

The Urbane Cyclist

Spring 2003

Issue 16

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition quarterly

www.vacc.bc.ca

TransLink Starts Community Shuttle Program

Jim Alix

In a bid to provide more cost effective and flexible transit services in suburban areas, TransLink is introducing "small neighbourhood-friendly vehicles [providing] an efficient, inexpensive alternative to conventional bus service. *Community shuttles* are 24 feet long and seat 20 passengers, or 16 passengers and two wheelchairs."

The community shuttles are appearing initially in Langley and White Rock, where an alert VACC member noticed that they do not have bike racks.

Where shuttles are replacing full-size, rack-equipped buses, this will lead to a cutback to a service much welcomed by cyclists who might depend on the transit system for part of their route (due to darkness, bad weather, fatigue, etc.)

Besides notifying the VACC of the potential loss of service, "our man" in White Rock took direct action by initiating discussions with TransLink and Sportworks, the company that supplies bike racks for the full-size buses.

TransLink's policy is to have bike racks on all buses and in fact, Sportworks does make racks to fit the community shuttles. The issue lies with the Motor Vehicle Inspection branch of ICBC. Although a rack is available which does not itself obscure the headlights, ICBC inspectors took issue with the



degree to which headlights are obscured when bicycles are on the racks, although this situation seems to be allowed in the United States.

TransLink staff are working with Commercial Body Builders to design a mounting system for the bike racks that will satisfy ICBC. With ICBC's approval, Commercial Body Builders will change their vehicle design.

TransLink has acquired two models of the vehicles, the E450, which cannot be retrofitted with a bike rack and the E550, which can. The lifespan of these vehicles is estimated at four to six years and any future purchases of this type of vehicle will include the ability to mount

bike racks, in accordance with TransLink policy.

As *The Urbane Cyclist* went to press, the last word from TransLink was that they are looking into new a Sportwork rack that may solve the problem.

(And now for the shameless plug...) This is an example of advocacy at work. If you would like to learn more about how advocacy works and how you can be a part of it, be sure to come to the VACC's "ABCs of Cycling Advocacy" workshop on February 16. You could even stay for the Annual General Meeting and have a hand in choosing our next slate of Directors.

(Contact details provided on page four.)

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

Bikes on SkyTrain: Five Years Later

Marion Orser

It was the fall of 1998; SkyTrain was the big topic of the day and the VACC was there advocating for cyclists.

The three key issues were:

1. Bikes on the Trains
2. Bikes on the Right of Way
3. Secure bicycle lock up at the stations

The VACC spent many hours attending workshops and open houses, writing letters, consulting with the Greater Vancouver Transit Authority (GVTA –

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The views in this publication are not
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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. 11 Mar 08 Apr 13 May

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,
April 25, 2003**



the forerunner to TransLink), then TransLink, the Provincial Government and The Rapid Transit Project Office (RTPO). Now with the SkyTrain Extension, the Millennium Line running, what has been accomplished in those three areas for cyclists?

Bikes on the Trains:

Before the VACC existed, there had been lobbying for bikes on the original Expo line. Now the Millennium line is running and bikes are still not allowed on the trains! With the loss of the bike racks on the 99B buses, services on Lougheed Hwy have in fact been cut.

Bikes on the Right of Way (ROW):

After many false starts, promises and hopes, BEST has taken on this project. With an original one million dollar grant from Vancouver City Savings, BEST is overseeing the construction and fundraising for the Greenway. (See www.BEST.bc.ca)

Secure bicycle lock up at the stations:

There are monthly rental lockers at all stations. There are also bike racks. To date, there are no day use lockers, one of our original requests.

What has the VACC done and where does it stand now?

Provincially: RTPO was a part of BC Rapid Transit. We met specifically with RTPO staff regarding cycling issues. We kept informed and put our concerns in writing. We met with Joy McPhail, then the Minister of SkyTrain.

Bombardier: The VACC wrote Bombardier to let them know how important it would be to their image and as mode of public transportation to build cars that were bike accessible

The GVTA and TransLink: The VACC repeatedly heard from RTPO that the cars were bike accessible but the policy regarding bikes on the trains was the responsibility of TransLink. So we wrote and called and emailed. The response was positive but always "later... after this report...", and again delay of a final announcement.

Safety Engineering Services: Recently we learned there was yet another obstacle. SkyTrain is administered by BC Rapid Transit and is under the jurisdiction of Safety Engineering Services (SES) and the Provincial Railway Act. This is now under the Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Safety Engineering Services Division. You are probably now beginning to understand what a tortuous process this has been. It is somewhat like Political Tennis: each time the ball lands in a different politician's 'court' there is considerable delay. This has meant that both the stations and Mark II cars are not as accessible for bikes as they might have been.

What might have worked? An advocates' post-mortem

In retrospect we might have called a meeting of *all* key personnel at one time to discuss Bikes on SkyTrain. This might have fleshed out all of the issues so they could be dealt with as a whole. For each of these players, bicycles are a minor part of the whole picture: for the VACC it is vital.

Using strategies that will be discussed at the upcoming workshop,

1. Our membership and other cyclists were aware of the issue.
2. We did not however develop related organizations into an issue specific coalition.
3. Our media strategy was not well developed.
4. We did work with Government staff and politicians, but not together as noted above.

In conclusion, the VACC are still actively promoting Bikes on SkyTrain with the appropriate authorities. Hopefully 2003 will be the year for bikes on SkyTrain!

Planning for the Future

Bonnie Fenton

Said Alice, "Cheshire-Puss...would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where -" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

" - so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

- *Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

We at the VACC were beginning to feel we were going the way of Alice (whichever way that is). With a huge geographical area and many municipal governments to deal with, we've found ourselves becoming more reactive than proactive. As an entirely volunteer-run organisation on a shoestring budget, we need to plan carefully to accomplish the most possible with our most valuable resource – people. It was time to step back and look at the bigger picture.

With that in mind, the VACC is undertaking a strategic planning process. A day-long meeting in January revealed the following priorities:

- *understanding the cycling community* – knowing who local cyclists are so that we can better represent your views to decision-makers
- *membership* – both increasing it as well as supporting, informing, and consulting our current members
- *directed advocacy* – choosing the issues we think are important to focus on and developing campaigns to make those things happen
- *funding infrastructure* – convincing various levels of government to fulfill their commitments to finance cycling infrastructure

A report will be produced in the coming weeks, followed by an ambitious but realistic plan to guide us into the future.

If you have an interest in cycling in the Lower Mainland and would like to share your thoughts or ideas on the future direction of the VACC, please send them to Bonnie at volunteer@vacc.bc.ca.



YVR Cycling Facilities Concerns: An Update

Jack Becker

As a follow-up to Jim Alix's article 'Getting Around Sea Island' in the Fall 2002 issue of The Urbane Cyclist, three VACC cyclists met with airport officials in December to review our concerns with the road system leading to the airport and to Richmond. A productive meeting provided the history leading to the current on-road and off-road cycling facilities as well as a forum for our concerns. At the end of the meeting, future steps were established, including an on-site visit of the hot spots, tentatively targeted for January, 2003.

YVR representatives indicated that minor funds were still available for some improvements, mainly signage. From the discussions, it would appear that the airport authority may not need much convincing that road and end-of-trip cycling facilities at the airport need improvements. There may be benefits to YVR in enticing airport staff to cycle to work and reduce pressure on the parking facilities.

With potential changes and commercial growth coming in the future on airport lands the time may be right for forming an airport bicycle advisory committee. Such a committee would provide a

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 604 681-5744 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | Richard 604 733-1764 |

- I want to contribute to the VACC by doing the following:

Thank you!

platform for airport representatives to work with cyclists towards improving the cycling infrastructure both at the airport and also on the road system. Cycling representation should include a mix of cyclists that either work at the airport, travel there for a flight, or cycle on the road network between Vancouver and Richmond.

The runways and facilities of the airport are the air travelers' doorstep to Vancouver. The road system leading from, to, and by the airport is the visitors' first impression at ground level of Vancouver and the region. We should be aiming to make this a pleasant experience for cyclists. We should be advocating for maximum quality and the most friendly cycling facilities;

- to encourage touring cyclists to choose Vancouver and British Columbia as a destination for cycling,
- to encourage business cyclists to use a bicycle to commute to the airport, hotels or their homes,
- to encourage visiting business travelers to stay longer and cycle around the city, as well as,
- to encourage airport workers to cycle to work.

All types of cyclists use the roads around the airport - the experts, the risk takers, the risk averters, the less skilled, those preferring a direct route, and those favouring cycling away from the noise, speed, and proximity of cars and trucks. We should not be skimpy on our requests. When advocating for improvements to the airport cycling infrastructure, we should keep in mind all of these cyclists.

Cyclists are encouraged to let their feelings be known to the Vancouver International Airport Authorities management, supporting an airport bicycle advisory committee and an improved cycling infrastructure.

**Who to write about issues in this edition of
The Urbane Cyclist**

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Minister.Transportation@gems5.gov.bc.ca

TransLink
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1700-4720 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2
Phone: 604 453-4500
Fax: 604 453-4626
www.translink.bc.ca/Service_Info_and_Fares/Buses/Community_Shuttles/Langley.asp

City of Vancouver
Mayor Larry Campbell and Council
453 west 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4
Phone: 604 873-7273
Fax: 604 873-7750
mayorandcouncil@city.vancouver.bc.ca

Vancouver International Airport Authority
P.O. Box 23750 Airport Postal Outlet
Richmond, B.C. V7B 1Y7
Phone: 604 207-7077
http://www.yvr.com/contact.asp

Sportworks: www.sportworks.com
Commercial Body Builders:
www.commercialbody.com

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.

It's entirely up to you.

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 Cyclist to me | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00 Individual |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10.00 Fixed/Student/Low Income |
| | <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: _____

02/03

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