

Issue 41

Summer 2009



Bike to Work Week is almost here!

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www.vacc.bc.ca

to sign up and win prizes!



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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

The Long and Short of it: New Cycling Greenways in Metro Vancouver by Rob Brownie

In the next few months two significant additions to the Metro Vancouver cycling route network will be completed, each showcasing important bikeway features that separate cyclists from motorists. The Carrall Street Greenway, which we focus on in this issue of the newsletter, runs the length of Carrall Street and will eventually join False Creek and Burrard Inlet to complete the Sea Wall Cycling Route. Just under a kilometre long, this bikeway is an important component of the revitalization of the area as it links three significant neighborhoods: Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside and Gastown. In contrast, the Central Valley Greenway (CVG) will be 25 kilometres long and will access numerous arterial bike routes in Vancouver, New Westminister, Lougheed and Brentwood. At specific points along the trail you will also have access to 11 sky train stations, more than 23 bus routes and 11 other urban trails. The route generally follows the corridor of the Millennium skytrain line, connecting each end of the bike route that runs adjacent to the Expo line. Cyclists will now be able to ride along a great loop that will be approximately 50 kilometres long! We applaud the efforts of TransLink, the Cities of Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminister, and cycling advocates associated with BEST and the VACC for seeing each of these projects through to completion. Please go to the VACC website in late May for updates on the official grand opening of the CVG Greenway which is coming up soon. We will provide you with an overview of the CVG along with photos in the next issue of The Urbane Cyclist. For an excellent map of the Central Valley Greenway you can do a search on the TransLink website: www.translink.bc.ca



Photos of the Carrall Street Greenway by Rob Brownie (see page 7)



The Urbane Cyclist

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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

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:
newsletter@vacc.bc.ca

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

Next deadline: Friday, July 24th, 2009

Be Lean, Clean and Green – Ride your Bike to Work by Erin O'Melinn

How can you be kind to your body, the environment, and your wallet? Bike to Work!

How can you get started? Join us for Bike to Work Week, May 11-17th, 2009! This fun-filled, free event offers prizes, free refreshments and snacks on your way to work, and a great feeling of satisfaction when you participate.

It's also an opportunity for first-time cyclists to get involved and access information to make their trip more enjoyable and, most of all, safe! Visit www.vacc.bc.ca/biketowork and register today.

Benefits

Thousands of participants have caught on to the benefits of cycling to work. Not only is a bike a low cost mode of transportation, it is good for the environment and your well-being. Many commuters have found that cycling to work is faster and less frustrating - bike lanes and designated paths provide traffic-free alternatives to sitting in gridlock.

Still need reasons to try biking to work this May? Consider the following:

Fun! Cycling has many great benefits, but the most compelling reason to ride, is that it feels great. Most people have a positive memory from cycling as children.

Personal well-being and health. Riding to work uses already committed commuting time for exercise. A commute of ~7km takes 25-30 minutes. Cycling to work helps you get in and stay in shape and burn off stress from work and other worries!

The cost of gas. Bikes don't require trips to the gas pump. Every kilometre you ride a bike, you burn calories instead of gas. And bike parking is always free!

The costs of a car. On average, it costs \$7,400/year to own and maintain a car; equivalent to around two months' wages for the average worker.

Environmental concern. Transportation accounts for 42% of carbon dioxide emissions in British Columbia. Bicycles emit zero greenhouse gases, regardless of trip length. A survey by Harris/Decima in May 2008 found that 75 per cent of British Columbians are willing to fight climate change by altering their everyday

Continued on page 6

CAST Update: Intersections and Cycling—Be Aware! by Janet Lowcock

According to a 2003 ICBC report on traffic collisions, almost 70% of automobile/bicycle collisions occur at intersections, often when a cyclist is moving straight ahead*. The urban cyclist will encounter many intersections during an ordinary bike ride or commute to work. The Cyclist Awareness/Safety Task Force (CAST) of the VACC will be developing a brochure for Bike to Work Week to increase cyclist awareness of the hazards of intersections and the need for vigilance and defensive cycling.

The following pointers, garnered from *Bike Sense: The British Columbia Bicycle Operator's Manual*, will help you enhance your personal safety on city streets and roads.

If you imagine cycling along a city street, various intersection types will come to mind: uncontrolled intersections, traffic circles and those controlled by stop signs or traffic lights. Remember though that driveways and alleys are intersections too. Always look for cars entering the roadway across sidewalks and coming out of alleys.

Here are some tips to help you safely cross an intersection and make a turn.

When going straight ahead through an intersection:

- Use extra caution at all types of intersections. Look around and anticipate that drivers may be unaware of cyclists and their speed.
- When beginning to cross with a green light, take a moment to make sure the intersection is in fact clear. BEWARE the "red light runners".
- Make sure that you are away from the curb to increase your visibility to drivers.
- **BEWARE THE RIGHT HOOK!** A right-turning vehicle may cut across your path as you enter an intersection. To avoid this, enter the intersection either behind or ahead of a vehicle so that you can see their turn signal, or they can see you.
- When approaching an intersection with several lanes, choose the lane with the arrow pointing in the direction you want to go. If you cannot safely position yourself in the correct lane, you could choose to dismount and cross at a crosswalk instead.
- If your lane becomes a right-turn-only lane, shoulder check, signal and change to the right side of the straight-through lane when an opening appears.

When making a left turn:

- To turn like an automobile: shoulder check, signal and position yourself in the left side of the lane or in the left-turn lane. Position yourself so that cars cannot pass you on the left. Yield to on-coming traffic and make your turn. Never make a left turn from the right side of the road, even if you are in a bike lane. **OR**
- Use the perimeter method: Proceed straight through the intersection on the right. Stop and either walk your bike through the crosswalk as a pedestrian or proceed as if you were coming from the right, awaiting the green signal to cross.
- Make sure that you have time to complete your turn safely. Never get caught in the middle of the road amongst high speed traffic.
- Please be vigilant and ride defensively. Remember that **"the single most important rule is to remain alert and be prepared for unpredictable moves or mistakes by others."** (Bike Sense)

For more cycling safety information, refer to *Bike Sense: The British Columbia Bicycle Operator' Manual* Third Edition, Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (publisher)

(* ICBC: *Traffic Collision Statistics- Police Attended Injury and Fatal Collisions*, 2003, p. 123)

Ride for Access to Justice by David Hay

One of the most important questions facing our society today is access to justice. Members of a civilized community need access to a justice system through which they can resolve their civil (non-criminal) disputes.

The most common complaint relating to our civil justice system is that it is expensive and out of reach for individuals of average means. Many people perceive this to relate to the high cost of lawyers' fees for services. It is true that many lawyers who render services on an hourly basis are simply unaffordable to the average litigant. While this may be perceived as the central problem, it is not. By analogy, the independent film industry does not suffer because Dustin Hoffman is too expensive. Moreover, many cases can be conducted on a contingent fee basis. Finally, consider the cases where, depending on the stakes, individuals may have no choice but to exhaust all of the resources they have. For example, if facing a criminal charge, and the prospect of prison, most individuals will often do anything they can to retain the best counsel they can. When their liberty is at stake, they are much more ready to exhaust any resources they have to force the Crown to prove its case against them.

But different considerations apply in a civil case. Civil cases involve claims for compensation arising from wrongful conduct. In these cases, the aggrieved Plaintiff chooses to pursue a remedy. But if the damages sustained as a result of the wrongful conduct are not significantly in excess of the cost of proceeding against the wrong doer, economic issues become paramount considerations. All too often, cases with merit are not pursued because the cost of doing so outweighs any benefit which might be gained. A large bulk of these costs relate to "filing fees, hearing fees and jury fees" levied by the government as the litigation proceeds. These fees render the "right

to trial" something which is often available only to litigants with significant financial resources.

The fact is that most litigation concerns individuals fighting institutions. Those institutions are usually insurance companies, banks, governments or large resource-rich and lawyer-heavy private companies. Institutional litigants can afford the cost of litigation. Sadly, resource superiority is often the most effective weapon in the legal war against the individual. In a wide variety of circumstances, individual litigants simply cannot "pay to play", or risk an onerous award of costs against them. The playing field is simply not level.

The good news is that the vast majority of civil disputes do not require litigation, but only the threat of litigation, for their resolution. But for the threat of litigation to be taken seriously, it must be informed, meaningful and purposeful. To bring this threat aggrieved individuals need proper legal assistance which is only available through the pro bono effort of BC lawyers who donate their time for the sake of advancing just causes. That's where the Western Canada Society to Access Justice ("Access Justice") comes in.

Access Justice, a non-profit society formed in 1990, is an organization which is dedicated to Justice for those who cannot afford it. For 20 years, Access Justice has advocated for people with modest means but determination to pursue justice. Its visionary was Dugald Christie, who died after being struck by a van on his bicycle during a ride across Canada to promote the idea that our justice system should not only be available to the rich and powerful. Since its incorporation in 1990, Access Justice has grown to the point where it now operates over 65 clinics across British Columbia using the services of some 320 BC lawyers who donate their time.

Continued next page

MEET YOUR BOARD

MEMBERS

Sara Gilbert

Sara has lived in Vancouver for 12 years since moving from Ontario in the late 90's. She has worked in the health care field for over 15 years and most recently as a Health Care Manager at WorkSafeBC in Richmond, BC. Sara's educational background includes a degree in Kinesiology, a diploma in Athletic Therapy, a Master of Health Administration and a Project Management Professional certification. Sara enjoys biking whether it is an early morning ride to work or a more hair-raising ride down the North Shore Mountains.

Continued from previous page

There are uncanny parallels between Access Justice and advocacy groups within the cycling community in BC. Both are committed to a better world in which one is not judged by the cost of one's automobile. The cycling community needs proper representation and empowerment through legal education and the advancement of legal issues which affect cyclists. What better way to demonstrate the synergy than lawyers riding in robes to the steps of the courthouse in demonstration of the vital needs for access of marginalized groups to our Courts.

On May 12, 2009, we will perform this ritual for a second time in the second annual bike and walk for justice. The ride will be held in conjunction with Vancouver's Bike-to-Work Week. Information about the ride can be obtained from the Access Justice Website.

This ride is a shining exercise in non-conformity and an important step towards greater awareness of Access Justice and its goals. I hope you will join us.

David Hay is a litigation lawyer and partner at Richards Buell Sutton LLP. He has a special interest in bike injury law and can be contacted at 604.661.9250 or dhay@rbs.ca.

mighty riders

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Tailwinds

"May the wind be always at your back."

- To Manabu Koshimura and the Vancouver Parks Board for installing bike racks within a week of the complaint that there were none!
- To New Westminister Parks and Recreation for establishing a temporary detour route for cyclists and pedestrians through Moody Park, with appropriate signage, during recent construction.
- To The Institute of Transportation Engineers Greater Vancouver chapter, who are hosting the 2009 Quad Conference in Vancouver on May 1 & 2 this year. Of the 51 presentations, 10 are about "active modes" (cycling, walking) and one of the 4 technical tours is to the Carrall Street Greenway.
- A belated tailwind to the Tim Horton's at Queensborough Landing in New Westminister for installing a bike rack within a couple of weeks of our request.
- To the City of Surrey, Province of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada for the \$12.5-million upgrade to the City of Surrey's network of cycling routes.

Hey, no headwinds this quarter!

Continued from page 2

behaviour significantly. Do your part by riding to reduce your carbon emissions.

Improvements in safety. Many cities in BC are making the roads safer for cyclists by adding biking lanes, safe bike parking and bike courses for new cyclists. Become a member of the VACC and advocate for more, while receiving great new member benefits.

Feeling unprepared? Safe cycling courses are available - see if your workplace will sponsor a commuter cycling skills course for employees - the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition has a variety of workshops aimed at safety, comfort, route planning and increasing bicycle knowledge: Go to www.vacc.bc.ca or contact Diana at Diana@vacc.bc.ca

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3211/is_199809/ai_n7888205

John Pucher, bicycle scholar (Rutgers University)



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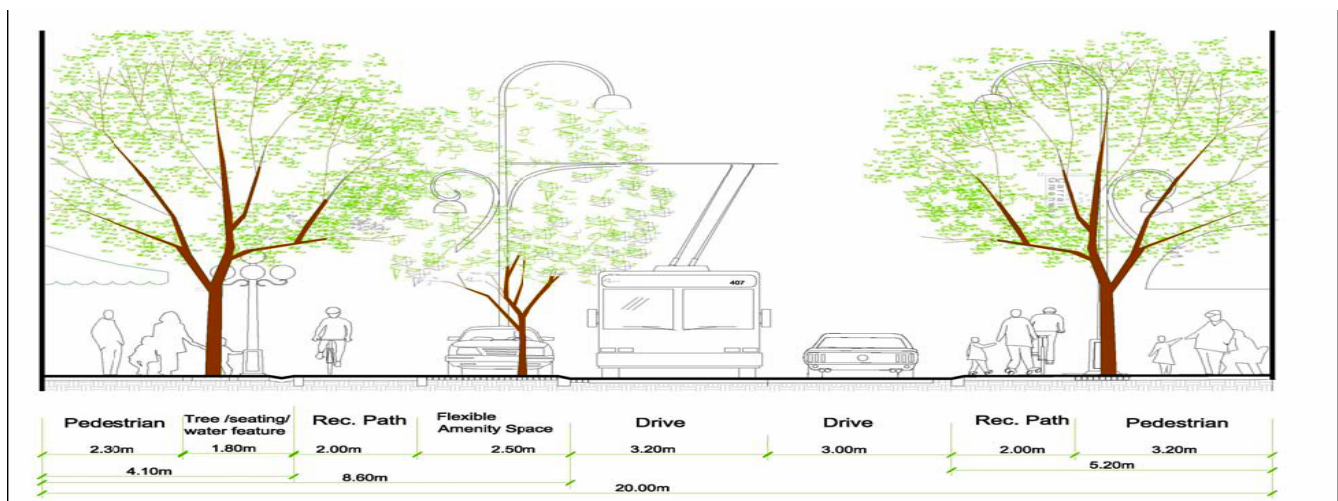
The Carrall Street Greenway by Rob Brownie

In 2005 Vancouver City Council approved a design proposal to convert Carrall Street into a multi purpose recreational route that would emphasize the unique heritage value of the Downtown Eastside. One of the oldest streets in Vancouver, Carrall Street has historically been a two lane, two way street with two lanes of parking. The Greenway concept design has reallocated vehicle space for pedestrian, jogging and cycling use while significantly increasing the landscaped portion of the street. Riding north from False Creek it is easy to distinguish the four main zones or sections of the development as outlined in the master plan. At the South End the Greenway begins at the False Creek portion of the Seawall bike route where a shared bike/pedestrian path will take you to Pacific Boulevard. The Park Zone leads you north on the road until you reach Expo Boulevard at which point you ride along a 2.5m sidewalk level bike path separated by the curb. It should be noted that until you reach Keefer St. there are *no* cyclist activated crossing lights (an unfortunate oversight!).

It is between Keefer and Water Streets, otherwise known as the Heritage Zone, that Carrall Street reveals the more intricate aspects of the bikeway route. Once you cross Keefer Street a gentle incline guides you onto another sidewalk level bike path that is separated from the road by landscaping treatments and bollards. The adjacent pedestrian path is separated along the built edge of the street by a shallow drainage feature and trees. Bike boxes are prominent at each intersection but also at the laneway crossing that

leads to the entrance to Sun Yat Sen Gardens. Construction is still underway between Pender and Cordova Streets while the north section of the Heritage Zone should be completed in May. Along the length of the street there are ample street markings and posted signage to guide motorists and cyclists, and the bike path is clearly distinguished by its dark grey pigmentation. The overall effect of the cycling component of the Greenway is very successful - it is a rare event when cyclists can ride along an inner city street and feel as though their safety and overall riding experience have taken priority over the car, and so we need to ensure that this is the new standard for bikeway construction in the future.

The final zone of the Greenway will include a bicycle/pedestrian bridge that will connect Water Street with Crab Park and the Burrard Inlet. At this point it is difficult to imagine what this bridge will actually look like as it will have to rise abruptly to clear the considerable expanse of railway tracks along the northern edge of Gastown. Funding may become an issue as well. Earlier this year the \$5 million construction budget for the Greenway was exceeded and an additional \$2 million was requested in the 2009-11 Capital Plan. It will be imperative for the cycling community to keep a watchful eye on this project to ensure that the final segment of the project is completed so that the Seawall loop will become a reality. In the near future we can do our part by exploring an important addition to the Greenway inventory of Metro Vancouver and seeking similar initiatives throughout the region.



Graphic: City of Vancouver

Bikeway Design 101

If we are to be effective advocates for the development of improved and expanded cycling infrastructure we need to be speaking the same language as engineers and planners. With this issue of the newsletter we are introducing a section that will explain some of the terms and definitions that will help you better understand what makes a better bikeway. Here we examine types of bikeways:

Urban Bikeway Classification System

Class I Bikeway:

These bike paths are completely separate from motorways, either following a corridor designated for other forms of transportation (Central Valley Greenway) or running adjacent to a motorway but at sidewalk grade (Carrall Street Greenway).

Class II Bikeway:

Here a bikeway shares the road with cars but is delineated with lane markings or "sharrows".

Class III Bikeway:

This type of bikeway includes streets that are fully shared by cyclists and motorists with some signage - think of bike routes in your municipality that are designated as such and tend to have lower traffic volume and some calming measures such as traffic circles and cyclist activated crossings.

From the Peace Arch News, Friday April 10 2009:

Bike Lanes get big upgrade

Jeff Nagel, Black Press

Surrey will get three new cycling/pedestrian overpasses and more than 13 kilometres of new bike lanes as part of a \$12.5-million upgrade to the city's network of cycling routes. The costs are being shared by the city, the province and the federal government.

New overpasses are to be built over Highway 1 at 168 Street, over Highway 99 off the Pioneer bicycle path and over North Creek at 180 Street.

A total of 10.6 kilometres of new bike pathways will be built, including \$1.8 million for additions to the Cloverdale Bicycle Path along 176 Street south of Fraser Highway, as well as added segments to the Wildflower, Serpentine, Green Timbers, Fraser Heights and Clayton bike paths. Also to be built is a new 2.8-kilometre bikeway up 148 Street from 96 Avenue that will connect to the new 10-lane Port Mann Bridge.

It's being billed as the biggest investment in cycling in Surrey's history.

"This will very dramatically improve the cycling options for people in this community in almost every part of this community," said transportation minister Kevin Falcon.

The plans have been on the city's books for years but the upgrades weren't likely to get built soon without senior government funding.

Bike to School Program

Bill Hamilton

The launch of the new VACC website came just in time to kick off the first **Bike to School Week** coinciding with this year's Bike to Work Week. The interest from schools to participate in friendly competition with other schools for prizes throughout Metro Vancouver is high.

Schools in Coquitlam, Richmond, Delta, Vancouver, Surrey and North Vancouver are all taking part in Bike to School workshops and events this spring.

Bike to School has also begun its **Bike Friendly School Awards Program** where schools apply to receive awards and recognition while learning from the success of other schools. For more information on Bike Friendly School Awards and information on bike education workshops for students, parents and school staff check out the new VACC Bike to School website or contact:

schools@vacc.bc.ca



Work with the VACC

To become involved, please contact:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burnaby | Luis 604 431-6658 |
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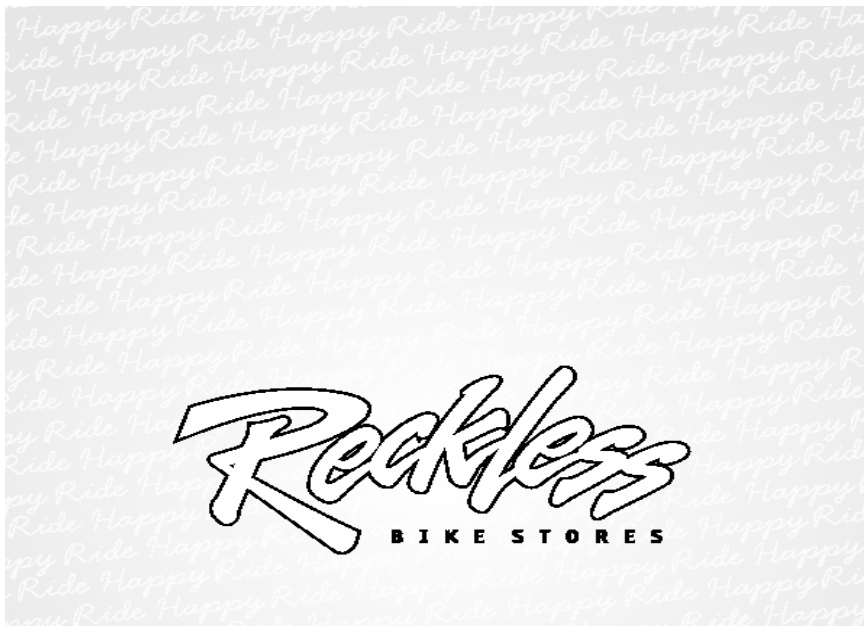
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Refer to our website for more contact information.



PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE VACC



The Urbane Cyclist

Bike to Work Week Countdown Posters!

For the first time Bike to Work Week this year has created count-down posters for the 4 weeks leading up to the event. These can be downloaded from the website and posted, or forwarded to help generate excitement for the event.



The first poster features Mayor Gregor Robertson; the three-week countdown poster features Christy Clark; the two-week countdown poster will feature Dr. David Suzuki. These are available for download from the website now! Look for another great "celebrity cyclist" on the one-week countdown poster on May 4.

Thank you!

To the Vancouver Aquarium for donating passes as Bike to Work Week prizes - they'd love to see you arrive on your bike to some of their great upcoming events. www.vanaqua.org

To the Self-Propelled Outdoor Club, which donated funds to the VACC after riding from Vancouver to Mount Baker, then climbing the 3285m summit!

The VACC is growing!

A Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows chapter was formed in February of this year.

Please mail this form and a cheque to:

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

Make cheques payable to: Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition

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