

Issue 28

Spring 2006



VACCAGM

Sunday,

February 19th in
Burnaby

See page 5 for
details and map

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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: No Solution in Sight by Bonnie Fenton

What a difference a few months make. In the fall 2005 issue of *The Urbane Cyclist*, we wrote about Vancouver City Council's decision to implement a one-year trial reallocation of two vehicle lanes to bikes on the Burrard Bridge so as to be able to give the sidewalks back to pedestrians.

The idea behind the trial was to determine whether, in reallocating lanes, there would still be enough space on the bridge for safe passage of all modes, or if we need to create more space. If the trial had gone forward and proven unsuccessful, the city would have known that the estimated \$12 million expenditure was indeed necessary.

Just before Christmas however, the new council reversed the previous council's decision; the trial reallocation will no longer take place.

While there's still disagreement on whether the lane reallocation was the best way to go, there was no questioning that it would have been the fastest and easiest way to significantly improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians on the bridge (the trial was supposed to begin in April of this year).

Given rising construction costs and Vancouver's focus on the Olympics, the VACC is concerned that the Burrard debate may well go on for another decade with no improvement in the interim.

Specific concerns of the VACC are:

- that immediate measures be taken to improve cyclist and pedestrian safety
- that there be physical separation of cyclists (and in-line skaters and other faster-moving self-propelled modes) from pedestrians
- that costs beyond the \$12 million currently earmarked for the project *not* come from the cycling capital budget
- that there be no "pinch points" on the bridge that would bring cyclists and pedestrians into potential conflict

If you'd like to express your views on the Burrard Bridge issue to Vancouver City Council, e-mail mayorandcouncil@vancouver.ca.

The Urbane Cyclist

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The views in this publication are not neces-
sarily those of the VACC

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FOUNDING MEMBER

British Columbia
Cycling Coalition

Member of the
(Canadian) Coalition for
Active Living

[http://
www.activeliving.ca/](http://www.activeliving.ca/)



MEET US

The VACC Board meetings are open to all
interested in bicycling in Greater Vancou-
ver. 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

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)
about cycling in Greater Vancouver.

Submissions may be sent to:

The Urbane Cyclist
Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition
Box 0074 641 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 21, 2006

President's Message by Colin Brander

My term as President of the VACC is winding down. As I am involved in other activities, including trying to improve the quality of life in our neighbourhood, it is now time for somebody else to take on this position. I will continue to be involved and will work with the new President to assist in the transition. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as President. Working with the board, committees and volunteers has been very rewarding. It is the work of our members that make our organization so effective.

Legislative Change/Enforcement

One of the things I would like to spend some time on is the legal side of cycling; including changes to the motor vehicle act (MVA) and pushing for increased enforcement of the rules of the road. In fact, this is one of the reasons why I got involved in cycling advocacy in the first place.

A few years ago, the BC Cycling Coalition did a review of the BC MVA (http://www.bccc.bc.ca/mva_presentation/mvaindex.html) and we made presentations to ICBC and the Ministry of Transportation's cycling committees. Unfortunately, when the Liberals first came into power, the MVA was no longer a priority. Time has passed and I think it is time to push for changes to our antiquated act again, so that the law is consistent with reality. For instance, I was surprised to learn that bicycle lanes are not referred to in the act.

As well, there seems to be a lack of respect for the traffic laws across the Lower Mainland. Traffic circles, bike only entry signs, crosswalks and stop lines are routinely ignored. How often have you seen drivers turn right on red without stopping? These all contribute to decreased comfort for all road users, especially the vulnerable users such as cyclists and pedestrians. Enforcement of the traffic laws is almost non-existent. One consequence has been the increase in the number of pedestrians killed across the region. I noticed recently, that Montreal will be hiring 133 additional police officers, just to deal with traffic enforcement, as they seem to be having the same types of problems. Now that the BC government is sharing the traffic fine money with the municipalities, there is funding available for more enforcement and I think we need to push to make sure this money is spent properly, so that we are all safer and more comfortable on the roads.

AGM

Mark February 19 on your calendars. It is a good chance to find out about our many accomplishments over the last year. As well, our guest speaker Gwendal Castellan will present on "The Antipodes Expedition: Cycling the Americas from the Antarctic to the Arctic". If you are interested in putting your name forward as a director, please contact myself or one of the other directors. I look forward to seeing you there!

Border Crossing Concerns in South Surrey *by Mary Eickhoff*

It came to the attention of VACC Surrey that a highway project under construction on Pacific Highway (Hwy 15) in South Surrey between 4th and 8th avenues, may affect current bicycle travel through the Pacific Highway Border Crossing into Washington State. At present, cyclists approach the U.S. Customs Building from Hwy 15. Currently there is no bicycle signage on this route or in this area indicating how to approach the border. There are indications this route will be used as a 'FAST – NEXUS' route and may not be open to cyclists.

Those of us who cycle internationally know how important it is that bicycle routes through border crossings be continuous. At present there is also no signage or direction for cyclists southbound through customs at the Peace Arch Border Crossing. Cyclists in traffic normally would use the right shoulder of the right lane, but when approaching the U.S. Customs building, this necessitates cycling close to traffic in the NEXUS lane; then at peak times, crossing three lanes of traffic, unassisted by any bike route signage or lane marking, to access the pedestrian entrance to the US Customs Office. On exiting, cyclists must cross the I-5 without traffic control to continue south through Blaine on Peace Portal Drive. We feel that the Ministry of Transportation for BC should be considerate of these factors if designating this route as the only bicycle border crossing west of Aldergrove.

In Washington State there is bicycle signage southbound from the Pacific Crossing Customs Office on WA 543 to H St, westbound to Mitchell Avenue, passing over I-5 to Peace Portal Drive. This is being used frequently by cycle groups meeting in neighbouring Surrey; however if there is not a safe access to/from Hwy. 15, this can not be recommended as a continuous route in BC.

It is our feeling that both border crossing corridors should provide convenient on-street accommodation for cyclists; access through the border should be equal to pedestrians or motor vehicles.

We have written to Hon. Kevin Falcon, Minister of Transportation for the Province of British Columbia, volunteering these on-road experiences and viewpoints for the purpose of encouraging alternative means of transportation toward the ultimate goals of:

- meeting our Kyoto requirement;
- decreasing traffic congestion;
- providing an economical, safe, healthy and reliable transportation option;
- enhancing tourism and improving air quality.

We are hopeful of a positive response from our Provincial Highway Authorities in 2006.

MEET YOUR BOARD

MEMBERS



David Pritchard

Originally from Toronto, David moved to Vancouver in 2001, with sojourns in Australia, Switzerland, Waterloo, Montreal and Ottawa. He has degrees in Computer Engineering and Computer Science and works as a 3D Graphics Programmer. David is interested in sustainable transportation in general, but cycling has been the focus of that interest, since it's the transport mode he uses and understands best. He's particularly interested in the technical aspects of bicycle facilities, and reads a lot about current research and policy. A related interest of David's is the interaction of transport facilities and land use.

How About that Right of Way? by David Hay

There can be no doubt that cyclists have made progress over the course of the last ten years in British Columbia. Cyclists have seen and have been part of a growing and changing environment. Certainly, the concept of alternative transportation has flourished in many forms and its real life manifestation in the Province is encouraging.

However, as cycling grows its growth reveals a significant systemic bias with regard to the rules of the road, and the collective perception of those rules. Legislative change has ensured that cyclists enjoy the same rights and obligations of motorists. However, when cyclists are involved in accidents with motor vehicles, a number of allegations and defences continue to be raised against cyclists, when they wouldn't be raised (in my view) if the accident involved two motorists.

As an example, let's begin with the fundamental right enjoyed equally by cyclists and motorists - that is, the basic right of way. In 1952, the Supreme Court of Canada established in the context of a motorist versus motorist case that traffic in the streets would be impossible if the driver of each vehicle did not proceed more or less on the assumption that other drivers would obey the laws of the roadway. In other words, those with the right of way need not anticipate every possibility and are entitled to proceed on the assumption that other drivers will not break the law. With the right of way, users of the roadway are only liable or partly liable for an accident if, once they become aware of someone's disregard of their right of way, they fail to take reasonable, evasive action. An example of this would be if you saw someone jaywalking and had ample opportunity to avoid hitting that person but decided to "stand" on your right of way. In those circumstances, the law will not let you proceed.

Because cyclists have the same rights as motorists, they also should enjoy the same principles relating to right of way, as established by the Supreme Court of Canada. Cyclists are not required at law to anticipate, for example, that a left turning driver will not yield the right of way. Similarly, cyclists are not required to anticipate that a driver sitting in his or her car in a parked position would suddenly open the driver's door into the path of the cyclist.

Unfortunately, motorists and insurers continue to cast blame onto cyclists for failing to anticipate various eventualities. They argue that if the cyclist had simply slowed down prior to entering in an intersection, the cyclist might have avoided contact with the left turning driver. Similarly, they argue that the cyclists passing a stopped vehicle ought to anticipate that if there

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"May the wind be always at your back."

Headwinds

- To the City of Vancouver for banning parking in the marked bike/parking lane along Pacific Blvd, near BC Place and GM Place around event times at these venues, and allowing motor vehicles to travel in that lane despite the solid white line and special purpose lane diamond logos, making it quite uncomfortable for cyclists.
- To the developer of the new building under construction on the northeast corner of Expo Blvd and Abbott for putting pylons and flagging tape across the end of the bike lane on Expo Blvd at Abbott with no prior warning and leaving no escape room, except to duck under the tape.
- To Coquitlam, ICBC and TransLink: For taking out the shoulder westbound on Lougheed Hwy near the Brunette interchange. This instead of improving conditions for eastbound cyclists as had been promised! Conditions for cyclists in both directions are now unsafe. They also added a non-bicycle friendly grate in the cyclists travel path. To top it off, these changes were meant to "increase" safety.

Tailwinds

- To the developer and site safety coordinator of the new building under construction on the northeast corner of Expo Blvd and Abbott for taking immediate action when informed about the pylons and flagging tape across the end of the bike lane on Expo Blvd at Abbott. (Note: Every construction site is required to have a safety coordinator, to contact if there are safety issues on or adjacent to the site.)

**Mark Your Calendars For a Day with
The Lower Mainland's Cycling Advocates!
Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition
8th Annual General Meeting**

Sunday, February 19, 2006

Time: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Location: The Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion.

Formerly called The Burnaby Association for the Mentally Handicapped

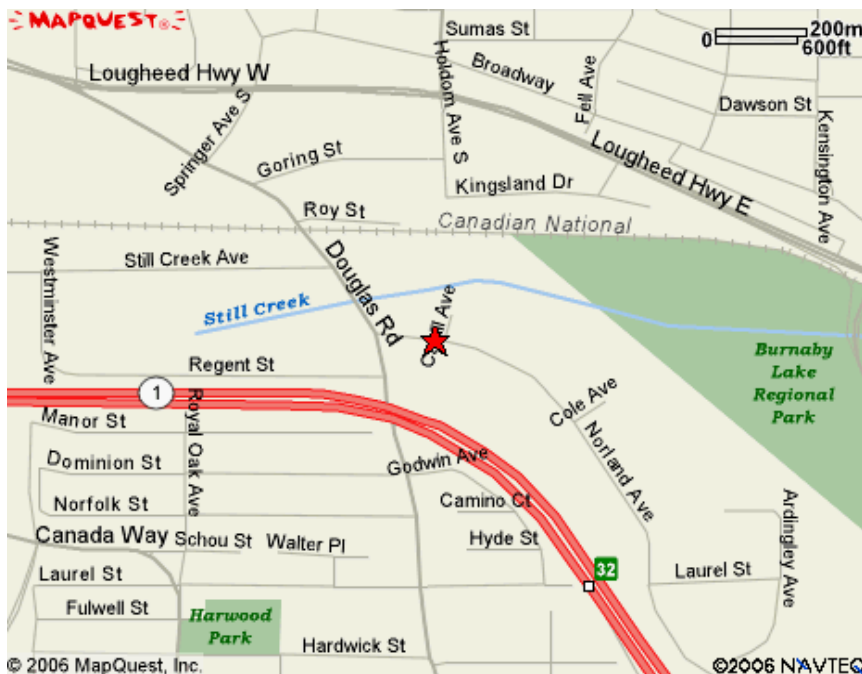
Entrance is at **BACK** of building

Plenty of indoor bike parking

The room is upstairs

Address: 2702 Norland Ave. Burnaby, BC

5 minutes SW of **Holdom** Skytrain station, NE corner of Douglas and Norland



Guest Speaker: Gwendal Castellan

Topic: The Antipodes Expedition:
Cycling the Americas from the Antarctic to the Arctic

The Antipodes Expedition is a project started by Gwendal Castellan, who decided to share his dream of cycling half way across the world and in two hemispheres with as many youth as possible. The expedition started on January 15th 2004 in Ushuaia, Argentina and finished in Inuvik in the North West Territories on September 1st 2005, and covered 30,000 km.

For more information contact the VACC by phone: 604-878-2222 or by e-mail: info@vacc.bc.ca.

Commuter Skills Course Update by Bonnie Fenton

The VACC's Commuter Cycling Skills Program is kicking off this spring. The free one-day course provides basic cycling knowledge to new and less-experienced cyclists. Classes will be offered throughout the Lower Mainland both to employee groups through their workplaces, and to individuals in public venues and are free to participants (with a \$50 deposit to reserve your spot).

What will I learn? You'll learn basic traffic skills, gain confidence in the abilities you already have, and pick up some handy tips. The day includes in-class and on-road training, with an easy-paced 10-12 km ride in the afternoon.

How do I know the class is for me? If you have a bike and would like to use it more but are nervous about riding in traffic, the class is

probably for you. The combination of classroom and on-road training is intended to build traffic cycling proficiency and confidence for adults who want to cycle for transportation.

Why is it free? Because the VACC thinks it's important to get as many people as possible riding bikes safely and confidently on the roads of the GVRD. Vancity, TransLink, and the cities of Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminster agreed with us and are generously supporting our efforts.

If you know an organisation that would be interested in hosting a class, or if you'd like more information, contact Bonnie Fenton at bikeskills@vacc.bc.ca or 604-734-1385.

Check out www.vacc.bc.ca for more information on class dates and locations.



TransLink Bike Program www.translink.bc.ca

Be bright. Use a light!

TRANS LINK
www.translink.bc.ca
604-953-3333

The Urbane Cyclist

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is someone in the vehicle they may open their door. While both positions may seem logical, in hindsight, both are wrong at law and contrary to the law. The law does not require such a high standard of cyclists, despite the fact that cyclists seem to be more vulnerable to injury than motorists. The law is that the rights and obligations are the same as those of motorists, end of story.

It seems to me that by ignoring this principle, which has been applied to motorists since 1952, individuals and institutions place too high a standard of care on cyclists, and correspondingly too low a standard of care on motorists. If the law were simply applied equally, liability in many of these cases would be very clear. Fortunately, the judiciary has been highly cognizant of this principle, but many cases would never get to trial and need judicial intervention were this principle properly applied in the early stages by the parties concerned.

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.

Work with the VACC

To become involved, please contact:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby | Mike 604 444-4068 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delta | Marion 604 520-7636 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | Fulton 604 526-3585 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Vancouver | John 604 986-9220 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Westminster | Andrew 604 521-2742 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Shore | Dave 604 988-5454 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid Transit | Jack 604 681-5744 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Richmond | Jason 604 267-9762 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surrey | Mary 604 535-2513 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TransLink | John 604 986-9220 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tri-Cities | Brennan 604 937-5155 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vancouver | Jack 604 681-5744 |

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

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
Phone: 250 387-1715
Fax: 250 387-0087
premier@gov.bc.ca

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

Mayor Maxine Wilson & Council
Coquitlam City Hall
3000 Guildford Way
Coquitlam, BC
V3B 7N2
Phone: 604-927-3001
mwilson@coquitlam.ca

City of Surrey
Mayor Dianne Watts and Council
14245 – 56th Ave.
Surrey BC V3X 3A2
Phone: 604 591-4126
Fax: 604 591-8731

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

TransLink
Chair Malcolm Brodie and Board of Directors
1600-4720 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2
Phone: 604 453-4500
Fax: 604 453-4626
www.translink.bc.ca/

VACC Values

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.

The VACC advocates for better conditions for cyclists and the removal of barriers to cycling. We achieve our objectives by meeting with governing agencies at all levels, writing well researched, proactive letters and reports, working constructively with the media, and encouraging more people to cycle more often. The work of the VACC is grounded in the following values:

- ***We support a variety of styles and approaches to cycling.***
- ***We value education and role-modelling of safe cycling.***
- ***We respect those who choose or need to use other forms of transportation.***
- ***We value cycling as a community building tool and as healthy for both individuals and our environment.***
- ***We avoid funding or support that could compromise the integrity of our mission, purpose, or values.***
- ***We seek positive legislative and policy change to make a lasting difference.***
- ***Our membership is open to all who share our goals and values.***



Bike Route in Estonia. Photo: L. Love

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 <i>The Urbane Cyclist</i> to me | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00 Individual |
| I heard about the VACC: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10.00 Fixed/Student/Low Income |
| <input type="checkbox"/> through the media | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.00 Each additional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> from this newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80.00 Corporate/Organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> from a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.00 additional per person to also join the BC Cycling Coalition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> via the website | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional donation (Sorry, we can't provide tax receipts.) _\$_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> from another cyclist | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> at a community event | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ | |

Please make cheques payable to:

Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

And mail, along with this application to:
VACC Memberships

City Square, P.O. Box 47068
15-555 West 12th Ave.
Vancouver BC V5Z 4L6

February 2006