

The Urbane Cyclist

Published quarterly by the Vancouver Area
Cycling Coalition (VACC)

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

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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 667 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 20, 2007

Bicycle Registration: A Way to Unite a Recovered Stolen Bike with the Owner by David Brierley Propertycop.org

It is 3pm at work and you are anxious to get home. Unfortu-
nately, while you are contemplating the serenity of your humble
abode, a stranger is pawing, pulling and pilfering your precious
property.

Shortly after, your valuables will be in the clutches of an unscrup-
ulous neighbour or a flop house fence. These items include bicy-
cles, cameras, laptops and liquor.

Sometimes these thieves are intercepted by the police. The obvi-
ous thief is the person known to be without a fixed address or
gainful employment, riding a high-end bicycle.

Frequently, police find bicycles repainted, or see that parts are
from other bikes. In the streets, bikes are a commodity, just like
bottles, metal and personal identification.

When the police do find a bicycle, for example, they are hampered
in their ability to locate the owner. Police databases contain
"stolen property" information. If the owner was on holiday, or at
work, then they didn't have a chance to report their bike missing.
If the owner did not keep serial number information, then they
may never report their bike missing. After facing this problem as
a police officer, I created a non-profit program, which is free to
the user, and allows them to register their property before it is
stolen.

PROPERTYCOP.org is not a police database. It is a private data-
base in which the users give the police and authorized personnel
permission to query, in order to get your property back. The user
can add pictures of their property, and email their data records to

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The Urbane Cyclist

Is It Safe? By David Hay

Laurence Olivier fans will remember that famous question in *Marathon Man*, a movie produced in 1976, whose tag line was "it isn't safe". Laurence Olivier's nasty character, Dr. Christian Szell, was attempting to extract an answer to that famous question from Thomas Levy, played by Dustin Hoffman. Mr. Levy, an unwitting grad history student, was caught in the middle of an international conspiracy involving stolen diamonds, an exiled Nazi war criminal, and a rogue government agent. When asked repeatedly by Dr. Szell whether or not it was safe while being tortured, Mr. Levy had no ability to answer the question because he had no idea what Dr. Szell was talking about.

The general legal requirement to behave "safely" falls squarely on the shoulders of all cyclists as a result of the *Motor Vehicle Act*. However, despite the use of terms "safely", and "safety" throughout that statute, nowhere in it are those words defined. Let's face it, there is in this world no such thing as absolute safety in the sense that no accident can occur. What then is the true legal meaning of the word "safe"?

The common law has struggled with the definition of safe for hundreds of years. What has emerged from this struggle is a hybrid definition containing subjective and objective factors. In determining what is safe within the meaning of any rule or regulation, the common law says that some regard must be had to the capabilities of the person to whom the term is being applied. This is a simple reflection of the fact that what is safe for Lance Armstrong may not be safe for Granny Smith. So when statutes such as the *Motor Vehicle Act* attempt to prescribe rules relating to safety, those rules are almost always broad and vague enough that they invite a whole host of evidentiary considerations. An example might illustrate the point better.

Let's take my favourite statutory reservoir of ambiguity, the *Motor Vehicle Act* provisions relating to passing on the right. The statute says you cannot pass on the right but provides a number of exceptions to that general rule.

However, even if you fit within one of the exceptions, you cannot pass on the right "when the movement cannot be made safely...". We know the use of the term in this context must import some objective standard which has a definite function in limiting what would otherwise be a legal free for all. That standard would relate to what the law describes as the "reasonable person". However, we also know that the term would apply differently to different circumstances. As such, the definition of safe must depend to some extent on the circumstances of each particular case. The definition morphs into what would be considered safe by a reasonable person in the specific shoes of the individual cyclist.

Terms like "safe", used in legislation, typically require interpretation. They have no inherent legal meaning beyond their ordinary meaning, but the latter can differ wildly, depending on who is doing the interpretation. Language has power, and is often construed in accordance with personal or institutional motivation, and bias, rather than any actual absolute standard.

The moral of this story is if someone tells you you've done something unsafely, particularly someone acting on behalf of a motorist by whom you have been injured, it is probably best to take that advice with several grains of salt. Ultimately, the only person in a social democracy with jurisdiction to decide whether or not a cyclist's conduct is safe or unsafe, is a duly appointed Judge. The job of that individual is to interpret the rules set out in the *Motor Vehicle Act* based on principles of common law and the evidence of any given case. It is only after an application of the law to the facts of individual cases that an actual finding of what is safe or not safe can be made.

David W. Hay is a litigation lawyer and partner at Richards Buell Sutton, LLP. Richards Buell Sutton, LLP 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 Hay directly at 604-661-9250 or send an email to dhay@rbs.ca

Cycling Downtown with Security in Mind by Sheree Gable

In keeping with this newsletter's theme of safety and crime prevention, the VACC recently sat down and spoke with some of the security staff who work downtown at Pacific Centre. Here are the results from our chat about bicycles:

VACC: How many bike racks are located on the Pacific Centre property?

Pacific Centre Security: There are a total of five bike racks on the property, plus there are two more on city property in front of the 609 Granville and the 750 West Pender office towers.

VACC: Where do Pacific Centre office tower tenants store their bicycles when commuting to the complex?

PCS: We have two secure bike storage rooms for tenants on the property.

VACC: What makes the bike storage rooms so secure?

PCS: It is access card controlled and only with appropriate access levels can you use these rooms. They are monitored by security 24 hours a day.

VACC: What's the best type of lock that cyclist can use when securing their bikes?

PCS: A krypton lock or a ¼ inch cable lock

VACC: In your experience what's the most popular type of bike that is stolen?

PCS: We have not found that one particular bike is more popular than any other.

VACC: What can cyclists do to prevent their bike from being stolen?

PCS: Know your bike well, lock your bike to the bike rack, remove wheels and seat when not in use.

VACC: How can cyclists encourage their employer to give them safe bike storage?

PCS: Research what areas are available for bike storage in your building, encourage your employer to provide incentives for people who bike to work, and compile a list of potential users.

VACC: What other advice would you give to cyclists about preventing bike theft?

PCS: Invest in a good lock to secure your bike, use secured facilities whenever possible, and never leave your bike unattended - even for a moment.

MEET YOUR BOARD

MEMBERS



John Fair (President)

John is an independent sales representative in the electronics industry who uses his bike for running errands (and any other excuse he can find). He started riding when he was six years old and never stopped, and now knows every Japanese restaurant on every bike route in the GVRD.

John has been a VACC board member since 2003 and recently helped organize the first annual North Shore Bike to Work Week. He has always thought cycling was an under-appreciated means of transportation. Now, with vehicular traffic increasing at an alarming rate, he thinks it's more important than ever to design more safe cycling routes.

More Commuter Cycling Skills Courses Offered in 2007

Back by popular demand, the VACC will again be offering its free commuter cycling skills courses to the public in the spring, summer, and early fall of 2007. 40 courses will be offered in 2007, up from 25 in 2006. Presented throughout the Lower Mainland, the one-day course provides basic cycling knowledge to new and less-experienced cyclists. Classes are free to participants (with a \$50 deposit to reserve your spot).

The combination of classroom and on-road training is intended to build traffic cycling profi-

ciency and confidence for adults who want to cycle for transportation. You'll learn some basic traffic skills, gain confidence in the abilities you already have, and pick up some handy tips.

For more information on class dates and locations, check out www.vacc.bc.ca/bikeskills or contact Bonnie Fenton at bikeskills@vacc.bc.ca or 604-734-1385.

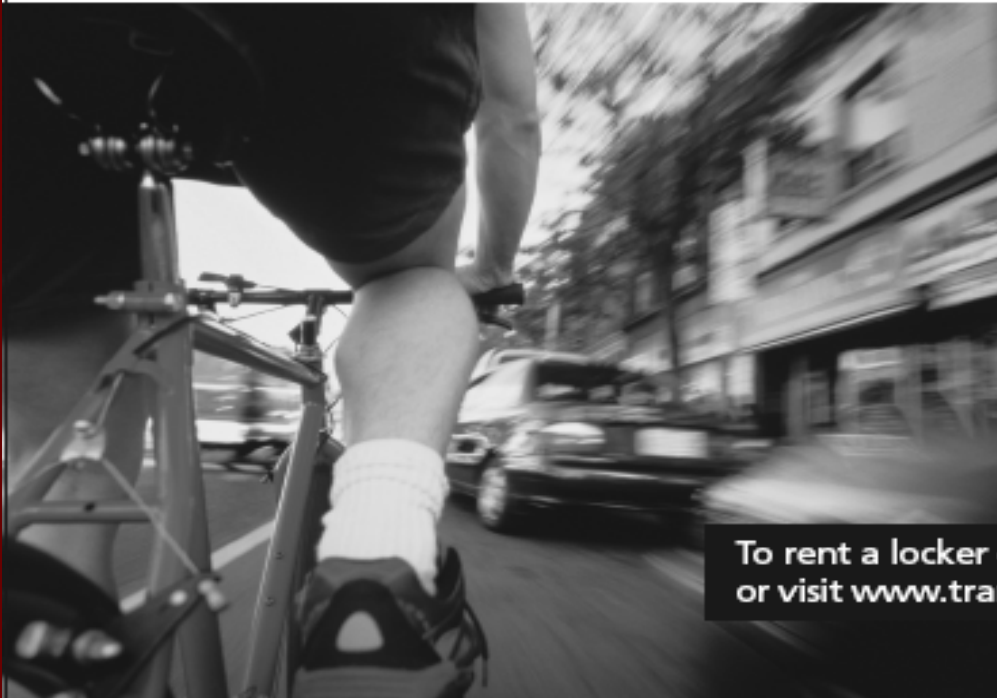
Many thanks to TransLink and the City of Vancouver for their continued support of the Commuter Cycling Skills Program.

This course made a big difference for me. Prior to it, I had been on a bike about 5 times in the last 15 years, mainly because I was absolutely terrified not only of traffic, but also of all other road users such as other cyclists, pedestrians, dogs, etc. I never thought I would dare sharing the road with cars, buses, etc. I am not sure what happened during the course, but I now bike to work at least twice a week and find it very enjoyable. When I need to use busier roads, I feel alert and focused, rather than jittery and out of control. I feel that I know my options and can make rational decisions.

I would recommend this course to anyone, and I think it also made me not only a better cyclist, but also a better driver and pedestrian!

Pam from Vancouver, September 2006

The perfect combination.



YOUR BIKE.
OUR LOCKER.



To rent a locker call 604.924.1076
or visit www.translink.bc.ca/bikes

Preparing for the Third Wave of Cyclists - Cycling facilities designed for future cyclists

March 28, 7-9 pm

SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver

Admission is free: reservations are required. Email cs_hc@sfu.ca or call 604.291.5100.

Within Vancouver, cycling for transportation has grown slowly over the past 20 years to a respectable level within North America. To create a steep change and cause a new wave of major cycling growth there will need to be changes in thinking towards cycling infrastructure design with trends towards the European approach. Hear more on techniques from other cities within North America and Europe which should be brought to this region to help spur that next stage of growth. Speakers include: Jack Becker, Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition; Dr. Hans Groen, Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, and Gordon Price, The SFU City Program.

Co-sponsored by the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition and the Simon Fraser University City Program with financial support from TransLink - The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority.



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Vancouver and UBC Report by Jack Becker

2006 was a good year for the City of Vancouver in expanding the cycling network - from bike lanes on Kerr St, in the south-eastern part of the city, to those installed downtown with left turn coloured bike boxes.

At the first committee meeting of the year the False Creek Flats Rail Corridor Strategy Study, the Seawall Bike Path, and Cambie St. were discussed.

With winds battering Stanley Park, some repair work will need to be done to the Seawall Path. So, it was an opportunistic time for the group to formulate its vision of cycling infrastructure for the park. The VACC will be communicating to the Park Board with suggestions for the Seawall Path.

The VACC is working with BEST and others in the False Creek Flats Rail Corridor Strategy Study. VACC's design preferences for overpass and underpasses evolved from these discussions.

Advocacy for bike lanes from the Fraser River to the north side of Cambie Bridge, on Cambie St. will continue, followed by focus on a cycling feeder network to the Canada Line stations.

A Vancouver wish list:

- The Arbutus Corridor with connections to local and regional cycling facilities,
- New comprehensive cycling master plan including an expanded network infrastructure and 'filling in' of missing connectors,
- Marketing of Cycling for Transportation should be undertaken aggressively,
- Separated bike lanes into and throughout downtown,
- A good definition or vision of what constitutes a bike route,
- Standards for acceptable traffic levels on bike routes. Policies for protecting bike routes and building new ones; policies around new developments to protect bike routes,
- City council and staff be more proactive by including cyclists' needs in the planning process.



Free Air. Free Oil.

Thanks for voting us #2

Heck, if your bike had a windshield, we'd do that too.

1810 Fir @2nd Ave. 604-731-2420 **110 Davie @Pacific 604-648-2600**

Reckless
BIKE STORES

THE ONLY THING EXTREME IS OUR SERVICE

The Urbane Cyclist

Cycling Skills Corner by Bruce Mol

Manoeuvrability

In CAN-BIKE cycling safety courses there are four foundational ideas that instructors continuously refer back to: Manoeuvrability, Visibility, Predictability and Communication. In this article I examine Manoeuvrability.

Riding in traffic is more than the physical activity of pedaling; it is the mental activity of always insuring you are in a safe position on the roadway and that you have an escape route should something go awry. For those unused to riding in cities and urban areas, the amount of visual information to process can create anxiety and fear – and that's without formulating escape scenarios. If you are 'afraid' of traffic it is most likely because you are not secure in knowing where you should position yourself on the roadway and what you'll do if conditions abruptly change – like a car door suddenly opens!

Begin with a safe position out from the edge of the roadway. In BC, cyclists are supposed to ride as far to the right as practicable. That means the cyclist decides where to ride based on the present conditions. You will need the ability to identify hazards and how to handle them. Learning about hazards and how to handle them is what bike courses are all about.

Cycling safety education is just as important as advocating for safer cycling facilities.

Work with the VACC

To become involved, please contact:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby | Mike 604 444-4068 |
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- 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@gov.bc.ca

City Of Burnaby
Mayor Derek Corrigan and Council
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby BC V5G 1M2
Phone: 604 294-7944
Fax: 604 294-7724
postmaster@city.burnaby.bc.ca

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

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@vancouver.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/

Refer to our website for more contact information.

What's that yellow thing? By Bernhard Spalteholz

It's called a velomobile. If you ever wished you could ride your bike more comfortably in the rainy months that we seem to have for much of the year in Vancouver, then you may be interested in one. Velomobiles are recumbent style bicycles with a shell (made of fiberglass or other light materials) enclosing the whole vehicle to keep wind and rain off the rider and increase aerodynamics. There is plenty of room behind the seat that can be used for groceries or camping equipment. They have been available in Europe for years, but this is the first model that is manufactured in Canada. Due to the increased aerodynamics of the vehicle, they are about as fast as a road bicycle on the flat and downhill sections. On uphill, the weight of the vehicle results in a slightly slower speed. To compensate for this, I have added an electric assist motor to my velomobile. This motor can assist the velomobile up to a speed of 32 km/h, and this speed can quite easily be kept up over long distances. The complete vehicle qualifies as an electrically assisted bicycle, therefore requiring no insurance or licensing, and is allowed to be ridden wherever regular bicycles are allowed. The batteries selected provide for an assisted range of about 60-100km between charges, depending on the average speed.



The Aurora velomobile is about 9 feet long, 32" wide, 47" high, and weighs about 79 lbs not including the electric motor and batteries. The safety equipment includes headlights (50W), a tail-light, brakelight, turn signals, a horn, dual disk brakes, as well as reflective tape all around. The yellow color also helps to ensure the vehicle is as visible as possible.

When riding the velomobile on the side of the road, cars seem more careful and give me adequate room when passing. Even though the velomobile is only a few inches wider than a bicycle's handlebars, it looks a lot wider to cars from behind.

Velomobiles cost more than a regular bicycle, but if you use it regularly to replace car trips, it can pay for itself in about one year due to savings on gasoline, insurance, and vehicle maintenance.

To find out more visit my blog at <http://theyellowvelo.blogspot.com> or my website at www.velomobiles.ca.

JOIN THE VACC!

Yes, I want to cycle for a better community

1st person _____
2nd person _____
Address _____
City/Postal Code _____
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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 |
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| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5.00 additional per person to also join the BC Cycling Coalition |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional donation (Sorry, we can't provide tax receipts.) _\$_____ |

I heard about the VACC:

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

Feb 2007

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