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West Vancouver puts brakes on Cedardale bike route

Jeremy Shepherd / North Shore News

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A planned West Vancouver bike lane is currently on hold after a group of Cedardale residents opposed the construction. Photo Mike Wakefield

A planned West Vancouver bike lane hit a dead end Monday when Cedardale residents came out en masse to oppose the cycle path.

The district's plan for a more connected cycling network includes a bike lane beginning at Inglewood Avenue and Third Street, just south of the Trans-Canada Highway.

Council approved the comprehensive plan in June, 2012, but most Cedardale residents were unaware of the path until the district sent out a letter the day before construction was set to begin on Monday.

"Some emails and phone calls started to fly around," noted district spokesman Jeff McDonald.

One email labelled the bike lane a crime connection, featuring a photo of a balaclava-clad criminal breaking into a car and noting that thieves will be able to get on and off the highway with ease.

"I made it a little strong because we had no second chance at all," explained 10-year Cedardale resident Dora Bergen.

Instead of a protest, between 20 and 25 district residents voiced their concerns to district staff over cups of coffee in a neighbourhood meeting Monday.

The residents stood together with near unanimity, according to Bergen. "It's about children's safety and it's also about having a peaceful and safe community."

Car break-ins have become so common in the neighbourhood that they often go unreported, according to Bergen.

Following the meeting, the project is "suspended indefinitely," according to McDonald. "There's some sensitivity in that area that staff weren't aware of," he said. "Staff realized they should have done some consultation rather than just informing people."

Bergen said she was "happily surprised" after watching the last piece of construction machinery being toted away. "We just count our blessings, I think, because we could have lost just as easy," she said.

There is no timetable to broach the bike lane, according to McDonald, but the project could resurface following community consultation.

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