

Safe Way to School? A report to the GVCA Sept 18, 2010



Parents walking or children cycling to school at North Glenmore Elementary are presented with a number of obstacles. Despite NO PARKING signs and information in the school newsletter Gator Gazette regarding no parking or stopping along Union Road both in the bike lanes and the bus stop, there are drivers aplenty who park their cars and walk their children to class leaving their cars blocking the bike lanes and the Bus Stop. Cyclists young and old are forced out into traffic or onto the sidewalks crowded with parents dropping off kids.



A Kelowna Transit Driver hams it up for the camera although the frustration is real. Cars parked illegally ahead of and within the bus stop prevented the driver from making a full entry into the bus stop. The vehicle in front of the bus remained parked for over 30 minutes. The minivan driver (on left) argued when she returned that “the driver had lots of room to get in”!

Many drivers park their cars totally within the bus zone or cycle path and walk to class with their kids. Some cars are parked for 15 minutes or more. Some parents stay in the car while their spouses walk kids to class. A Bylaw blitz on Sept 13 in the afternoon meant no cars were stopping in the no parking zone. By the next morning it was back to usual. The absence of NO PARKING signs, yellow lines or barriers does not make the parking restriction apparent. Curiously along Snowsell where parking is now permitted (according to the Gator Gazette) the no parking signs are still in place adding to the confusion.



In the 10 minutes leading up to class bell, dozens of parents dropped off their children, some taking the time to walk the kids to class leaving their cars parked wherever they felt like it.



On the first day of school parents expressed their frustration at the lack of places to pull off Union into the school to drop off their kids. Parents seemed oblivious to the fact that parking on Wyndam Cr. across from the school and jaywalking across the street was dangerous. Other drivers make a U-turn (both ways) on Union.



Students walking to North Glenmore Elementary from the Valley Road N Sexsmith neighbourhood have a number of obstacles to overcome along Union Road and Valley. Unsafe conditions at Valley Road and Union intersection leave students to cross Union to the sidewalk in mid block after traversing a muddy field in an attempt to avoid the dangerous curve north of Union on Valley Rd. N.



Students and others who ride their bikes on Union and stay off the sidewalk are forced into a narrow gap on the north side where the sign announcing the long completed Glenmore Bypass blocks the North boulevard of Union and the bicycle path is non existent. Cyclists travelling to and from Wilden to UBCO and other areas also use this route. The narrow road and poor site distances along with illegal truck traffic and speeders is leading to a potentially fatal outcome especially with winter ice and snow coming all too soon.



Adding to the worry of cyclists is heavy trucks and equipment illegally using Union Road and 200 block Valley Road N (not a truck route) to access projects in Wilden and other growth areas.



At the corner of Union and Glenmore the sidewalk is blocked by giant weeds. The corner site distance was also badly blocked at the intersection. The weeds have since been removed.