Issue 24

Spring 2005



Mark Your Calendars: VACC AGM

When:

Sunday, March 20, 1 PM - 4PM

Where:

John Braithwaite Community Centre 145 - West 1st Street City of North Vancouver

(See map, back page)

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The Urbane Cyclist

The Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition Quarterly

www.vacc.bc.ca

Make cycling an integral part of the transportation culture of the Lower Mainland

Burrard Bridge by Jack Becker

After about 20 years of campaigning, it appears that the safety of cyclists and pedestrians on the Burrard Bridge may finally be addressed by City of Vancouver Council. Staff have prepared five alternatives and are currently soliciting input from various committees. In the end, Council will have to make the final decision. The choices include: two motorized lanes reassigned to two bike lanes physically separated from motorized traffic; sidewalk widening outward retaining the look of the bridge; sidewalk extension inside the bridge by removing one traffic lane partially in each direction while retaining existing vehicle capacity at each intersection; and an under the bridge deck cycling path. A fifth option that would extend the sidewalks outward except at the two columns creating pinch points was rejected by the VACC for safety and traffic flow concerns for cyclists and pedestrians.

The VACC's position is simply that Council must make a decision and get construction started. Many VACC members fa-

vour the two-lane reassignment alternative, the least expensive proposal. Why are so many lanes required on the bridge considering the move towards Transportation Demand Management? The City's Cool Vancouver initiative calls for modal conversion from singleoccupancy vehicles, to transit and other forms of sustainable transportation.

On January 20th, a number of VACC members were gathered in Surrey listening to a traffic engineer question conventional traffic engineering thinking on road widening, and suggest that lane efficiency is really increased by lane reductions on provincial type highways and city streets. His thinking was certainly along the lines that you cannot build your way out of car traffic congestion and, in fact, motorized vehicle traffic congestion should be designed for to facilitate rational mode choice for trips.

What is your thinking and preference for the options? Let your Mayor and Council know.

Cycling in Denmark by Marion Orser

As a cyclist and a cycling advocate, one hears of places in the world were the number of trips by bicycle far surpass those taken in North America. Denmark is one such place. It is purported to have the second highest number of trips taken by bike after the Netherlands. So when I noted the Cross Canada Cycle Tour Society (CCCTS), was planning a trip to Denmark, I joined them. (*Continued page 3*)



National Cycling Route in Denmark Photo: M. Orser

The UrbaneCyclist

Published quarterly by the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC)

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 Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Phone **604 878-8222** for details. **info@vacc.bc.ca**

10 @ 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 (300 words or less) and letters about cycling in Greater Vancouver.

Submissions may be sent to: **The Urbane Cyclist** Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition Box 0074 674 Columbia Street New Westminster, BC V3M 1A8 Or e-mail: newsletter@vacc.bc.ca We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity and length.

Next deadline: Friday, April 22, 2005

President's Message by Colin Brander

2005 Annual General Meeting: Mark Sunday, March 20 on your calendars as that is the day the VACC are holding our AGM. As with any Board of Directors, the VACC is always looking for new individuals to become directors. We currently have a relatively small Board and we would like to see an increase in the number of directors to better represent the region and to better spread the workload. Interested?

Please see page 7 for more details.

Policies and Marketing: In addition to the advocacy taken on by the Board and by our numerous regional committees, we have been working on improving the way we operate as an organization. The reason why the Board has made this a priority is so that we can become a more efficient and effective organization and spend more time dealing with cycling advocacy.

To this end, we have put Van-City's \$10,000 Capacity Building grant to use in developing several procedures, and procedures manuals. These manuals will help guide directors, committee chairs and other volunteers, lessen the learning curve and allow them to quickly find the answer to most operational questions.

Thanks to the volunteer efforts of Sharee Gable, the VACC's first marketing plan is nearing completion. The main objectives of the plan are to increase the VACC's public and media profile and to increase our membership base, so that we become a more effective voice for cycling.

Values Revisited: When the VACC was first being formed, we created the organization's values. As we were a new organization and there were several other cycling advocacy organizations, we needed to differentiate ourselves from these. For this reason, our current values explain both what we represented, while also explaining what we weren't. Recently, we decided that it was time to update our values to better reflect who we are and what we stand for. Our values are available on our website at <u>http://www.vacc.bc.ca/corporate/values.htm</u>. If you have any comments or suggestions on changes, please let me know and I will pass them along to the committee.

Golden Ears Bridge: On the advocacy front, the VACC has been in contact with TransLink about the proposed bridge that will replace the Albion Ferry. TransLink is proposing 2 metre sub-standard shared pedestrian and cyclist sidewalks. As well, the VACC has concerns with the designs at the ends of the bridge, especially on the north side. The VACC has sent a letter to TransLink about our concerns and will be following up with them. I urge you to contact TransLink and your municipal representative on the TransLink board to let them know that you expect this facility to be built to standard with safe, convenient connections at both ends.



(Continued from page 1)

What makes this country different?

Denmark is an affluent society. Taxes are very high hence one might expect adequate cycling infrastructure. There are 'National Routes' that might be considered tourist routes. Additionally most streets have cycle paths or lanes. Unlike North America, these routes are separate facilities paralleling both sides of the road, enabling cyclists to travel in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic. There are separate pedestrian sidewalks and both facilities are maintained to a high level - no debris on these routes.

Urban

In an area where there is parking, the cycle route was placed on the inside of the parking. I found this unnerving at first. In the Lower Mainland this would make the cyclist vulnerable from right turning vehicles at every intersection. So how and why does it work in Denmark? At every intersection there are blue bike lanes painted on the road. Motor vehicle drivers must never cross this marking without checking for, and giving priority to the cyclist.

Traffic circles have a blue cycle path painted on the right hand side of the circle for cyclists. This could mean the cyclist would be vulnerable from motorists exiting the circle prior to the cyclist. Again the motorist must give right of way.

Left hand turns for cyclists are entirely different in Denmark. One must follow the blue lane straight through the intersection. If the traffic is clear one can then complete the left hand turn from the far right. This was a scary move for me, but it does work.

National Routes

The national routes follow quiet

routes through the countryside. Usually the route was on quiet country roads. Occasionally the route took us on gravel, on a paved path through fields, or even through a field with newly cut grass to indicate the route. These were not at all easy to manage on a touring bike with even a light load. There were always alternatives to these routes parallel to the motorist traffic.

Bridges

One of the first bridges I crossed, like the Pattullo, was undergoing structural upgrades. The difference however, was that on the Pattullo, the one narrow sidewalk for cyclists and pedestrians was closed as a base for the workmen and equipment. In Denmark the sidewalk for cyclists and pedestrians was open and one lane of motorized traffic was closed for the workmen. A difference in real priorities. Other bridges, had a lane each for pedestrians and cyclists on both sides of the bridge.

Can we adapt Denmark's system?

I often hear that we should adopt methods from countries such as Denmark. From my personal perspective this would not work. It would mean a new set of rules and regulations for the roads. Cyclists would be more vulnerable at every intersection because of established and regulated traffic behaviour.

However, I do believe we must continue to demand the financing of cycling facilities, and education for cyclists and motorists. There are other aspects we can adopt: destination and distance signage for cyclists. On every road that is being upgraded, or built, all users should be considered and accommodated. We need to develop tourist cycling routes in conjunction with the tourist industry. Perhaps we could even do that better than in Denmark. "The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart." - Iris Murdoch, writer (1919-1999)

Tri-Cities VACC Meeting by Marion Orser

<u>Volunteers</u>

Needed

The VACC Fundraising

Committee is seeking volunteers to assist with the development and organization of fundraising activities. Funds raised by the VACC support its advocacy efforts, events such as bike safety events for children and adults and cyclist workshops, and publications including the Urbane Cyclist, the VACC'S newsletter. If you are interested in helping out either on a short term or continuing basis, I would like to meet with you. Please contact me, Fulton Tom, at 604-323-5763 or at thetomboys@shaw.ca.

March 8 2005, 7 to 9 PM

Pinetree Secondary School 3000 Pinewood Ave Coquitlam

Although the VACC are the Lower Mainland's Cycling Advocates, we have been able to achieve more in some areas of the lower mainland than in others through the work of committed cyclists in those areas.

Recently a few dedicated cyclists from Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam and Port Moody have started to work with the Board Liaison for the area to improve the cycling environment. The VACC, along with those individual cyclists, have written letters supporting Port Moody and Coquitlam cities in their application for shared provincial funding through the Cycling Infrastructure Partnerships Program (CIPP). In Port Moody the application was for a cycling pedestrian overpass between Murray Street and St Johns Street and in Coquitlam for the continuation of the bike lanes on Guildford in Coquitlam.

Other current issues:

Coquitlam: Foster Street is a part of the bicycle plan. City staff are considering some minor changes. What do cyclists feel needs to be done urgently? Additionally we are working with the province and Coquitlam toward a temporary signed cycle route through Riverview to bypass the area in front of Riverview where the shoulder narrows dangerously and is practically non-existent. The latter will be a route to Port Coquitlam too.

Port Coquitlam: Meeting with staff to ensure the Coast Meridian access, egress and the actual on road structure is built to cycling standards.

Port Moody: Murray Street is to be expanded. It is a component of the newly developed bicycle plan. It is important that this street have bicycle lanes.

If you ride your bike in the Tri Cities (or even if you're thinking about it), come meet and work with other cyclists to help improve cycling facilities.

Surrey Central Transit Village Planning Process by Mary Eickhoff

An exciting new initiative was launched in Surrey last December at City Central Tower in Whalley.

The City of Surrey is partnering with Transport Canada, the GVRD, other GVRD municipalities and TransLink, in the Transportation Canada Urban Showcase Program. The partnership has been successful in receiving federal funding and support to undertake initiatives to improve transportation and land use efficiency in the region. One of the components of this partnership is a proposal to develop a Transit Village Plan focused on the Surrey Central SkyTrain Station area.

The Transit Village planning process, which will take place over the next year or so, will focus on a study area with a radius of approximately 800 metres, centered on the Surrey Central SkyTrain Station. The study will take into account land use, design, transportation, development investment and social issues. The result of the planning process will be the development of a Transit Village Plan, including a strategy for capital investment in the area. Some of the high priority improvements identified (Continued next page)

through the study process will be constructed soon after the Plan is completed, based on capital funding that is available through the partnership. The Plan and related investment in this area will be focused on improving access for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and vehicles. This is where VACC representation comes in.

The consultation process was 'kicked off' by workshops held in December and January.

In conjunction with the village planning process a free lecture is offered to include a wide range of community groups, called MAKING PLACES: Connecting where we Live, Work, and Play.

A review of these activities as they relate to cyclists will be reported in the next Urbane Cyclist. City of Vancouver Council Adopts, in Principle, a New Era for Cycling by Jack Becker

Investment of \$20 million to achieve 10% cycling mode share by 2010; in time for the environmentally sustainable Olympic Winter Games

The City of Vancouver Council showed true leadership at its Transportation and Traffic Committee meeting on January 18 and took a bold first step forward towards a more sustainable and a cycling friendly city. Now steps 2 and 3 will be needed, funding an aggressive program to move cycling for transportation significantly forward.

Since 1990, \$14.5 million has been invested into the City's physical cycling infrastructure with another \$12 million set aside for the Bur-(Continued next page)

Cycling Around Greater Vancouver



Lock & Ride

Rent your own bike locker for just \$10 per month available at most Millennium SkyTrain Stations, Ladner Park & Ride, Phibbs Exchange, Sexsmith Park & Ride, King George, Scott Road, 22nd Street and Main Street Stations. For more information



on how to rent a locker, call us at 604-453-4500.

Try a Combo

Bike & Bus – Take your bike part way there. Many buses are bike rackequipped; each rack holds two bikes. Bike & SkyTrain – Take your bike on SkyTrain, weekdays between 9:30 am – 3:00 pm and after 6:30 pm. On weekends, if there's space, you can go anytime. Be sure to enter through the last door of the train. Bike & SeaBus – Take your bike on SeaBus any time. SeaBus can carry six bikes per sailing.



Map it Out

It's easy to get around on two wheels with your TransLink Cycling Map. Pick up a copy at retail locations throughout the Lower Mainland. For a detailed list of vendors visit: www.translink.bc.ca/ transportation_services/bikes



You're holding in your hands the quarterly newsletter of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition. This newsletter, along with everything else done by the VACC, is entirely the work of committed volunteers, and is based upon a set of core values. If these values speak to you, we hope you'll consider supporting us by purchasing an annual membership and/or becoming actively involved.

We advocate better conditions for cyclists. While we encourage cycling as a means of transportation for more people, we respect those who choose or need other modes.

We support cycling for itself safe cycling is what we hope to achieve.

We believe safe and convenient bicycle facilities are a key to encouraging people to cycle more often. rard Bridge. Cycling traffic has been increasing reaching a 3.3% cycling to work mode split by 1996. While Vancouver may be exemplary for a North American city, one needs to look at the European cities for examples of sustainability and true opportunities for cycling as a transportation mode, where 20% to 43% of trips are made by bicycle.

The VACC has actively advocated a more aggressive direction towards increasing the cycling mode share within the city

Council adopted, in principle, recommendations for a cycling mode share target of 10% by 2010 and then working towards European levels in the future, completion of the 1999 Bicycle Plan by 2008, and development of a new comprehensive cycling master plan focused on attaining the target mode split and emphasising people factors that will induce them to leave their cars at home and cycle or combine cycling with transit instead.

People's travel habits will need to change if we want an environmentally sustainable city. Current cycling facilities have limited lure to those who cycle little or not at this time. To go beyond growth that existing facilities will provide, new design concepts, such as those used in Europe, will be needed along with focused programs targeting peopledecision making processes for their selection of mode of transport for the next trip.

Questions on "Do investments in the cycling network infrastructure actually increase cycling levels?", "Is there appetite for Vancouverites to cycle more?", and "Can such investments be justified?" will have positive responses with the right improvements in a city-wide cycling infrastructure and in marketing to those that can be persuaded to cycle on their next trip and leave the car at home.

Big Burnaby Bike News by Mike Peel

The VACC-Burnaby has been meeting bi-monthly, and at these meetings, we've come up with some good ideas and fixes for Burnaby's cycling network. The staff at the City Hall have been responsive so things are happening in Burnaby!

The city has undertaken some cycling initiatives and infrastructure projects that include the following: further work on the East Burnaby bike route, Council approval of the Gilmore north-south bike route, and public open houses on the Central Valley Greenway (CVG). Recently, Burnaby also announced Open Houses for two more proposed bike routes: the Victory bike route – which will run east-west in the South Slope area - and the Cariboo Bikeway – which will run north-south in eastern Burnaby. Check them out on Burnaby's web site (www.city.burnaby.bc.ca), and provide comments at a Burnaby-VACC meeting or to Burnaby City staff.

I've noticed that a new bike store has opened along the new Gilmore bike route; perhaps we could see the Gilmore bike corridor become like Vancouver's Commercial Drive district! Maybe not, but there are some good shops/cafes near the Gilmore/Kingsway area so with the help of the bike route, the area could become more pedestrian/bike orientated.

(continued next page)

We believe in making friends. Protest rides to gain attention by disrupting traffic are not our style.

We use modern forms of communication to share information, debate issues, and communicate effectively as cycling advocates.

We are an independent group and do not accept funding or support that might compromise our ability to speak, lead, or criticize.

We work to institutionalize change. Rather than fight the same battles repeatedly, we seek policy or legislation to create lasting change.

We are inclusive. We support a variety of styles and approaches to cycling.

We encourage anyone who shares our values to join us.

□ Burnaby

□ Surrey

Join the VACC Board

The VACC's Annual General Meeting is coming up on Sunday, March 20th at John Braithewaite Community Centre in North Vancouver at 13:00. The meeting is an opportunity for members to get together to celebrate our accomplishments over the past year, and to talk about plans for the coming year.

The Board of Directors is the body that sets the direction for the VACC, and each year, half of the Board's two-year positions come open for election. If you're a member in good standing of the VACC (or become one before the AGM), you might want to consider running for the Board.

- The Board generally meets on the second Wednesday of the month from • 6:30-9:00 pm at transit-accessible locations throughout the Lower Mainland.
- Members spend 2-3 hours monthly for Board meetings and 1-2 hours per week on Committee and other work.
- During Bike Month (June), Board members are often requested to participate in extra events.
- An orientation will be held for new members soon after the AGM.
- You'll have opportunities to participate in workshops offered through Volunteer Vancouver.

For more information, contact Bonnie at volunteer@vacc.bc.ca.

Other good bike ideas have been floating around, such as Richard Campbell's suggestion to install an "electronic bike counter" along the new CVG; It could provide useful long-term statistics, such as how much traffic increases on the route over the years; or what affect 92 cents per liter of gas has.

Feel free to bring your own problems and solutions to an upcoming VACC-Burnaby meeting. The meetings are held at the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion, 2702 Norland Ave., Burnaby (near the Holdom Skytrain and are posted on the VACC-Burnaby listserve (go to station), www.vacc.bc.ca to join).

Work with the VACC To become involved, please contact: Mike 604 444-4068 Central Valley Greenway and Skytrain Jack 604 681-5744 □ Tri Cities and Delta Marion 604 520-7636 □ Fundraising Fulton 604 526-3585 □ Greater Vancouver John 604 986-9220 □ New Westminster Andrew 604 521-2742 □ North Shore Dave 604 988-5454 □ Richmond Jason 604 267-9762 lan 604 881-4425 Vancouver Jack 604 681-5744

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

Thank you!

Tailwinds (thumbs

up) to...

The city of Burnaby

for proposing two

new bikeways(Victory

and Cariboo

bikeways) See link

below and article

page 6:

For more information

http://

www.city.burnaby.bc. ca/cityhall/

departments_plannin

g/

plnnng_trnspr_vctrbk

.html

Please Don't Open That Door by David Hay

asked what is the single greatest cause of accidents between cars and My answer is always the cyclists. same - failure to keep a proper lookout. It seems to me that the vast majority of accidents are caused by, or at least involve, this act of negli-The reasons why so many gence. motorists simply fail to see cyclists are often the subject of vigorous debate. In my view, at the heart of the failure is a basic lack of social conditioning. As a point of departure, that concept is always thought-provoking, but beyond the narrower legalist purpose of this piece. It may be more fertile to examine what in my experience is in fact the most common variety of accident - the dreaded door.

Over the years I have often been

Door accidents are particularly violent because the cyclist usually has no time to react. Over the years I have been involved in many unfortunate cases where the cyclist's life story changes in an instant.

In most of these cases the driver simply failed to keep a proper lookout when checking his/her rear and side view mirrors, or they did not bother checking at all.

The Motor Vehicle Act requires motorists to open their doors carefully. It states as follows:

"When Opening a Door Prohibited:

203 (1) A person must not open the door of a motor vehicle on the side available to moving traffic unless and until it is reasonably safe to do so.

(2) A person must not leave a door open on the side of a vehicle available to moving traffic for longer than is necessary to load or unload passengers."

In addition to the Motor Vehicle Act, the common law provides that persons ought to avoid acts or omis-

sions which they can foresee would injure someone. Clearly, blindly opening one's door creates a risk of foreseeable harm.

As a cyclist, one is entitled to assume motorists will obey the Motor Vehicle Act and the common law. As a matter of legal principle, for the purposes of establishing liability, one does not need to anticipate that a driver may throw open a door into one's path. A cyclist will only be liable if, once the cyclist became aware of the driver's disregard for the law, the cyclist failed to take reasonable evasive measures and was negligent in his or her response. This might arise if the door were thrown open well in advance of the cyclist, such that the cyclist might have had time to avoid the door, if the cyclist had been riding properly and keeping a proper lookout. Failing that, a cyclist will not be liable for an "agony of the moment" decision or reaction, which may have turned out to be an unlucky one.

Recently, I have noticed that door culprits and their insurers have taken an increasingly aggressive approach to door victims on the issue of liability. In the "old days" liability was assumed unless the cyclist had a chance to avoid the accident. In the last several years I have seen all manner of defences in these cases. Some defendants suggest cyclists should not ride next to a line of cars within range of a door and are liable for doing so. Other defendants suggest that the presence of someone in a parked car should alert the cyclist to the possibility of a door being thrown open. If the cyclist is not so alerted, he or she should be partly responsible for the accident. From the perspective of hindsight and safety, these arguments have some appeal.

(Continued next page)

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Tailwinds (thumbs up) to...

The City of Surrey for widening the bridge over the Nickomekl River on 192 Street and thereby eliminating what had been a nasty bottleneck on one of the few north-south routes in the area However, they are contrary to the principle of law I mentioned, namely, that a cyclist is not liable simply because he or she failed to anticipate a motorist breaking the law. It is important to distinguish between what might be good advice in terms of safe cycling practice, and the imposition of liability for failure to follow that practice in the circumstances. In my view, unless this distinction is made, there can be no proper analysis of legal liability in any given case.

David Hay is a litigation lawyer and partner at RBS Lawyers. RBS Lawyers is a full service downtown Vancouver law firm delivering legal advice and solutions in all areas of practice. The information above is not legal advice. Anyone seeking legal advice should call David directly at 604-661-9250, or send an e-mail to dhay@rbs.ca.

A Sustainable Community for the Southeast False Creek Lands? By Jack Becker

The development of the Southeast False Creek (SEFC) lands was heralded to be a model environmentally sustainable community that could be held up as a world class example. Vancouverites flocked to public meetings with their suggestions, calling for a higher level of sustainability for these lands.

While this desire for sustainability may have been reached in many parts of the development, the transportation plans being presented to Council in December certainly favour the use of cars over more environmentally sound modes of transportation such as cycling. While there was an opportunity to

(continued back page)

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Spring 2005

Did you know ...?

The more letters written and the more phone calls made, the more likely cycling conditions will improve.

Who to write about issues in The Urbane Cyclist:

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

Honourable Kevin Falcon **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

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start addressing, through road design, some of the current health problems, by promoting walking or cycling to the local school for children, parked cars were favoured over cycling facilities.

The VACC would encourage a more sustainable transportation design for SEFC lands. The roads through these lands are very short, and should be fashioned with narrower streets that have a one-way traffic lane, separated two-way cycling lane, and a pedestrian lane. Delivery bays could be provided along each block with visitor car parking below ground or at the edge of the lands. Such roads would induce people to be out of their cars and enjoy the ambiance of the neighbourhood.

We have only one chance to get it right, so let the mayor and

JO	IN THE VACC!	
Yes, I want to	cycle for a better community	
1 st person 2 nd person Address City/Postal Code Phone E-mail:		
The VACC does not sell or give ou contact individual members throug	t address information. The VACC reserves the right the above information.	
Cyclist to me	□ \$10.00 Fixed/Student/Low Income	
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through the media	\square \$ 5.00 per person to also join the BC	
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via the website		
from another cyclist		
at a community event	And mail, along with this application to:	
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	New Westminster, BC V3M 1A8	
2/2005		