Newsletter page

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**Articles 1**

May 2019

Dear Readers,

There have been lots of changes at BEST these past few months. In April we introduced our new GM, Alan Woodland, and this month our departing GM Stephanie Williams bids farewell after almost 10 eventful years at BEST. In the midst of these comings and goings life hums along, with Commuter Challenge 2019 gearing up with lots of great prizes; BEST and friends hosting seniors’ Walkability/Wheelability audits in Metrotown; Living Streets getting going for another year in Surrey; The Bicycle Valet celebrating environmental sustainability; and BEST enjoying a group ski trip on Carload Wednesday.

We hope you have all been able to enjoy these beautiful spring days. Happy sustainable commuting and happy reading, everyone!

Stephanie Williams bids adios to BEST

Stephanie farewell shot

Her bags are packed and she's ready to go...

If you told me, way back in the fall of 2009, that I would be writing my farewell newsletter story in the spring of 2019, I would have laughed in disbelief. But here we are.

I remember my interview for my 6 month internship with then Operations Manager, Steve Beck, and then Executive Director, Marg Mahan. Marg commented that the flats I had worn for the interview would need to be replaced with much more practical shoes. I knew then that this was the place for me!

Working at BEST, from interning, to coordinating The Bicycle Valet, to running the organization, has been a remarkable journey for me, and one that I am so grateful to have had the privilege to experience. Most of all, this is because of the people I’ve had the opportunity to work with through my roles in the organization. This includes all of the amazing volunteers, who are truly the backbone of the organization, the dedicated staff, the extremely supportive Board of Directors, and our many partners and supporters. I wouldn’t have stayed so long without so much support.

What I am most proud of:

Developing The Bicycle Valet into BEST’s flagship program and an expected, respected service at Metro Vancouver events, buoyed by a community of over 350 volunteers

Working with the Parkbus team to bring the service to BC - which has now taken over 3900 people to BC Parks by express bus.

Coordinating the work of over 20 organizational members in a very successful Collective Impact project to increase and improve transportation options for seniors, called Seniors on the Move.

I’m also excited to see where all our most recent projects go, including:

Parkpass: A new platform helping park agencies manage demand and promote transportation options

WalkSide: A platform mapping sidewalks and wheelchair accessible routes - half of the City of Vancouver is now mapped!

Cycling without Age: An inspirational program from Denmark which uses cycling trishaws to reduce seniors’ isolation, which BEST is helping bring to Vancouver.

Mostly, I am proud to have been a part of BEST’s long 28-year history and the sustainable transportation community that has opened up to me. I will be keeping track of where it goes in the next 28.

For those wondering where I’ll be going next, I’m taking a year off to go traveling. After that, who knows. One thing I do know: the experience I gained at BEST will be be integral to my future endeavours.

Thank you,

Stephanie Williams, outgoing General Manager, former coordinator of The Bicycle Valet, Commuter Challenge, and intern.

BESTies forever.

Commuter Challenge: Try sustainable commuting and win!

CC photo

Get creative with your commute during BC Commuter Challenge Week June 2 - 8th.

Congratulations to Major Tom & Mobi by Shaw Go for winning BC Commuter Challenge’s Early Bird Prize Draw on April 15th! Both companies won five entries to 2019 Tough Mudder Whistler.

Everyone who participates during BC Commuter Challenge from June 2nd to 8th and logs their commutes can win a prize - there are 55 prizes in all including cycling events (RBC Whistler Granfondo, Ryder Hesjedal’s Tour de Victoria, Triple Crown for Heart), theatre tickets (Bard on the Beach, Arts Club donated by accounting firm Morgan and Company LLP), climbing gym passes (The Hive, Crag X, Cliffside), clothing (Icebreaker, Side Saddle), entertainment (Vancouver International Film Festival, Vancouver Folk Festival), bike commuting gear by Two Wheel Gear and many more…...check out the full list of prizes at https://commuterchallengebc.ca/prizes.

It is fast and easy to register yourself and the organization you work for and will only take a few minutes. If you are already a sustainable commuter you might as well log your trips and be in the running for some great prizes. If you use a car to commute this is a perfect opportunity to change it up a little and use a sustainable way to commute such as walking/running, cycling, skateboarding, transit, telecommuting or even carpooling. The event is only one week long but our hope is that some people may find using sustainable transportation to commute a practical and enjoyable alternative…...and a money-saving one because, as you likely know, BC has the highest gas prices in North America!

Want another sustainable transportation idea for your commute? Try using MODO for your carpooling needs. If you are new to Modo you can get a $50 drive-time credit using the code BESTCOMMUTE. Using Modo (or any other sustainable transportation option) to commute and logging your trip also makes you eligible for winning more drive-time credits. Some exciting news that Modo has recently announced: they now have two hydrogen fuel cell vehicles in their fleet! The Hyundai Nexo hydrogen fuel cell SUV is a zero GHG emitting vehicle and has a range of up to 570 kms.

Many sustainable transportation alternatives can be slower and sometimes inconvenient. But slowing down has its own merits as well. I recently cycle commuted home with a co-worker across the Ironworkers’ Memorial Bridge and we stopped at the top to enjoy a beautiful sunset. It would have been even more perfect if our partners were there but we proved that two dudes can enjoy a sunset together and not be too weird.

Some inconveniences may include getting rained on, being sweaty, waiting for transit etc. Most problems are easily solved (umbrella/raincoat with hood or hat, change of clothes, reading or playing a game while waiting) and when you balance those inconveniences against the CO2 emissions not going into the atmosphere, the choice is clear.

Instead of fuming in traffic (car and driver), you might have some interesting stories to tell by using sustainable transportation. One of my favourites is when riding my bike in rural South Surrey, I saw a woman running after a llama on the road I was riding on. I offered to help her but she said she had it under control. I noticed the llama had a leash around its neck and she must have let go by mistake or the llama yanked away from her, as the animal was about six feet tall and quite muscular (probably from all the exercise it got from escaping from its owner!).

If you have an interesting sustainable commuting story, email it to Stuart Lew, stuart.lew@best.bc.ca. We will post your story and award a prize to the best one.

Seniors on the Move: Walkability/Wheelability Audits!

Seniors participating in audits of key walking areas in Burnaby.

On April 17th, BEST, together with our SFU Gerontology partners, Voices Of Burnaby Seniors (VOBS), and City of Burnaby hosted Walkability/ Wheelability audits in the Metrotown area. We started with a one-hour training session led by SFU Gerontology project leads with the SWAN (Stakeholders Walkability/ Wheelability Audits in Neighbourhoods) tool newly revised with a Vision Zero (road safety) lens. Then, four groups of 5 or 6 people went out for an hour into four areas to document their observations for key walking routes identified by VOBS.

Together we identified barriers and room for improvement, including: narrow sidewalks, bumpy/irregular walkways, sandwich board obstructions, poor signage and markings, and curb cuts leading into the road. Next, after collecting each groups’ SWAN forms and photos, we will draft up a report of findings for the City of Burnaby. Part 2 of this Burnaby session will be in June, with more areas to check for walkability/wheelability in other parts of Burnaby throughout the summer. This project is being made possible through the Fraser Health Vision Zero Community Grant.

As part of BC Seniors’ Week June 2-8, and on-going for the month of June, we invite you to take part in our Walkability/Wheelability Wednesdays (or flexible for other days) initiative. Are you interested in hosting in your neighbourhood? Please contact Janette by phone 604-669-2860 or email janette.mcintosh@best.bc.ca

On Monday June 3rd, BEST will also be at the City of Richmond’s 55+ ACTIVATE! Health and Wellness Fair. For more information please go here. We hope to see you there!

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Two Transit Training Workshops will be hosted at Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House on May 13th and May 30th. Interested in attending? Or for more information please contact Jessie Huang, 604-879-8208 ext 105, jhuang@mpnh.org.

Interested in hosting a workshop? please contact Janette McIntosh 604-669-2860, janette.mcintosh@best.bc.ca.

Living Streets program underway in Surrey

Surrey youth take to the street and make some shocking observations...

The Living Streets program is underway in Surrey again this spring and summer! I was very happy to engage with some wonderfully enthusiastic youth groups to kick off our 11th season. (For background to the program, visit here).

On our walk around the North Surrey Recreation Centre with the Kwantlen Park Secondary Girls Empowerment Group we made some stunning observations. Very similar features were noted by the North Surrey Secondary Girls Empowerment Group in their audit around the school.

Inconvenient obstructions, missing crosswalks and sidewalks that simply disappear!

The common theme for the day was a very quick decrease in pedestrian infrastructure and upkeep as we moved just one block away from our starting point. New infrastructure around North Surrey Rec Centre and Public Library was a treat, but as we walked East it quickly crumbled. Sidewalks disappeared, road markings vanished and cars seemed to speed past at just the right moment to highlight the importance of consistent infrastructure.

In Vancouver I had the opportunity to attend the VSB Sustainability Conference on behalf of BEST and offer two workshops to students. The entire event was planned and coordinated by a group of very promising students who have already started to take action on climate change. The theme of the conference this year is lifestyle and how youth can make a difference in their community.

Volunteers are needed for upcoming events! Please let me know if you’d like to help lead a walking audit. Events include:

May 5th - Surrey Leadership Youth Council (SLYC)

July 10th - S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

July 16th - S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

July 17th - S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

July 18th - S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

July 19th - S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

For more information on Living Streets please contact coordinator Stephen White, stephen.white@best.bc.ca, 604 669 2860.

The Bicycle Valet: Go Green!

April was a month of environmental sustainability and appreciation of nature at The Bicycle Valet. Surrey’s Party for the Planet began the month with the celebration of Earth Day. With a sustainable marketplace, environmental workshops, and a succulent giveaway the party had it all! The Bicycle Valet as well as Living Streets were on hand to contribute to the sustainability of the day, and had a blast doing it!

Sakura Days Japan Fair fell on the same weekend. Taking place at the VanDusen Botanical Gardens, this festival celebrated Japanese culture and the annual bloom of the cherry blossoms!

The Vancouver Sun Run took place on that Sunday, with runners from across Metro Vancouver taking on the 10k course. With The Bicycle Valet at the finish line, cyclists came out in support of their friends and family, braving the hail and winds, proving once again that the Vancouver cycling community is one of the most dedicated around.

Looking back at a sunnier Sun Run (2018).

We wrapped up the month with another Earth Day event, this time in cooperation with Youth For Climate Justice Now, as well as working alongside our friends at HUB Cycling to help them kick off their Bike to Work Week campaign!

Coming this month The Bicycle Valet will return at all of these exciting events!

May 5th - BMO Vancouver Marathon

May 5th - Kids Help Phone - Walk So Kids Can Talk

May 10th - Whitecaps vs Portland Timbers

May 15th - Whitecaps vs Atlanta United FC

May 25th - Whitecaps vs FC Dallas

May 30th - L’ecole Bilingue Bikers’ Breakfast

May 31st - Whitecaps vs Toronto FC

Make sure to keep up to date with our calendar as we are always adding new events, and be sure to follow us on Twitter and Instagram (@TheBicycleValet)!

For more information on anything related to The Bicycle Valet, please contact Erik at erik@best.bc.ca or (604) 669-2860.

BEST celebrates Carload Wednesday on the slopes

BEST Staff (clockwise from front left): Alan, Mirtha, Steph, Janette, Erik and Steve.

Back in March, when there was much more snow on the mountains, the BEST staff went out for the second annual ski trip on Carload Wednesday! We took advantage of a few of our favourite things - deals, carpools, skiing and socializing - and hit the slopes of the North Shore.

Modo provided the wheels for our outing (which were winter rated) and Mt Seymour was the destination. Mt Seymour offers a flat rate for your carpool on Wednesdays in the winter so we packed the van with Alan, Mirtha, Steph, Janette, Erik and Steve.

**If you need more articles and text here is the like to find them**

<http://best.bc.ca/>