco.

[Click here for full story.]

Vancouver planners say taller buildings just a start
More change needed to transform downtown

Planners from one of the world's most envied cities said Seattle needs to do more work -- and evaluate whether it's asking enough of developers -- to create downtown neighborhoods that will attract new residents and families. [Click for more.]

Seattle downtown plan needs adjusting, report says

If downtown Seattle wants to be like Vancouver, B.C., it needs more than Mayor Greg Nickels has proposed in his "Center City Strategy," which calls for taller buildings and more dense development. [Click for more.]
For the report, click here

For the webcast, click here
Vancouver offers tips on vibrant urban living

By JENNIFER LANGSTON

Cited as a model for Seattle's efforts to create lively urban neighborhoods, Vancouver's downtown population has nearly doubled in the past two decades. The first new downtown elementary school in 50 years opened last fall.
There are substantial differences between Seattle and Vancouver, where the government exercises broader authority in controlling land use, and private property rights are not so revered.

But Seattle City Councilman Peter Steinbrueck believes there are lessons to learn. He hired top Vancouver planners Larry Beasley and Ray Spaxman to evaluate the mayor's proposed zoning changes.

"Seattle is too good to get this wrong," said Beasley, who will offer specific recommendations to the City Council on Monday. "There are many other aspects of a great community than just the private development."

[For complete story, click here.]
CHALK ART

All drawings are done on sidewalks… so keep in mind the surfaces are flat!

Thanks to Betti Port
The buildings we hate most in Britain revealed

By Fiona Govan

Holyrood has been voted one of Britain's 12 most vile buildings by almost 8,000 viewers for a forthcoming Channel 4 series, Demolition, in which first place leads to a recommendation to send in the wrecking ball.
The others include Westgate House in Newcastle; the Bournemouth Imax Cinema; Gateshead car park (below); Northampton bus station and a cement works in Rugby.

"Some of the nominations are ridiculous but they enable a discussion about architecture, good or bad," said Mr Ferguson.

"It was never my intention that X-listing should only be about demolishing buildings. The repair of a historic building can be about taking out something inappropriate and replacing it with something appropriate. It's about making them attractive and amenable places that lift the spirits. I think we have some buildings in Britain that demoralise and depress."

[For full story, click here.]
Westgate House, Newcastle

Greyfriars bus station, Northampton

Bournemouth Imax Cinema
RE: Watermark Restaurant at Kitsilano Beach

I agree with your comments about the public areas, and then some.

First, the lifeguard portion, a public amenity, is yet to be finished and should, in my view, have been completed concurrently with the opening of the restaurant.

Secondly, the ground plane of the building in general is poorly conceived. Not only is the cinder block a poor choice of materials, the ground reads as a badly designed public washroom rather than a well considered amenity with a grand entry to the restaurant that could, in and of itself, have been a “public amenity”.

Consequently, the West Coast theme seems to be reasonably rendered on the second floor restaurant portion is sadly lacking at the ground plane. Hence, a fully rendered opportunity has been missed by all parties.

Doug Purdy, Vancouver
Delightful.....your commentary and photography just gets better and better....

Thanks for taking the time to put these 'tags' together and for keeping us enthused by the quality and character of our city.

Roger Bayley, Vancouver

Your electronic magazine is a joy and so informative. Because of your publication, I see that some of the dreams of my youth are actually occurring in cities and communities. Thank you so very much for caring and sharing.

Elaine Laycock, Orlando, Florida

Wow! What a superb issue! Congrats and thanks.

Howard Levine, Toronto
Price Tags 74

My husband John and I lived in that hotel next to the Sylvia Hotel when we were renovating our house on Quesnel Drive. The décor was 50’s Moderne – fabrics of Lurex thread etc. Our friends would come to admire/comment/criticize the kidney-shaped chairs with attached side tables and strange-shape coffee tables. You had to see it to believe it.

The monthly rent was dirt cheap and the cleaning left the dirt behind! In my mind, it was all quite priceless and probably now the furniture could be some collector’s pieces… But it probably went to the dump.

*Ginnie Richards, Vancouver*
Price Tags is an electronic magazine by Gordon Price

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Public art on the Sunrise Bikeway in southeast Vancouver. Special issue on public art coming up.