

urbane cyclist

THE VANCOUVER AREA CYCLING COALITION QUARTERLY

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Making cycling an integral part of Metro Vancouver's transportation culture

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Metro Vancouver Chosen to
**Host the Velo-city
2012 Conference**

SPRING 2011 #48



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The VACC Board meetings are open to all interested in bicycling in Metro Vancouver. We generally meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm. Phone 604 878 8222 for details.
info@vacc.bc.ca

INTERNET

Keep up on the latest cycling issues and events. Join one of our e-mail lists at www.vacc.bc.ca/lists

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

We welcome articles of 400 words or less about cycling in Metro Vancouver. Submissions may be sent to **Urbane Cyclist: newsletter@vacc.bc.ca**

We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

NEXT ISSUE OF URBANE CYCLIST:

May 2011

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Suggestions for Easing the Tension Between Cyclists and Drivers

Michael Clague puts a call out to both cyclists and drivers to get talking about safety- together! He works in the fields of adult education, social policy and planning, and community development. Michael is a Member of the Order of Canada.

By Michael Clague

As a member of both the VACC and the BCAA, I am writing out of great concern for the ever-increasing climate of hostility between those who cycle and those who drive.

May I suggest that these two organizations get together and model collaboration by organizing a joint safety education program for cyclists and drivers? We can also work together in proposing joint solutions to issues that will make the roads a less contested and more respected space for both transportation modes.

Here are some thoughts:

- Jointly produce a good manners booklet/flyer for road safety and for respecting traffic regulations with the logos of both organizations.
- Distribute the flyer through bike shops, car dealerships, motor vehicle licensing offices and at bicycle and car events with joint information booths.
- During Bicycle Safety Weeks and at the start of school, college and university

seasons have information booths at strategic locations on bike routes.

- At events, offer free “goodies” that encourage people to stop, be reminded about safety and to be invited to make suggestions for improvements.
- Invite the Mountain Equipment Co-Op to offer free, inexpensive mini lights to the first 1,000 cyclists who stop to receive safety information during Bicycle Weeks.
- Fund the program by approaching ICBC, major bike distributors (e.g. Norco) and automobile dealerships.
- Have VACC and BCAA volunteers work together at information and safety events.
- Invite cyclists and drivers to offer constructive solutions to share the road issues

The key is moving from “blame the other” to personal ownership for cycling and driving behaviour. Pro-active collaboration between VACC and the BCAA would model this.

By Rob Brownie

Jan Gehl: Cities for People

The renowned architect, planner and cycling supporter delivered the 2011 Arthur Erickson Lecture recently at the Vancouver Playhouse.

As Jan Gehl began his talk entitled “Cities for People” it was clear from his opening remarks that architects, planners and politicians have a long way to go to fix cities that have embraced the automobile for over sixty years.

“Traffic planners make room for traffic- they make cars happy.” Transportation planning and the architecture that supports the movement of vehicles at 60 km/hr require large spaces and huge signage, erasing detail and people from the street. For too long, Gehl asserts, cities have been planned not from eye level but from an “airplane perspective.” What looks great on a map or plan has little connection to what we experience as pedestrians and cyclists. We all suffer as a result.

It is “people culture” that needs to drive how city spaces are organized which means slowing our streets down to accommodate movement at 5 km/hr. The “lively city” is one that is attractive, safe, sustainable and healthy- a city that invites people into the public realm rather than chasing them away.

For Gehl, change in how cities

are developed is often piecemeal or arrives in half-measures and yet there are success stories we can all embrace. In terms of cycling infrastructure New York City is working at a rapid-fire pace to improve what has long been a horrific environment for cyclists. Where bicycles have traditionally been used to protect parked cars, parked cars are now protecting bicycles with curbside bike lanes.

And Copenhagen, of course, now boasts a staggering statistic- 36% of all commuter traffic is done by bike. An additional boost to cycling advocacy is a tidy fact promoted on the City of Copenhagen website. A person choosing to cycle adds 25¢ per cycled kilometer to societal health and wellbeing while driving costs society 10¢ per kilometer driven.

But an underlying message of Jan Gehl’s is that constructing new bike lanes is not enough. A complete shift in how we view our cities must take place, one that involves the development of dynamic streetscapes that integrate a whole range of activity- cycling, walking, playing and interacting. In closing his talk Gehl ponders whether we might need a Department of Public Life to lead the re-design of our cities and streets. In the meantime, we can all do our part by behaving like the people we are and slowing the city down.

For more on Jan Gehl’s ideas you might want to get your hands on his book, Cities for the People (Island Press, 2010).

Gordon Price: Cycling is About Passion

The VACC Board regularly invites local bike advocates and members to speak at monthly board meetings. Gordon Price, Director of the City Program at SFU, spoke to the board in January.

“Cycling evokes passion.” And so began Gordon Price’s eloquent message about cycling as something we love simply because there is a physical object that we develop a very strong attachment to- the bike.

People are passionate about their cars, and long ago we had affection for the horse and buggy. So if we accept passion as a core impulse that drives our transportation choices, we can shift people’s dependence on the car if we do a better job of giving people real options to get around.

Gordon Price is a firm believer in developing strong public transport networks and giving cyclists well designed infrastructure to commute safely. Passion develops over time and will create momentum for change if there is political will to make it happen.

Visit Gordon Price’s blog at pricetags.wordpress.com for more thoughts on cycling and city building.

Talking to Cyclists

By Karen Larsen

Have you ever thought about what it takes to make cycling a habit? A friend of mine asked me how I got into bike commuting and what support I had. When I started cycling I had two motivations. One was to lose weight and the other was an opportunity to host a radio show at CiTR (UBC's radio station) during the infamous Vancouver bus strike of 2000.

Until then I had been taking small trips to work and doing errands on my bike. At the time I didn't think I could ride as far as UBC from my home in East Van, but I got encouragement from a friend. He shared his experiences of bike commuting. He offered to lend me his fancy road bike, and later helped tune a bike my boyfriend gave me. I made it out to UBC for the first time on his bike. I soon realized I could bike anywhere I needed to go in the city. Without the help of others I may not have started biking at all.

My friend's question got me wondering about what kind support other cyclists have when they start out. Here's my conversation with Rebecca, a cool, energetic woman who works in my building at UBC and is just getting into commuting.

Q: What was your motivation for bike commuting to work?

A: I lived in France for a while and cycling infrastructure there is so great, it was really easy to bike anywhere.



Plush Bike, by artist Becky Gould, Burnaby, BC. Photo by Ken Ohrn

There are rental bikes everywhere which are really inexpensive to use. I just loved it. When I came back to Vancouver and I moved to Kitsilano, I really wanted to start riding my bike to work.

Q: Did you get any support from friends, family or other cyclists?

A: I don't really have any friends who are hardcore bike commuters, but a friend of mine connected me to a friend of hers. He helped me pick a bike to suit my needs for commuting and tuned it up. My family is also very supportive. And at work, we're lucky because we have showers and I can bring my bike inside where it's secure.

Q: What, if any, barriers did you face when you first got into it?

A: Well, a lack of rain gear was a bit of a trial. I also didn't want to spend too much money on a bike and I wasn't really sure if this was going to be something I'd do often. I did have

some technical issues with my bike when I first started riding, but that's sorted now!

Q: Looking back, is there any support you wish you'd had?

A: Not really. When my contact at the Bike Co-op set me up, I let him know what I was looking for in a bike, I asked about safety, about bike lights, about how to carry my stuff. I guess I could still learn more about the mechanics of it, since I'm sure I'll break down eventually and I'll need to know how to fix it!

Q: What advice do you have for fledgling cyclists?

A: Get help from someone you trust! Go to a friend if you can for advice. Tell him/her what you need and what you want from biking. And, of course, get a good lock, take the designated bike routes when you're starting out and store your bike under cover whenever possible.

Preparations Underway for Vancouver-hosted International Cycling Conference

By Chris Keam

It became official on October 19th. Vancouver will be hosting the Velo-city Global 2012 international cycling conference at the Sheraton Wall Centre, in June 2012. The Velo-city conference series is the brainchild of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and is designed to bring together a wide range of people and organizations to share information, best practices, and successful strategies for fostering the use of bicycles as a means of urban transportation. The successful bid on behalf of Vancouver was put together with the support of the City of Vancouver, Translink, Tourism Vancouver, the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, and individuals from the cycling world and the event and meetings industry.

The official announcement of the conference, by Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson and ECF president Manfred Neun saw local media from television, print, and radio in attendance, providing the conference with valuable public awareness.

"Velo-city will bring together hundreds of planners, transportation experts and cycling specialists from around the world to discuss the fast-growing role of cycling in urban transportation," said Mayor Robertson. "We are very excited that the European Cyclists' Federation has selected Vancouver for its global conference in 2012. Hosting a major international conference like Velo-city is a good boost for our local economy, and it's a great opportunity to showcase



ECF president Manfred Neun is accompanied by members of the Velo-city organizing committee, including Scott Edwards, Manager of Greenways and Neighbourhood Transportation for the City of Vancouver, during an orientation ride examining Vancouver's cycling infrastructure. Photo by Chris Keam

Vancouver's bike infrastructure to the world's leading transportation experts."

"Cycling is already an important travel mode in Metro Vancouver, and TransLink has partnered with the City, the province and the federal government in major infrastructure upgrades to make it an even better option for more people," said TransLink's vice president of Customer and Public Engagement, Bob Paddon. "TransLink is pleased to support the 2012 Velo-city conference."

"Bravo to the City of Vancouver, Translink and VeloWorks for their efforts in bringing the 2010 Velo-City conference to Vancouver," said Rick Antonson, president and CEO of Tourism Vancouver. "Not only will Velo-city generate business for the local tourism industry, it reinforces Vancouver's reputation as a clean and green travel destination with exceptional offerings for cyclists."

Now, the organizing committee's attention is on the nuts and bolts of the conference. During the week of Jan. 21st experts and scientists from health, planning, and economics disciplines gathered at the Wall Centre

for *Scientists for Cycling*, a series of meetings to discuss the themes and topics that should be front and center during the Velo-city conference. Some notable names are helping in this effort, including Gil Penalosa, from the Ontario-based 8 to 80 Cities active transportation advocacy group, and Kay Teschke, who is spearheading the UBC study *Cycling in Cities* study – examining cycling safety, infrastructure, and injury rates.

A wide variety of representatives from advocacy groups, local municipalities and universities, the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, and the cycling industry also attended the meeting.

The organizing committee is also turning its attentions to sponsorship and volunteer opportunities. If you would like to be involved in the Velo-city 2012 conference, please visit www.velo-city2012.com and click on the e-mail link to get in touch with the event organizers.

Chris Keam is the Velo-city Global 2012 communications director.

TO BECOME INVOLVED, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Members: Please Attend Your AGM!



Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition 14th Annual General Meeting

Saturday, March 26th, 2011
2-5pm

Shoreline Room at the
John Braithwaite
Community Centre
145 1st Street West, North Vancouver, BC
(One Block North of Lonsdale Quay
and the SeaBus Terminal)

phone 604-982-8300

Headwinds | Tailwinds

Tailwind A Tailwind to the City of Vancouver for removing east-west stop signs on the 10th Avenue bikeway between Manitoba St and Yukon St (at Columbia and Alberta). – *David Creese*

Tailwind To the City of Vancouver for completing the re-pavement of the 10th Avenue bike route between Clark Drive and Main Street in Vancouver.

An additional Tailwind goes to the CoV for finally connecting the cyclist-activated bike crossing at Fraser St.

Headwind To the Vancouver Police Department for not adequately enforcing new traffic rules along the Dunsmuir St bike route. Cars and trucks continue to use the bike route illegally and drivers have been making unsafe right-hand turns without stopping to make adequate shoulder checks for cyclist traffic.

Safety and Access Drive the North Shore Committee in 2011

Take note that Jay MacDonald, the chair of the North Shore Committee, will be the master of ceremonies of the VACC AGM, Saturday, March 26th at the John Braithwaite Community Centre (event details on previous page).

By Andrew Cuthbert

There is a highly motivated and organized group of people leading the North Shore Cycling Committee. They have even set up a Wiki webpage to share, organize and track resources, rides, meetings, and other items regarding cycling on the North Shore. All information about the North Shore committee can be accessed at any time by visiting: nsvacc.cheakamus.com/index.php/Main_Page

Currently the committee is monitoring changes underway to the eastern approach ramps to the Lions Gate Bridge. The plan is to improve bike access to and from the bridge via the 6th Avenue ramp and develop a link to the Spirit Trail in North Vancouver.

The committee is also conducting an investigation of cycling infrastructure around the Iron Workers Memorial Bridge. They are currently working with other VACC regional committees to gather data on present bicycle access points to the bridge. This will lead to a set of recommended



From left to right: Bill Roddie, Bart Copeland, Antje Wall, Dianne Murray, Jay MacDonald, John Dove, Dave Purfitt. Photo by Heather Drugge

changes. The Committee plans to present their findings to the City of Vancouver, the Ministry of Transportation, and the District of North Vancouver.

Another current project of the committee is the drafting of a document called the “Hierarchy of Cycle Route Constructs”, to classify North shore bike routes by level of safety. As soon as re-paving projects are underway on any new or existing bike route, the North Shore VACC will be there to provide input to ensure that cyclists are accounted for.

Looking ahead the North Shore Committee plans to review and revise their “Bicycle Master Plan” document which contains a comprehensive plan for cycling infrastructure on the

North Shore. The committee plans to maintain a strong working relationship with North Shore municipalities to develop new routes and infrastructure, and test and evaluate exiting routes.

Public and community involvement is always on the North Shore committee’s agenda. Last year they participated in and sponsored events such as the Canada Day Parade, MEC North Vancouver Bike Fest, Bike to Work Week, and the Mountain Film Festival.

If you would like to get involved in the North Shore VACC, they meet at 6:00pm on the first Thursday of the month at the West Vancouver Public Library. Visit their Wiki page website or northshore.vacc.bc.ca to keep up with the latest news on any of their projects or campaigns.

A new year is full of opportunities to make cycling better for all of us.



Are you a member of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition?

Membership perks include

- Special deals at bike shops, Momentum Magazine and on car sharing
- A monthly newsletter and great events to connect our community

Join the movement at www.vacc.bc.ca

2011 Membership Campaign

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In partnership with bike stores throughout Metro Vancouver, when you join the VACC, you will get THREE one-time discounts or special offers per year at any of the participating stores below:

DISCOUNT 1: 5% off a new bike

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DISCOUNT 3: 15% off accessories

Take your new VACC Membership card into one of the following bike stores to redeem

your discounts and get your card stamped (check our website often as participating bike stores and businesses are updated all the time: www.vacc.bc.ca/membership)

Bike Doctor (Van/Burnaby), Bikes on the Drive (Van), Dream Cycle (Van), Different Bikes (Van/N. Van/W. Van), Experience Cycling (Maple Ridge), Local Ride (Maple Ridge) Maple Ridge Cycles (Maple Ridge), Mighty Riders (Van), Obsession Cycles (N. Van), O'Hagan's Cycles (Surrey), On Top

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