

The Urbane Cyclist

Winter 2002/03

Issue 15

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition quarterly

www.vacc.bc.ca

Bike Route Signs

Andrew Feltham

Jim Alix

Does anybody take seriously those green and white bicycle signs? You know, the ones which blandly declare "Bike Route", often with an arrow pointing *somewhere*... but if you're new to the area, you're not sure where. The de facto standard for the bike route sign has earned a rather dismal reputation with cyclists in many cities through out North America. The signs are singularly uninformative, frequently discontinuous, and the routes they mark often end abruptly with no suggestion of where to go next. Ultimately these signs get ignored along with the bike routes they attempt to identify, and the signs instead contribute to the urban clutter which we see around us everyday.

With increased interest in sustainable transportation and active living there has been a steady increase in the number of bike routes in our region. While this is an important step forward for cycling in our region, it is a shame that we should denote them with the same old discredited signs which have been ignored for years. Bike routes are an asset to our urban environment, they should be distinguished on our road network as "the new way of getting around" with colourful, attractive and *useful* route markings.

For this reason the VACC is putting forth a position on bike route signage which we hope will be adopted by transportation authorities throughout our region. The goal would be to generate additional interest in our bike routes with attractive new signs, while addressing some long-standing deficiencies in the current signing standards. Currently our position addresses three items:

1. The sign board (see illustration)

- Signs must provide useful information such as: destinations (cities, regions or attractions); distance and/or time to destinations; and a route name or number for reference.
- Signs must display the bicycle logo, and we encourage the use of a logo for other common users of the route such as bladders



or pedestrians. This promotes awareness amongst the various users. The words "Bike Route" need not appear!

- The directional arrow need not appear on the sign but should form part of the sign profile.
- We suggest a community-friendly colour which can be distinguished from standard Ministry of Transportation signs. Yellow or red are commonly used in many European countries.
- Municipalities may want to place their symbol on the sign to remind tourists of their location.

2. Placement of signs

- Bike route signs must be clearly placed at all bike route intersections, the crossing of any major artery, and at reasonable intervals between, if necessary.
- The new bike routes signs should not be placed unless there is a commitment to sign the entire route.

3. Funding of signs

- In our current fiscal climate an ambitious project to re-sign our bike routes may be considered inappropriate, thus an alternative approach to funding could be through private businesses. We suggest that a local business, which is of common interest to cyclists, could place a similar destination sign pointing to the business in return for paying for all the signs at the intersection. This is consistent with our position of providing useful information to cyclists.

Bike route signs are an important part of cycling infrastructure, which have not been exploited to their

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The views in this publication are not necessarily those of the VACC

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MEET US

The VACC Board meetings are open to all interested in bicycling in Greater Vancouver. We generally meet on the second Tuesday for the following months at 6:30 p.m. 10 Dec 14 Jan 11 Feb

Phone 604 693-1093 for details.

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 (300 words or less) and letters about cycling in Greater Vancouver.

Submissions may be sent to:
The Urbane Cyclist
Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition
PO Box 40074 RPO Royal City
New Westminster BC V3M 6J7
604 693-1093

Or e-mail: vacc@canada.com

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

Next deadline:
Friday,
January 24, 2003



full potential. Well-implemented signs provide useful information, promote safety for the users, and promote awareness of the route. They can inspire confidence in new riders and tourists to explore our region by bike. They are an antidote to the common perception that cycling is dangerous and inconvenient.

The VACC welcomes your experience as cyclists to provide input on this position. Please send any feedback to Andrew at feltham@telus.net or call 604-521-2742.

President's Message

Marion Orser

We all have our reasons for volunteering. Some are obvious – good fun with a great group of people while accomplishing something worthwhile. On a personal level my other reason for working with the VACC was so my grandchildren would not need to.

It is now five years later and the grandchildren are getting older. How far have we come? It often seems like one step ahead and two back, but slowly we see a change in attitude. Some areas are providing more comfortable and efficient roads for cyclists. On the other hand, roads are still being built in the Lower Mainland that by design exclude cyclists or make for uncomfortable riding. Some roads are being rehabilitated, but not to cycling standards. In some regions there are cycling watchdogs, often VACC members or VACC Committees. Yet in other communities there are at present no organized cycling advocates.

But we are still often working on individual issues. When will staff and elected representatives in our region automatically think, "How will this road construction or road rehabilitation affect all road users, including the cyclist?" This level of understanding is required before my real dream is accomplished: no need for the VACC except in an advisory/consultant capacity.

We all contribute in our own way. Each time we see the sign "Your Tax Dollars at Work," the VACC wishes to ensure 'our' tax dollars are being used to *better* cycling facilities, not to make them worse. Your membership means we speak for the larger cycling community. If time in your life permits a more active involvement, that too is vitally important. See www.vacc.bc.ca or cut out the membership form and join us.

Bike Shop Discount Program

* **The Bike Doctor**, 1350 Commercial Dr. Vancouver
163 West Broadway Vancouver
Phone: 604 215-7433
www.thebikedr.com/

* **Guywires cycle tech**, PO Box 28603,
Burnaby, V5C 6J4
Phone: 604-420-9722
www.gonecycling.com/guywires.html

* **Sideshow Cycles**, 6579 Victoria Drive, Vancouver
Phone: 604-323-8477

Cycle, Re-Cycle

Jim Alix

Such a deal! One organization that helps promotes cycling as a form of transportation, recycles bikes otherwise bound for the landfill and works to give at-risk youth a viable trade. And they even have bikes for sale!

Who is doing all this? The Sanctuary Foundation has been...well...giving sanctuary to at-risk youth throughout BC since 1991. Working with Human Resources Canada (federal) and the Ministry of Human Resources (provincial) for funding, "street kids" are offered job and life-skills training, with the goal of employment in the bicycle and ski industries. They are given computer training and life skills courses, introducing (or re-introducing) them to a sustainable lifestyle. Part of the work is with bicycles donated to the *Recycle Your Cycle* program.

In 1999, the Sanctuary Foundation, in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency and the Cuban Ministry of Education, established the Cuban Alternative Transportation Project. New and used bikes are gathered here in BC, and then shipped to Cuba where they become a much-needed part of Cuba's strategy for servicing their transportation needs.

The first three years of the program have seen an Alternative Transportation Technology Centre, which trains Cuban youth—similar to the Sanctuary Foundation's programs here—as well as a warehouse system and three bike service shops.

The next three years will see the expansion of this program to most of the major cities in Cuba, with nine new service centres together with the supporting warehouse infrastructure. These will act as "hubs" for the graduates of the Cuban training program, as they start their own small businesses.

Until this year, the Sanctuary Foundation maintained an office and classroom in New Westminster, as well as a workshop and warehouse in Coquitlam. In January, they moved to an integrated facility in Burnaby, near the Royal Oak SkyTrain station, which has offices, classrooms, cooking facilities and a 5000 square foot warehouse, all on a double lot, leaving plenty of room for the portable classroom and an organic garden.

The new digs still need some work. Renovations planned include the addition of a mezzanine to provide a computer classroom and repair centre, improvements to the kitchen and fencing around the lot.

But what about those bikes for sale, you say? These high quality bikes offer a light-weight aluminum frame in a polished or raw aluminum finish, with a small quantity of larger sizes in powder-coated red. Rounding out this comprehensive package is an accurate and durable 27 speed Shimano Deore component gruppo with hubs laced on extra strong Alex rims with stainless steel spokes. To help take the edge off bumps and assist the rider in controlling the bike over challenging terrain, an optional Zokes suspension fork with 3" of travel is available. And just in case you get over your head, powerful V-Brakes can slow down the pace until you're ready for another dose of adrenaline induced fun.

Prices on these coveted rides range between \$600-\$750 depending on front fork choice with a wide range of sizes too. An excellent price for a new bike but with the added satisfaction of knowing that the profits go in to help the Sanctuary Foundation continue its commitment of improving the level of programs offered.

The Sanctuary Foundation is a non-profit charity. The government provides partial funding for the at-risk youth programs and for the international programs. To make up the rest of the funding, the Foundation relies on grants from philanthropic organizations and on community fundraising.

For more information, or to contact the Foundation, check out Sanctuary's website, at www.sanctuary.bc.ca.

Upcoming Workshop: *The ABCs of Cycling Advocacy*

Join Bruce Mol for a workshop on cycling advocacy. Old hands and novices alike are bound to learn something new. See www.vacc.bc.ca for more info.

Date: February 16, 2003

Time: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Place: Centennial Lodge , Queen's Park, New West

To register, contact Marion Orser at president@vacc.bc.ca or 604-520-7636)

Note also: The VACC AGM will follow the workshop (2:00 - 4:00 pm, also in Centennial Lodge).

HELP WANTED

We're trying to spread the work load a bit more thinly at the VACC and hope you can help. Is there anything you might be interested in doing? There's lots of useful experience to be gained (and some fun along the way). If you have questions or want to volunteer, contact Bonnie at volunteer@vacc.bc.ca

1. Minute Taker

We're looking for someone to take minutes at the monthly board meetings.

You would need to:

- Attend monthly meetings (about nine per year)
- Take notes, type them up, and submit them
- Time: 4-5 hours a month

2. Newsletter Coordinator

This would require:

- Getting newsletters to distributors
- Coordinating the member mail-out
- Batching copies for library distribution
- Time: 5-6 hours quarterly

Grand Opening Surrey's Mud Bay Park

Mary Eickhoff

It was definitely the start of something GREAT when Brad Fisher, Surrey Engineering, put out the call to cyclists to come to Surrey and participate in the September 20 opening ceremony for Mud Bay Park.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was carried out under blue skies, in brilliant sunshine sparkling in the waters of Mud Bay. A canopied reception area and refreshments were provided, with seating for the hosts and guests. Key players in the ribbon-cutting ceremony were Surrey Mayor Doug McCallum, Councillor Gary Tymoschuk, Surrey Parks Rec. &



Evan Seal, The Leader

Culture Commission, Langley Councillor Gayle Martin, Chair, GVRD Parks, and Mr. J. Singh Biln, Assistant to President, BC Rail who described extensive improvements to be made at the BC Rail crossing at the park entrance. Cycling groups represented were B.E.S.T., BC Cycling Coalition, Cross Canada Cycle Tour Society, Richmond Bicycle Club, VACC and Vancouver Bicycle Club.

"As a major waterfront access point, this new park is unique to Surrey and provides a vital link to the Official Spur of the Trans Canada Trail linking the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal to the Albion Ferry", said Councillor Gary Tymoschuk, (photo) Chair of the Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission.

The Park is located at 12991 48th Avenue in South Surrey accessible from King George Highway connecting to Colebrook Road. Everyone wants to know whether MTB tires are required. I can respond by saying that a group I was cycling the trail with recently was passed by a cyclist on a road bike dusting along with skinny tires.

For additional information contact:

Jean Lamontagne, Manager of Planning, Research & Design,
Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture, 604 501 5080

Tailwinds:

*To Ministry of Transportation (MoT): The Lions Gate Bridge reconstruction is a bridge that the ministry should feel proud of. For cyclists, the sidewalks are the best of any MoT bridge in the Lower Mainland. Let's hope this is a sign of things to come. Congratulations on a job well done! Next we need improvements to the North Shore approaches.

*To City of Vancouver: The bike box at Union and Main is great. It is exactly what is needed there. Glad to see city engineering staff thinking outside the box and finally getting the support they needed from to make this project a reality. The brochure was a very well written tool! On both counts, congratulations on a job well done!

Headwinds:

*To Ministry of Transportation (MoT): \$30,000 a year for cycling spot improvements for the Lower Mainland is ridiculously low. There are so many past MoT disasters for cyclists that need fixing up that it will take centuries at this rate. First there was the loss of the CNP and now this. What will it take for you to realize that cycling is a good alternative to the motor vehicle?

*To Ministry of Transportation (MoT): Lowering the already extremely low maintenance standards is going to affect cyclists the most, in fact it already is. I hope that you have budgeted larger amounts for payouts to cyclists due to damage caused by poor maintenance!

Finding the curb edge in the dark

Jim Alix

I don't know about you, but when I have to ride over the Patullo or Queensborough Bridges at night, I have a great fear of riding off the edge of the sidewalk and sprawling myself and my trusty steed in front of a motor vehicle. Both of these bridges have only one sidewalk that is used for both directions. (Actually, the Queensborough Bridge has two, but the eastern side is closed to all traffic.) This means that cyclists must often ride along the curb edge, close to the motor vehicle lane, to accommodate approaching users or to pass slower users. I have to admit I'm amazed it doesn't happen (without some research, I can't say "more often") but I do know one thing: if I was relatively new to bike commuting, either of these bridges would be a significant barrier! That's why I'm happy to see that TransLink has given me a bit of help for the Patullo Bridge sidewalk: they've put a wide strip of yellow reflective tape along the curb edge. This will be a great help, especially if it ever starts raining in the Lower Mainland again! The Queensborough Bridge sidewalk, which is even narrower, could use the same treatment, but it belongs to the Ministry of Transportation and we might have to wait a while (are you listening?) MoT has allotted a \$30,000 per year budget to cycling improvements in the Lower Mainland (on MoT facilities, of course.) That's where the new bike route signage at a couple of bridges has come from. If nothing else is done on the Queensborough for next year, I'd like to see TransLink's move copied. A line of tape or paint cannot replace a much-needed physical barrier to separate the motor vehicles from cyclists and pedestrians, especially on the bridges with only one sidewalk. I hope this is only an interim measure and that more improvements for the Patullo are in the works.

The BC Parkway

Richard Campbell

The concept is great: a linear park connecting Burnaby, Vancouver and New Westminster with separate paths for cyclists and pedestrians. Unfortunately the current implementation is not able to safely and conveniently serve current users. The bicycle path is hilly, not very direct and often disappears just before major intersections. The pedestrian path is so bad that most people walk on the bicycle path.

The City of Vancouver is now planning on improving the Vancouver section of the Parkway for pedestrians. While such improvements are badly needed, many improvements are also needed to make the parkway a good cycling route. The city did do minor cycling improvements a few years ago, limited to signage and signal improvements. However, they did not address several safety and convenience issues arising from poor alignment of the bicycle and pedestrian route.

We are concerned that if we continue to make incremental improvements in such a manner, we will have spent a significant amount of money and failed to address the problems that can only be solved by realignment of the bicycle path. It is clear that we need a long term plan. If a plan is developed first, defining the eventual configuration of the Parkway, incremental improvements can be made that are compatible with long term enhancements.

The BC Parkway Improvement Committee's report outlines many of the problems with the Parkway and proposes both interim and long term solutions. It could be used as the starting point for an official upgrade plan. We urge Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster and TransLink to develop a long term plan to address the many safety and convenience issues along the BC Parkway.

Please write the City of Vancouver and TransLink to encourage them to really make the BC Parkway a great cyclist and pedestrian facility.

Work with the VACC

Yes, I'm willing to work at improving cycling in Greater Vancouver!

I would like to volunteer on the following committees:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby | Karim 604 307-9225 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delta/North Surrey | 604 693-1093 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Westminster | Andrew 604 521-2742 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Shore | 604 693-1093 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Surrey/White Rock | Jean 604 531-3484 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surrey | Ian 604 576-4425 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tri-Cities | Brian 604 522-2977 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vancouver | Jack 604 253-3554 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | Richard 604 733-1764 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to contribute to the VACC by doing the following: | |

Thank you!

SkyTrain Update – Give Us a Brake

Richard Campbell

Regional cyclists have been waiting very patiently for the last 17 years for bicycles to be allowed on SkyTrain. The recent opening of the SkyTrain Millennium Line eliminated or shortened several buses routes that were bike rack equipped, including the popular 99B from Lougheed Mall to Commercial Drive. This is a significant loss of service that has severely inconvenienced many cyclists.

VACC directors Bonita Eberl, Jim Alix and Richard Campbell, along with TransLink's Program Manager Alternative Transportation, Helen Cook, recently took part in an emergency braking test with bicycles on SkyTrain cars. The tests went well and answered concerns regarding bicycles during emergency stops.

The ball is out of TransLink's court now and it is now in the hands of the Safety Engineering Services (SES) branch of the Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. SES now must approve TransLink's procedures and policies regarding bicycles on SkyTrain. TransLink is hopeful that approval will be granted soon, thus permitting bicycles on SkyTrain by the beginning of 2003.

Please send letters to Minister Abbot encouraging him to make sure this issue is dealt with as quickly as possible by his ministry. Writing or phoning your local MLA would also be a great idea.

For background information including sample letters, go to www.vacc.bc.ca/skytrain/body.htm

JOIN THE VACC!

Yes, I want to cycle for a better community

1st person _____
2nd person _____
Address _____

City/Postal Code _____
Phone _____
E-mail: _____

The VACC does not sell or give out address information.

The VACC reserves the right to contact individual members through the above information.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please e-mail The Urbane
<i>Cyclist</i> to me
Income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00 Individual
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10.00 Fixed/Student/Low
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.00 Each additional
<input type="checkbox"/> \$80.00 Corporate/Organization |
|---|--|

I heard about the VACC:

- through the media
- from this newsletter
- via the website
- from a friend
- from another cyclist
- at a community event
- other: _____

Please make cheques payable to:
Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

And mail, along with this application to:
VACC Memberships
PO Box 40074 RPO Royal City
New Westminster BC V3M 6J7

11/02

Who to write about issues in this edition of The UrbanE Cyclist

City of Burnaby
Mayor and Council
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V5G 1M2
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Fax: 604 294-7724
clerks@city.burnaby.bc.ca

Hon. Gordon Campbell
Premier
PO Box 9041
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E1
premier@gov.bc.ca
Phone: 250 387-1715
Fax: 250 387-0087

City of New Westminster
Mayor and Council
511 Royal Avenue
New Westminster BC V3L 1H9
Phone: 604 527-4522
Fax: 604 527-4594

Honourable Judith Reid
Minister of Transportation
PO Box 9055
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2
Phone: 250 387-1978
Fax: 250 356-2290
Minister.Transportation@gems5.gov.bc.ca

TransLink
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1700-4720 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2
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Mayor and Council
453 west 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4
Phone: 604 873-7273
Fax: 604 873-7750
mayorandcouncil@city.vancouver.bc.ca

Remember....

The more letters that are written to these government officials, the more likely that conditions will get better for cyclists. If you do not write or call these officials, it is less likely the situation will improve.