

THE OKANAGAN SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2008

TRANSPORTATION

Bus service disappoints

I am a student at UBC Okanagan and every morning I ride the bus with my son to his daycare, drop him off, and then take the bus up to the university.

On a good day, the ride takes me about an hour, and along the way I read a book or mark papers, as I am a teaching assistant for first-year English classes.

I have always found riding the bus to be an enriching experience, which allows me to talk with other commuters and to build community bonds.

However, this week my commute has taken me over three hours to get my son to his daycare and then get to my job. In -20C weather, it is extremely frustrating to stand out in the cold with my young child while bus after bus passes us going the opposite direction.

Wednesday was the worst experience I have ever had as I and a group of other parents with young children stood outside for more than 45 minutes without a bus in sight. Our young children were weeping as cold tears ran down their cheeks as we tried to explain to them why a bus was not there to pick us up.

It is unacceptable that the City of Kelowna would allow this to happen to its most vulnerable citizens. Many of the people would ride the bus are parents, students, seniors, disabled, or just want to lower their global footprint. On a day when buses are to come every 10 to 15 minutes, I want to know why there was no bus available to shelter my young son and I from the cold.

In my opinion, the late or non-existent buses illuminates the social inequality that the City of Kelowna perpetuates. By paying taxes and for the privilege to ride the bus, these services need to be available and accessible to everyone. Yet riding the bus is not something that everyone can participate in, as lately the buses are not arriving on time, or at all, and often getting to the bus stop is difficult for people as the sidewalks are not cleared and people with strollers, walkers, or wheelchairs are unable to get through the snow.

The City of Kelowna needs to take responsibility for vulnerable people who rely on public transportation for their mobility and freedom.

***Kelsey Wheelhouse,
Kelowna***

City on right track to make community bicycle-friendly

Kelowna city council has just approved funds to update the city's master plan for cycling networks and to support a study of an offroad cycling route along Glenmore Road from McKinley Landing Road to Lake Country.

These initiatives are important steps toward making cycling a viable, enjoyable, progressive and truly important part of our transportation network.

Considering the future costs of fossil fuels, climate change and the need to make

our area more people-friendly, cycling and other self-propelled means of travel must become a bigger part of our transportation mix.

Providing for cyclists not only means that cyclists benefit, but ensures that our city is designed on a scale appropriate for its inhabitants.

This will not happen if we ignore the current realities.

There are many areas of Kelowna that cannot be safely accessed by bicycle and

there are times of the year when riding a bicycle in Kelowna is not only unpleasant, but positively dangerous.

City council and Mayor Sharon Shepherd are to be congratulated for taking the long-term view despite the pressures resulting from the present financial climate.

Keep up the good work. We sincerely look forward to working with the city and other stakeholders on all cycling related matters.

Grant Rice,
Kelowna Area Cycling Coalition

Glenmore bypass could be 2009's biggest project

By **RON SEYMOUR**

The Daily Courier

One day next September, most of the 850 cars and trucks that drive by Geoff Hall's front door every hour should disappear.

"That'll be a very good day," Hall said Wednesday, anticipating a quieter atmosphere in his neighbourhood once the new \$11-million Glenmore bypass opens.

"The traffic along here gets worse all the time, and the road is pretty crummy," Hall said. "Walking's no treat either, because there aren't any sidewalks."

Construction of the Glenmore bypass would be the single biggest transportation project in 2009. If council grants approval during budget deliberations in early January, work would begin in April with a completion target of September.

The new 1.2-kilometre road would parallel Glenmore Road to the east, between Dallas and Scenic Roads. It would be four lanes from Dallas to Union, then two lanes on to Scenic.

On the books for more than two decades, the bypass has finally reached the top of the city's priority list. That's mostly because of increasing traffic caused by new

subdivisions in Glenmore Valley, such as Wilden.

The average hourly vehicle count has now reached the 800-900 mark, the point at which the road needs to be replaced with the bypass, said Ron Westlake, the city's regional services director.

The bypass would be a continuation of upgrades done in the past to Glenmore Road between Bernard Avenue and Dallas Road. It would also have sidewalks and a separate bike path on the west side.

Most of the necessary land has been acquired, but some property negotiations remain to be concluded.

Once the bypass opens, the existing stretch of Glenmore Road between Dallas and Scenic Roads would likely be renamed and used for local traffic only.

At the Highlands Retirement Residence, where the average age is 80, people are already looking forward to a quieter future and calmer traffic.

"The speed limit is 50 along here, but people drive at 70 or 80," residence manager Lynn Anderson said.

"We'll be very happy when the bypass opens."

RECREATION FACILITIES

Glenmore deserves its share

As a member of the Glenmore Valley Community Association for the last three years and currently the president, I would like to express the following personal opinions.

We have been advocating and petitioning the City of Kelowna for over three years on the need for a recreation facility in our area. Meetings with various city departments, mayor and council have been frustrating, yet sprinkled with the glimmer of hope that we will be next on the list.

As we are put on hold, we witness expanding growth in existing facilities.

The unprecedented growth in population in the Glenmore Valley should in itself illustrate the need for our recreational facility. Currently, there are five schools located in Glenmore. The school board chose to relocate Dr. Knox Middle School to Glenmore to service current and future demands.

I see growth of population, schools, yet, no planning for a recreational facility to accommodate increased needs.

A facility along the lines of Parkinson Recreation Centre, even without a pool, offers

various activities to all age groups. A community centre would both be socially prudent and congruent with city ideals of becoming a green community.

I believe we must remain diligent in our efforts to gain a priority with city hall.

Our association has been active in attempting to persuade the city to establish an active transportation corridor from Glenmore to UBC Okanagan.

**Kim Dodds,
Kelowna**

Glenmore Valley to be a key area in OCP review

■ **Area has been developed in 7 years to what was thought would be its total capacity**

By J.P. SQUIRE
The Okanagan Sunday

The Glenmore Valley in Kelowna already has more houses than the city's official community plan envisioned in 2000.

So it will be a key study area during an OCP review which begins this fall, city planner Gary Stephen told members of the Glenmore Valley Residents' Association last week.

The previous OCP review in 2000 envisioned another 1,000 new housing units on the former agricultural lands in the Glenmore Valley, he explained.

"As of this July, we've issued building permits for over 1,000. In seven years, we've built out what we thought the capacity of the Glenmore Valley was going to be. Done, gone."

However, there is still developable land available because developers constructed higher-density housing, he said.

"Obviously, that's another good reason from our perspective that we need to re-do the OCP because those projections weren't correct."

More projects are coming on stream with higher densities, using land a lot more wisely, which is a good thing, he said, "but what that means is more units are going to come on and they are going to have a greater impact on services, so we have re-evaluate the OCP from a land-use and servicing point of view."

One of biggest developments is and will continue to be Wilden in the Glenmore Highlands, where 220 homes have been built since 2003 out of 2,200 approved in its area structure plan.

In other Glenmore Valley changes:
■ Another 25,000 square feet of commercial space, perhaps with second-floor offices and even some residential housing, could be added to the 75,000-square-foot "village centre" on Kane Road at Glenmore Road.

■ The B.C. Agricultural Land Commission has approved-in-principle the Glenmore Connector between Glenmore Road and UBC Okanagan. The exact route hasn't been approved but an announcement is expected shortly on the valley's road network.

■ The Glenmore bypass will extend the current four lanes of Glenmore Road to Union Road, then two lanes will connect back to Glenmore Road. Road design was started, then shelved pending a transportation study in connection with the OCP review.

■ Glenmore Road is expected to be four-laned from there north to serve Kinnickinnick, formerly called the McKinley Landing wellness resort.

■ The upper section of Skyline Drive will be completed in October to connect Clifton Road housing to the Clement Avenue extension, aka Central Okanagan Bypass.

■ Work on a 4.5-metre Rails with Trails pathway will get underway on the Clement Avenue extension this fall with completion next spring.