



# Bicycle Parking

## Bike Racks In The Comox Valley



Handy post--Courtenay 5th & Cliffe

In response to Coalition Member Dave Hardie's self proclaimed "rant" some investigative reporting was initiated to discover what the experts say is the most effective bicycle rack and what the bicycle parking availability is in the Comox Valley. Dave Hardie, Steve Allan, Brian Schoneberg, Ilze Viskere and Terry Dekker contributed their observations and photos about Bicycle parking in the Comox Valley.



Handy sign post--Courtenay 6th St.

*I find most public bike racks in the valley are most frustrating as they do not hold my bicycle very well. Bike racks can be generally classified two ways, ones that secure the front wheel (or rear wheel) and those that a bike leans against. There are many different types of bicycles so it is difficult to have one bike rack that fits all. However some bike racks support a greater variety of bikes reasonably well and some that do not support any bike very well. The worst rack I found is the expanded spring type found at Costco. It is a work of art but nothing more! The ubiquitous hanging coat hanger type racks sort of work if the bicycle is carefully placed and the bike is not bumped. The best bike rack I have found is at the Broken Spoke and with a few simple modifications it could easily accommodate thin tire road bikes and regular tire bikes as well as providing a leaning stand for any bicycle. It is a simple design that could be easily manufactured locally at any machine shop here in the valley. I hope any businesses or municipalities that are thinking of purchasing new bicycle racks check out the Broken Spoke's design and not just order in any common coat hanger type manufactured outside the valley.*

- Dave Hardie

### What Does the Cyclist Want?

A bicycle is an investment and leaving one unattended can result in damage or theft. A recent report advised that although the number of auto thefts in the valley has dropped bicycle thefts "jumped from 43 last year to 67 this year" (Comox Valley Record Nov 24, 2016). As a result, cyclists are interested in parking bicycles close to their destination, most preferably in their line of sight if they are stopping for food or beverages.

Although resourceful cyclists will lock up their bicycles using any available post, they prefer racks that support their bikes in an upright position preferably in two places and allow it to be secured by the frame and one or more wheels. The rack should be sturdy enough to resist being cut or detached with common hand tools, and so heavy or affixed, that it cannot be easily moved or lifted.

Ideally, racks should be protected from the elements, making it more comfortable for the cyclist to park the bicycle, lock and unload it. It will also aid in keeping the seat dry.

Although different styles of racks will work well for various types of bicycles, the design we found with universal effectiveness was the "A" or "Inverted U". This rack can be manufactured and installed fairly easily, can be placed individually or in groups and will not impede pedestrians or scooter operators. The cyclist can dismount, lock up and unload the bicycle with ease.

For more information visit:

[http://www.apbp.org/?page=Bike\\_Parking](http://www.apbp.org/?page=Bike_Parking)



Inverted U--Courtenay 5th & England



Further to our research, we found that the Comb, toast, spiral, and wheel well rack designs provide no support for the bicycle frame. This can result in bent wheels or even in bicycles falling over. The wheel well, in particular, can be a tripping hazard. Some combs will not accommodate a mountain bike with large tires and the one pictured at Tim Horton's is too close to the railing to even be used. The second comb rack pictured, situated at the plaza at Comox Ave. & Anderton Rd has spaces too wide to be secure (except for possibly a wide tired mountain bike) and if the rack were fully occupied handlebars and pedals would be entangled. The spiral rack found at St. Joseph's hospital is not wide enough for the bicycle to be securely leaned against and several bicycles tethered here would fall over into each other.

Wave style racks which were located in several locations, if used as intended, leave the bicycles parked perpendicular to the rack, not supported in two places and prone to falling over.

Modified coat hanger racks, such as the one at Home Depot, are often too low to accommodate a large front wheel and the bicycle needs to be secured on the side of the rack. The one at Thrifty's in East Courtenay requires that if you have panniers you need to leave room between bikes or use the end. Made of flat metal "ribbon" this rack can easily scrape your bike. The one at the Credit union, on Ryan Rd has triangles too small to support bike a frame. Outside of frame sort of works but the bike is likely to fall over.

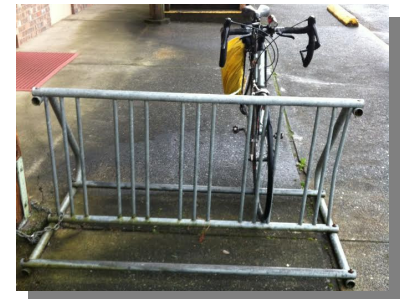
Wall bars, not an option found in the valley, are simple, relatively inexpensive & may be more appropriate than freestanding racks in areas where pavement widths are restricted. They may also be less intrusive but the disadvantage is that an excessively long chain is required to secure both the cycle wheels and the frame thus limiting the level of security.

In touring the valley, we found that bicycle racks are not always easy to find. The ones at Thrifty's in west Courtenay are not easy to spot in the parking lot and could use some signage placed above them. Others are tucked around corners and largely not within the cyclists line of sight at coffee shops and restaurants.

With the exception of the racks at Value Village and half the racks at the library, none of the stands



Comb rack—Tim Hortons, too close to the railing to be used at all



Comb rack—plaza at Comox Ave. & Anderton Rd.



Spiral rack—Costco



Spiral rack—St. Joseph's hospital



Wheel well rack-Cumberland



Toast rack—Cumberland



Wave rack—Health Unit Courtenay



Wave rack—Driftwood Mall



Modified coat hanger rack—Credit Union, Ryan Rd.



Modified coat hanger rack—Thrifty's East Courtenay



provided any protection from the elements.

The most artistic rack that we found was outside of the Joint in Courtenay, was highly visible and very functional providing support for the bicycle frame, and easy access to the door of the physiotherapy clinic.

Some excellent examples of universal racks were found on in Comox on Comox Ave. near the Salvation Army Thrift store and on the west side of the Comox mall and in Courtenay on the west side of 4th Street by the Coastal community Credit Union. Additionally, two inverted U racks were situated on two of the corners of 5th and England. This was efficient use of a small space to provide parking for 4 bicycles and there were many other locations along the main streets in Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland which would allow Inverted U racks or bollards.

The "Pi" found in the common area of the Thrifty's plaza in east Courtenay takes up little space but the "instructions" are printed in tiny tiny font and tell you to "Lift your Bike" up onto the "horn". This does not take into account that some people can't lift their bicycles.

Of interest were the bollards in Cumberland. There the local Rotary Club has installed several which allow for the lock up of two bicycles each. Both of these designs have the bicycle parked parallel to the sidewalk, take up very little room and are visible.

The City of Courtenay currently has no guidelines for bicycle parking but a finer detailed vision for street scapes is planned for a future time and would allow input from residents. Additionally, the Downtown Courtenay Business Association would be a natural partner in any endeavour to increase bicycle parking for downtown customers. The same would apply to Comox and Cumberland. It is possible to acquire attachments for existing road signs that would allow secure lock up of bicycles where parking space is limited, so this one creative solution to increase secure parking.



Coat hanger rack—Thrifty's w. Courtenay



The Joint Physiotherapy—Courtenay



Home Depot



Courtenay Library



Inverted U- -Comox Mall



Inverted U— Courtenay 4th Street



Inverted U--Courtenay 5th & England



Comox Ave near Salvation Army



The Pi—Thrifty's Plaza  
East Courtenay



Bollard—Cumberland