

# The Kana:takon Infrastructure Proposal

By  
Students For Bonding Of Community

---

## Abstract

North America is defined as having twenty three countries. The focus of this proposal is concerned about the three largest countries that take up almost the entire shelf that defines the continent: Canada, USA, Mexico.

In general all three have ongoing so-called infrastructure concerns such as ports threatened by inundation (perhaps due to climate change). Frequently cited as a classical problem in this area are topics such as ‘crumbling bridges’, ‘bad roads’, etc.

The proposals that Students For Bonding Of Community make here do not directly depend on or change the plans that these three countries have with regards to the above examples. Our proposals *complement* the designs being discussed, add further requirements that do not seem to be considered presently, and broaden the very definition of what the term *infrastructure* actually means.

The word ‘kana:takon’ is a First Nation (Mohawk) word meaning, in English, *village*. The reader will observe that any plans we suggest that are infrastructure related will shed light on the health and well-being of people who live in these three counties. Most ordinary infrastructure discussions seem to focus on transportation issues and are primarily motivated by commerce demands.

We view the pages that follow as feedback (sometimes even pushback) on the knee-jerk commerce-only solutions. Why? People who live in these villages (really any urban area) are actually sometimes constrained by ribbons of roads, bridges, etc. that create, in effect, disjointed neighborhoods (our villages). You will see below (as we provide specific alterations and suggestions related to the typical commerce-only plans) that we factor in actual peoples’ impact when it comes to grandiose plans that inadvertently cause built-in and systemic tensions, separation, and a myriad of social ills.

---

## History

We have made the following observation: all too often pleasant and useful linear areas that are enjoyed by the villagers who occupy any given community are, it turns out, by accident and afterthoughts. Here’s a few simple examples:

- In Europe there exists many towns, if you will, that were surrounded by mighty, high and thick walls. A number of them have been refactored as pleasant stroll able pedestrian byways that actually circle the older portion of the former smaller towns.
- In the Americas defunct railroads have become ‘rail trails’.
- Also certain canals that used to require horse paths have met the same refactored benefit for all nearby villagers.
- Former Native American paths that haven’t become roads also serve as pedestrian byways.

The above history, although obvious to everyone, is mentioned here because it represents a pattern. Infrastructure byways are typically built for a well-defined purpose. The purpose falls out of favor. They sometimes lie idle for many years. Villagers apply pressure to improve their own destiny and the useless facility is *refactored* for all to enjoy.

This paper presented this history to prove the point that we will reinforce later. When the serious proposals for the aforementioned 'commerce-only' infrastructures are considered we hope that history is NOT repeated. We hope our input is considered *early on* (as the bridges or what not are improved and/or rebuilt)!

---

## Name Confusion Exists

All the Americas have specific words for something called a bridge, a road, etc. Here we will cite (using USA nomenclature) what exactly we are writing this paper to discuss. First we list unsuitable names:

- The XYZ "Bike Trail"
- The ABC "Bike Path"
- The PQR "Rail Trail"
- The CDF "Canal Path"
- The IJK "Recreational Trail"
- The LMN "Linear Park"
- The Northern Strand Community Trail

We could go on and on about the above list of unsuitable names. Before detailing our specific beefs about the above names we will introduce our suggested generic name of any and all of the above misnamed entities. Remember we're discussing the *three countries* cited above.

- community/communauté/comunidad
- filament/filament/filamento

Above we present three meaningful words in English/French/Spanish respectively. Even if one is NOT fluent in two of those languages we believe one can understand the intent, the meaning of the other two 'foreign' terms.

Next we explain: why use the term 'community'? Especially why the term 'filament'? Our rationale depends on the "It takes a village..." concept that we honor using the 'kana:takon' term with.

All the above names serve the nearby abutting community. The so-called community (villagers) are NOT all cyclists as exhibited by this incomplete list of participants: walkers, joggers, strollers, roller-blade folks, push scooter youths, wagon pullers, wheel-chair folks, adult walker frame users, and, finally, bikes. Event users such as virtual walks to raise funds consist as a special case. At times when the facility is closed we observe winter cross-country skiers and snow shoe walkers as well.

Depending on the facility's location (such as near entrances to trams or subways in an urban setting, near college campuses) we also note that the vast majority of traffic is either NOT via bikes or, conversely, crowded with bikes. Any so-called trail with the name 'bike' should be gently renamed - perhaps honoring folks who unselfishly helped to develop it or, like schools, to honor a community stalwart.

To reinforce our concerns about these facilities' nomenclature we have noted that some have been renamed over time. In our fictitious list above we compliment whomever conjured up descriptive names such as 'recreational' and/or 'linear park'. These are indeed a vast improvement. Clearly that rather long list of actual users (cited above) all seek *recreation* in one form or another. Since many of the facilities have occasional park benches (to rest on), border meadows, ponds, waterways, etc. they do take on the ambience of a real 'park' that needs to be differentiated from the likes of a baseball park. Calling it *linear* seems to fit the bill. Kudos to those that have banned terms like "bike", "rail", "canal" from any descriptions of the *community* facilities. There are exceptions such as if the trail exclusively borders a canal, a sea, a lake, a river, or even a sentimental defunct railway. Then it seems appropriate to label it as such.

The last name listed as poor or mediocre name choices is an actual name. A member of our group cited as a favorable label that starts heading in a direction that we suggest for all facilities. It used to be called "Bike To The Sea". It connects eleven towns (we call them villages in our exposition for a reason you shall see later). It progresses from a distant village and proceeds several miles and terminates at a marvelous beach along the Atlantic Ocean. The visions started in the early 1990's. Sadly it is still not done! This is even though an abandoned railway bed has laid fallow all those years! The group has never given up trying. This paper, we hope, will serve as a final boost leading towards success for this specific effort and many others that can't seem to get off the ground.

The initial mistake (we think) was in the naming of the trail. Maybe after ten-fifteen years they finally realized that villagers FEAR an assault, an onslaught of BIKES in their very own back yards. Talk about resistance! Yikes to bikes! The group caved on the old name and came up with: The Northern Strand Community Trail (as we listed above). This was a huge improvement. Think about it: the issue is almost primarily a *marketing* one! Selling the benefits and reducing the fears of abutters.

What we applaud about their decision on a name change are two major improvements in the name: (1) Community and (2) Strand. Why is this better?

The *Community* phrasing should be self-evident based upon our rather extensive list of community members that actually are expected to use the facility. Last, but not least, bicyclists.

But what about the term *Strand*? Why is this an improvement? Listen to us: these two combined describe (1) *who* is expected to share and use the delightful facility (i.e. the entire village community) and (2) the *actual physical design* of the facility. All facilities that we are discussing in this paper are, looking at the map, tiny thin *strands* that meander from one village to another. We welcome the term they chose. In two words we know who and how. Who the users are and how it differs from, for example, a trail, a path, a park.

There's not too much an improvement that we can suggest to boost the pairing of those two words to convey the concept of the village-to-village infrastructure concept this paper concerns. However we will make a humble suggestion that, in the end, could make things better to understand when it comes to the actual purpose of any and all these facilities.

Strand, like a strand of hair, says it all. Almost. We'll try out an improvement without losing the notion of a *single thread-like very thin faculty*. Compared to Interstates that are 100 meters wide our little strands are but 3 meters wide. Unfortunately, at least in English, the same word 'strand' conjures up a feeling of being *stranded*. Left alone. Moreover it conjures up a famous

avenue of **Strand** theaters. We'll try to improve this wonderful thin-as-a-hair concept with a new term.

Refactor. What does that word mean? Defunct railways had rails uplifted, ties removed, asphalt (or stone dust, etc.) covered for smoothness and 'presto' a very nice strand for all the above listed community members was built. The old mechanism (railway) was *refactored*. Dirt canal paths were refactored. We hope the reader understands refactor: some entity in decline, may possibly be rendered useless, finds a new somewhat creative existence.

We regret to announce the evident spiraling death of those, already old-fashioned, incandescent light bulbs! Welcome energy savings LED bulbs. Goodbye the old standards with their filament wire that burst out not just light but wasted heat and energy! What is a filament. (1) it is a *strand*; (2) it is a very tough strand made from metal even; (3) it provided light for years!

The generic class of what used to be called any name you pick: path, trail, railway bed, is in our opinion a simple *community filament*. The second word conjuring up a narrow strand that is not only narrow but sheds light. Very import - the sheds light part. The entire kana:takon philosophy ("It takes a village"...) depends on, thrives on disparate presently disjointed neighborhood pockets feeling TENSION. Fear Indeed. "Who are those souls at the other end of my own city?" we observe the shuddering denizens asking. The almost total lack of the kana:takon approach is why it seems to take a full generation to get folks to succumb to the idea of such a strand in their "back yard". These poor souls who reject the joyful, recreational, community based facilities simply "*don't see the light!*"

We DO NOT believe that any existing facilities need to be renamed. We don't urge maps to be redrawn. The generic name, that's what we describe here, of 'community filament' is not a name of existing or future trails, paths, or whatever they were inadvertently called. Do not confuse it with an actual name. It is our suggested *standard*.

---

## The Community Filament Standard

Here we will take an example. For continuity we'll use the prior mentioned facility: 'The Northern Strand Community Trail'.

### *Suggested Signage*

Located at every entry/egress point there exists a sign. Using our example as a posting we see:

Welcome to The Northern Strand Community Trail  
(A Community Filament Standard - CFS)

Visitors: Please adhere to the CFS curtesy rules and suggestions as you enjoy your excursion today!

The reverse of the sign might say something like: "Goodbye" (or whatever) as folks leave.

“So what might be the so-called CFS curtesy rules and suggestions?” The reader wonders. Here we stipulate possibilities:

We start with suggestions related to bicycle ‘rules’ due to the wide perception that remains entrenched that cyclists practically own the filament stand.

#### BIKES:

- Stay to the right side (except for passing).
- Passing: say on approach ‘on your left!’ (fr: ‘à ta gauche’, es: ‘a tu izquierda’); alert with bell otherwise.
- Proceed *very slowly* when passing
- No races allowed unless a sponsored event such as a fund raiser permits it.
- Children too young to abide by bicycle rules should be encouraged to practice elsewhere until they know enough to never stray into oncoming traffic (pedestrian or otherwise). Same rule applies to children on scooters, roller blades, etc.
- In general absolutely no motor assisted devices permitted! Exceptions could exist for battery assisted bikes that older folks use. A related exception is battery transit chairs for the disabled. Any assist type items on wheels cannot exceed the maximum speed posted (if noted).

#### OTHER USERS:

- Pet owners **MUST** have short leash if on the pavement. Pet to right of owner. No feces on pavement. Owners bag droppings. Retractable leashes allowed OFF the pavement that cannot extend as far as the pavement borders.
- Ensure walking children stay in front of adults and on right side. Never allow them to enter the left side of the pavement.
- Strollers, wagons, roller blade users stay to the right as usual (except to overcome and pass).

#### ALL COMMUNITY USERS

- No graffiti permitted on pavement and/or private abutter property and fences (without permission)
- Abutter fence gates that make it convenient to access the filament strand are PRIVATE. Never use them as a short cut to enter or exit the facility unless permitted.
- Use ‘Carry-In/Carry-out’ scouting rules when picnicking along the wayside.
- Support small businesses that pop up along the way for drinks, wash room facilities, food, etc.
- Meet and Greet. The filament should shed light on the folks who live nearby that you never could have guessed!

#### ABUTTERS

- Abide by local ordinance. For example political signage, if allowed, may expire after some duration of display.
- Enjoy the wonderful amenity that should keep you and the family hale and healthy!
- We observe that folks that do live in close proximity to the filament actually add value to their property. Nice going.

#### POLICING

- Typically with bicycle officers equipped as *community police* (no guns please). Body cameras, radios for support, non-lethal restraint equipment, are suitable accouterments.
- Enforce rules. Ticket scofflaws such as motorized users.
- Develop a fine rapport with any and all users such as calling for aid if someone has a flat or whatever event requires help.

---

## The Community Filament Infrastructure Design Goals

This section suggests design goals. It is especially relevant when proposing brand new filament strands.

One reason we hedge on the name ‘liner park’ cited earlier (as attractive as it sounds) is this: it really doesn’t conjure up an image of a park as we know them today. Think baseball, football fields. Think bleachers as well. Think large paved lots to park cars. This is far from the model we discuss here!

We have heard the term for points to access the filament strand as ‘Trail Heads’. A term apparently borrowed from mountain folks who travel up a dirt road and park their vehicle in order to hike in the woods. We don’t like borrowed terms any more than we like calling the filament strands a “bike trail”.

Typically, because the filament strand meanders in snake like fashion over many kilometers it has a huge number of entry/egress points. For the time being we have no name except a suggested one: *socket pockets*. Our reasoning, the reader asks? A properly built filament has (as it gets developed) underground various utility supplies. Indeed some actually justify building the filament. An example: At every so-called socket pocket there should exist about six kiosks that permit a parked EV to charge batteries while using the strand itself. Whatever utility bids to install this service (and help defray the cost of building this infrastructure element) gains over time to profit! It goes unsaid that other useful buried and critical infrastructure items such as sizable water supply pipes, sewage pipes, optical cables, etc. could be beneficial to the greater community.

Furthering with the electrical supply idea: if storm damage wrecks above ground poles and disrupts power, the utility has a right to shut off the kiosks and refactor the power to a number of nearby homes that have lost power.

The technique we describe here is called ‘piggy-backing’ use cases. Any driver that has gone over a huge bridge that crosses high over a river has likely noticed weird ‘pipes’ of some sort that the bridge load handles as well. This brings us to a very important notion. When and if some grand designs exist to replace those crumbling bridges we mentioned at the very beginning of this paper: PLEASE PIGGYBACK a three meter wide, safe filament strand so that villagers are no longer isolated, living in fear of others ‘on the other side’, unenlightened!

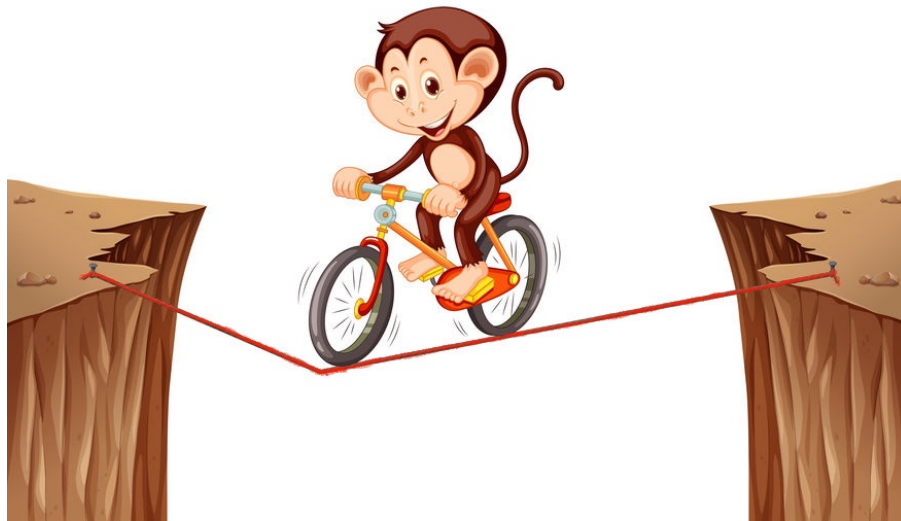
---

## Summary

Our understanding is that continuous discussions within the separate three major nations that comprise most of the entire North American continent have concerns about crumbling infrastructure. This paper simply hopes to broaden the definition of infrastructure. The definition needs to be slightly (we think) enlarged to gain commensurate benefits that should pay over time. Here we list a few rationales to support the refocused effort.

- The recent pandemic has caused a rethinking in many folks lives. Mental health, physical health have been in the news. The stories provide evidence that many communities need *more bonding* (to reduce tension) and a *proper infrastructure*. We humbly suggest one way to achieve the proper infrastructure that should address these issues.

- The CFS approach, once understood, should encourage greater acceptance from groups that, in the past, resisted nearby trails. For example there are many creative ideas to mention to abutters. Possibilities include direct access to EV access as if they have their own charging kiosk. Reliable backup power for the same group when overhead wires break during storms, etc.
- Why turn down tourist dollars? We hope and even expect to attract many bicycle enthusiasts from the other two countries (in a three country partnership). The CFS is a *standard*. Any trail that has that 'brand' should be easily identified on all sorts of maps including mobile ones. The standard isn't complete but will, for example, have icons that express ideal routes for the likes of wheel chair users and other routes marked to challenge bikers.
- We would be remiss if we neglected to credit a forth 'country' (if you will) squeezed between Canada and the USA. That country, the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne, can teach us all a thing or two about what it means to become a close knit village. A kana:takon.



It's time to ignite bicycle filament strands, enlighten the village!