

the Urbane cyclist

Spring 1998, Volume 1 Issue 1

Official Publication of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

Welcome!

Welcome to the first issue of "The Urbane Cyclist", the official newsletter of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition (VACC). In these pages we will inform you of the activities of the VACC, general transportation cycling in Greater Vancouver, and hopefully incite you to act on issues which affect you directly. In this issue we introduce ourselves (look to page 2 for our values) and touch on a couple of items we already have on the front burner. Let us know what you think is important to cycling in the region. Join us in creating a strong, unified voice for transportation cycling in Greater Vancouver.

James Wanless,
Editor



Left: Our logo is an adaptation of other regional cycling coalition logos. With it we hope to be easily identified as 'the voice' of transportation cycling in Greater Vancouver. We "borrowed" Nanaimo's, who, in turn, had borrowed Victoria's. Hey, if it ain't broke - don't fix it!

Why a Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition?

Freedom of Choice

Doomsayers proclaim that Vancouver is on the same evolutionary pathway that Los Angeles was on 25 years ago. Vancouver is apparently being consumed in a relentless crush of cars. Cycling routes are deluged with private automobiles. Meanwhile, would-be cycle-commuters claim fear of automobile traffic as the number one reason they stick to their automobile. Although the irony is obvious, traffic planners seem to have forgotten about bicycle transportation.

Citizens of Vancouver, it is not too late for the humble bicycle. Reasonable and pleasurable cycling can yet be integrated into the Vancouver area transportation infrastructure. To the bright future of bicycling, we present the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition. We present the freedom to cycle!

History of the VACC

Advocates from **Cycling BC**, **BEST** (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation) and the **Vancouver Bicycle Club** contributed to the formation of the VACC. Cycling BC has over 2000 members and is responsible for many programs that benefit cyclists. BEST has established excellent work in advocacy and education and is responsible for the successful quarterly, The Spoke 'n' Word. The Vancouver Bicycle Club has a long record of community activity.

Provincial and regional coalitions are needed in British Columbia to provide single representative bodies to communicate the interests

of the cycling public to governments at the Provincial and municipal levels. A coalition can more effectively represent transportation cycling than each cycling organization acting on its own.

The VACC will represent the entire lower mainland region as one of several regional coalitions throughout the province. At the same time the British Columbia Cycling Coalition will operate at the Provincial level. Organizations will join the BCCC while the membership of the VACC will consist of individuals and corporations. On March 21 of this year the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition hosted the first meeting of the BCCC at which Vancouver area cycling advocates **Colin Brander**, **Peter Stary**, **Su-Laine Yeo**, **Robert Delahanty** and **Richard Campbell** were chosen as interim directors.

The VACC will represent the basic community need for sustainable, appropriate urban transportation. The objectives of the VACC will be consistent with the Livable Region Strategic Plan and consistent with a city that has aspirations to be a model for progressive urban development in the 21st Century. 🚲

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the Urbane cyclist

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If you would like to contribute to The Urbane Cyclist please call James Wanless at 219-6279. The views in this publication are not necessarily those of the VACC.

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VACC interim Board of Directors

Colin Brander, David Cambon, Richard Campbell, Robert Delahanty, Marion Orser, Peter Stary, Helen Warn



VACC values

The VACC was formed to present a clear voice for transportation cycling in the Vancouver area. It took some time, but from the inception of the VACC, through recent meetings of the interim Board of Directors, we have been debating what this organization should stand for. We offer the final version of our guiding principles. We welcome your comments.

1. We are pro-bicycle; we are not anti-car. While we might like to have fewer cars on the road and the public using more healthy and efficient forms of transportation, that is not our primary goal.
2. We support cycling for itself, not as a way to further another agenda such as environmentalism. We may be environmentalists, but cycling is our main agenda.
3. We are inclusive. We support a variety of styles and approaches to cycling. We encourage anyone who shares our values to join with us.
4. We believe in making friends, not enemies. Protest rides to gain attention by disrupting traffic are not our style.
5. We use modern forms of communication to share information, debate issues, and to quickly contact others.
6. We are an independent group and maintain our

- independence by avoiding any funding or support that might compromise our ability to speak, lead, or criticize.
- 7. We work to institutionalize change. Rather than fight the same battle many times, we strive to have policy or legislation put in place to create lasting change.
- 8. We believe in action and are each committed to doing a fair share of the work.
- 9. We aspire to consensus decision making, within reasonable limits.
- 10. We advocate better conditions for cyclists. While we encourage cycling as a means of transportation for more persons, we respect those who choose or need to use other forms of transportation.
- 11. We do not take ourselves too seriously. We endeavour to keep it fun.

Burrard Bridge Strikes Back

by Richard Campbell

In mid-April, a cyclist was seriously injured after being knocked off her bicycle by a pedestrian and hit by a van. This is an accident that should not have happened. Nearly six years ago, the people of Vancouver voted to spend millions of dollars to improve cyclist and pedestrian safety on Burrard Bridge. The city studied the problem for a few years then closed a lane of traffic for a week on a trial basis. Angry motorists, who had not been properly informed of the trial, forced the city to back down. Since then, the city has largely ignored the issue.

The problem is that the bridge is only good enough to be dangerous. It is good enough - mainly because there is some separation from the high speed traffic - that many people who would not dream of cycling over other bridges, do so over the Burrard Bridge. The vast number of less experienced cyclists, rollerbladers and pedestrians in such a small space creates this dangerous situation in spite of the fact that it is better than most other bridges.

It is the closest bridge to a large population living within reasonable cycling distance of downtown. As well, it is an important recreation link, connecting Kits and Granville Island with the bike paths along English Bay, False Creek and Stanley Park.

In order to get more people to cycle, better cycling infrastructure is needed. If people perceive cycling routes as being dangerous, they will simply continue to use their cars. We must not settle for substandard and dangerous bicycle facilities. Whatever option is chosen for the bridge, it will set the standard for bridge bicycle access in the Vancouver area.

The option chosen must make the bridge a safe place for all users. It must increase the number of people cycling over the bridge, not automobile capacity. Possible options include:

- * widening the sidewalk by widening the Bridge.
- * creating bicycle lanes underneath the bridge
- * hanging bicycle lanes off the side of the bridge.

- * remove one lane of traffic leaving 2 lanes in one direction and 3 in the other then restripe the bridge to create bike lanes on each side.
- * widening the sidewalk by removing a lane of traffic.
- * creating bicycle lanes by removing a lane of traffic in each direction.

Given the heat that Council faced over the lane removal for the trial, they will likely be reluctant to consider options that remove lanes of traffic. Thus, even though they are more expensive, options that do not impact traffic may be more likely to receive council's blessing.

Over the next few months, VACC will work with other cycling groups to reach consensus on what is the best and most realistic solution for the Burrard Bridge. We must speak with a common voice or they will simply use the same old divide and conquer strategy and we will get nowhere.

Please write or phone Mayor and Council at:
Mayor Philip Owen,
Vancouver City Hall, 453 W. 12th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C., V5Y 1V4
873-7621



Photo courtesy Scott Nelson



Burrard Bridge: too dangerous for safe non-motorized transportation?

The GVTA is Out There!

by Larry Pamer

The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority was ratified by the Greater Vancouver Regional District at its February 17th Board meeting. In view of the mixed reaction which followed the original proposal for the new authority last November, it is in the interest of transportation cyclists to be aware of what is currently happening now that the GVTA is becoming a reality.

Put in context, the GVTA represents an opportunity for people who are concerned about the future of transportation in the Lower Mainland to resolve transportational challenges in a more inclusive format than was originally prescribed. The initial proposal for the transportation authority did not mention cycling. This was highly disconcerting for cycling advocates who have worked diligently to establish bicycles as a recognized means of transportation. The GVRD's Livable Region Strategic Plan (1996) seemed to validate these efforts by citing bicycling as "a priority" for increasing transportational choice.

In hindsight, the omission of cycling was due largely to the impetus of the design of the new authority to coordinate pending changes to roads and transit. In particular, the authority was conceived to facilitate the transfer of responsibility for many of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways' non-freeways and arterials throughout the province to municipalities. With the operation and maintenance of many of these roads going to GVRD municipalities the issue of a regional road authority arose. Similarly, with regards to transit, there had been talk of regionalizing it to allow municipalities to plan and operate it, as well. A regional body would also be required to coordinate intra-regional transit and maintain service standards. Although, it may have made sense to confine the scope of the GVTA to pending changes in infrastructure management, recognition of bicycles as a bona fide transportation choice was omitted.

GVTA - cont'd on page 4

VACC takes on Burnaby OCP

by Su-Laine Yeo

Cycling conditions in Burnaby leave much to be desired. The minor roads are often fragmented, poorly lit, and poorly paved. Just about everything else is a truck route. No more than seven north-south roads cross the Trans Canada highway, and about half these crossings are daunting.

But cyclists are tenacious. A half-dozen of us at the VACC - and perhaps a few thousand outside it - do frequently cycle in Burnaby. Burnaby has promise for cycling. It has no bridges, and a land border with Vancouver. Its institutions like SFU, BCIT, and many high-tech companies attract people who - given the chance - are perhaps adventurous enough to try a less common mode of transportation.

So when Burnaby put forth a draft Official Community Plan in March and invited public feedback, VACCers took notice.

An Official Community Plan (OCP) comes out every five to ten years. It establishes the priorities and directions of a city or region, in spheres ranging from schools to land use to job creation. It's a chance to get promises for lasting bicycle-priority efforts and to pitch cycling as a

community-friendly activity. Bikes aren't just cheap transportation - they're for air quality, neighbourhood stability, noise reduction, and other great things you want your community to have.

A glossy brochure summarizing this year's draft plan envisioned an aesthetic, robust, "environmentally aware" city encouraging walking, cycling, transit, and high occupancy vehicles to play a greater role in transportation. All three artist sketches of what Burnaby will look like in the future featured at least one bicycle or tricycle.

Deeper into the text of the draft OCP, cycling was less prominent. Most ominous was the line, "safe and convenient cycling and pedestrian facilities will continue to be provided," inspiring laughter and one cyclist's observation: "They're not going to take anything away!" The draft OCP had solid transportation goals, but was weak in its provisions for reaching those goals. This was the message the VACC brought to a meeting with three Burnaby city planners in mid-April.

Burnaby - cont'd on page 4

Got something to say?

We welcome articles (400 words or less), comments, letters, suggestions, or any correspondence about cycling in the Lower Mainland.

Submissions may be sent to:

The Urbane Cyclist
c/o VACC
1925 Garden Drive
Vancouver, BC
V5N 4W8

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

Your ad could be here

Reach a highly targeted audience for pennies per exposure. With support from advertisers like you, we'll grow and you'll keep reaching more potential customers.

For rates & deadlines call
James Wanless @ 219-6279

Join the VACC !

Yes, I want to support transportation cycling in Greater Vancouver

I am joining as:

- an individual - \$20
- an organization/corporation - \$80

My interests are:

- commuting / transportation
- recreational riding
- volunteering for the VACC

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please make cheques payable to:
Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition
and mail, along with this application to:
1925 Garden Drive
Vancouver, BC
V5N 4W8

And . . . Thank you!

Calendar of Events

VACC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Start Bike to Work Week with a bang. Join cyclists from around the Lower Mainland for the first Annual General Meeting of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition. Be a part of what will be an effective member supported transportation cycling lobby group in the Vancouver area.

Agenda will include the election of directors and other society business. We will set lobbying priorities for the VACC and form committees, allowing members to become involved in VACC activities. A membership fee of \$20 is required to vote at the meeting. For more information or if you are interested in being a director contact **Richard Campbell at 733-1764**.

When: Sunday, May 31 from 12:30 to 4:30
Where: Bonsor Recreation Complex
6550 Bonsor (at Central), Burnaby.

BIKE TO WORK WEEK

Brought to you by Better Environmentally Sound Transportation.

Events include:

Evening Lantern Ride, Opening of the Midtown Bikeway,

Clean Air Day

(includes the Commuter Challenge, Pancake Breakfast & Transportation Fair, the Great Bike-Transit-Car Challenge and Clean Air Day at Science World) Bicycling Forum, BEST Dance (with People Playing Music) and Bike to Market Day (Granville Island).

When: Sun. May 31 through Sat. June 6
Where: All over Vancouver
Information:
Phone: 604-669-2860
Email: cho@wimsey.com

BECEL RIDE FOR HEART

Raise funds for the Heart and Stroke foundation with one of Vancouver's favourite rides. 20 or 40 km route.

When: May 31, 1998, 9am
Where: Thunderbird Stadium, UBC
Information & registration:
Phone: 604-738-RIDE
Fax: 604-738-7463

WINDS OF CHANGE

The Society Promoting Environmental Conservation presents the opportunity for environmental groups, NGOs, First Nations, labour, student and youth groups, business and public and social interest organizations to tell senior representatives from the federal, provincial and regional governments what ideas and solutions they have for dealing with climate change. You are invited to present your proposals and/or submit a position paper for distribution at the conference.

When: June 6, 1998
Where: Robson Square Conference Centre, Vancouver

Information & registration:
Phone: 604-736-7732
Email: spec@alternatives.com

MOVING THE ECONOMY

Economic Opportunities in Sustainable Transportation - An International Conference exploring sustainable transportation as a key to economic progress.

When: July 9 to 12, 1998
Where: Toronto, Canada

Information & registration:
Phone: 416-392-1560 x 85854
Email: mte@city.toronto.on.ca
www.city.toronto.on.ca

BEARINGS '98

An exhibition of visual works by Vancouver Bicycle Couriers.


When: July 27 - August 29, 1998
Where: Atrium Public Gallery,
Hongkong Bank of Canada
885 W. Georgia Street, Vancouver

Information:
Free attendance, open regular business hours.

GVTA - cont'd from page 3

To the credit of the GVRD and to cycling advocates, the public consultation period of December and January led to revisions to the original proposal. In dramatic fashion, the joint submission in mid-February of the GVRD Transportation and Strategic Planning Committee and the GVRD Budget and Administration Committee recommended that the Board add a provision to the *Recommended Agreement on Transportation Governance and Funding in Greater Vancouver* that the GVTA will "coordinate and support programs, facilities and initiatives to increase the use of bicycles in the region." This also reaffirms faith in the GVRD's Livable Region Strategic Plan in that the LRSP deems bicycling as "a priority" for increasing transportation choice.

Now that the GVRD has approved the GVTA, as amended, it is working with the provincial government as a participant in the legislative drafting process to assure that the board-approved version of the agreement is reflected in the legislation. Once the "GVTA Act" is passed, the GVTA board can be formed and its sub-regional advisory groups can be staffed. In the meantime, a public advisory committee will work with the interim board to determine a model for the structure of the sub-regional groups and, thereby pave the way for the public advisory function which will be an integral part of the GVTA.

If you would like to become more involved or learn more about this project, visit the GVRD website at www.gvrd.bc.ca (**Working With You**) - you can e-mail your comments to the GVRD while you are there. Or if you prefer, get in touch with Bob Paddon, the Manager of Communications and Education, at 432-6205. 

Burrard - cont'd from page 3

We drafted a response to the OCP over email, phone, and two pre-meeting planning sessions. The VACC listserv enabled the group to see and comment on the position. Among the changes we asked for:

- * Refine the proposed Cycle Roads network, which emphasizes high-speed, high-volume roads such as Willingdon Avenue. Although it is possible to cycle in such conditions, many people prefer to cycle on less busy streets, or with greater separation from traffic.
- * Improve road surfaces.
- * Hire a bicycle co-ordinator.
- * Commit to bicycle priority measures. Change the heading "Non-Vehicular," referring to cycling and pedestrians, to "Non-Motorized."
- * Bring all future road project plans to the Burnaby Bicycle Advisory Committee.

We had the satisfaction of working with other groups. Representatives from the Burnaby Bicycle Advisory Committee came to the meeting, and Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) supported our requests in a letter.

As expected, the planners were non-committal, although they were amicable and were impressed that our position was well thought-out and detailed. Jack Belhouse, (Deputy Director of Planning & Building) will present our letters to Burnaby City Council in early May as part of community feedback on the OCP, and to the Transportation Committee for inclusion in the Transportation Plan.

Obviously, we still have work to do.

Over the next year, we could build on this experience by:

- * taking on another OCP. Lynn Valley has one in the works right now.
- * continuing to lobby for Burnaby improvements, particularly a cycling network.

Members are interested in north-south routes, connections with Vancouver, connections with New Westminster, numerous difficult intersections, and other areas.

If you're interested in projects like these, by all means join the team at the VACC and let's make things happen. 