

CYCLE THERAPY



MARCH/APRIL 2007 NO. 106

Neighbourhood Workshop Series 2007: #1 The Walkable, Bikeable City

by Melanie Perkins

Victoria: Vibrant City, Vibrant Neighborhoods - Neighbourhood Workshop Series 2007 was launched on January 29, 2007 to involve and engage citizens in neighbourhood development. The City of Victoria, in conjunction with the University of Victoria, LifeCycles and Vancity sponsor the series.

Common Ground held a planning session February 19 at 7:00 pm in City Hall antechambers.

Many people including representatives of Victoria's neighbourhood associations, the GVCC's President, Darren Marr and a dynamic new organized group, *Common Energy* from UVic attended. Maeve Lyndon, (361-0358 or 383-5800) LifeCycles Common Ground Project Society <http://www.commongroundproject.ca/news> (under construction) partnering in the workshop, facilitated. Joe Daly, Manager of Research, Planning and Design, Victoria was the keynote speaker.

By definition, the *Greenways Plan* is intended to provide an opportunity for alternative transportation across a system of safe, aesthetically pleasing corridors throughout the City. The goals are three-fold but perhaps the one most important to the GVCC is to "establish a human powered transportation network". There are three types of these networks, *People Only*, *People Priority* and *Shared Greenways*, for walking, cycling and walking and mixed with auto traffic respectively. These have been designated on a map approved by City Hall.

The Plan and the Map can be found here - but beware, some of this contact information is out of date and is being changed: http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/currentprojects_greenways.shtml

Joe Daly is the only City employee directly involved in planning and has been appointed part-time greenway duties. Gail Price-Douglas also works on the program in the Community Development Branch of the City of Victoria. The Greenways Program has a fifty-year time line, looks for matching funds and has an annual Capital Budget in excess of \$100,000. It springs from the Greenway Plan, which was adopted by City Hall in 2003. The highest capital priority is a walking and cycling route adjacent to the harbour next to Fisherman's Wharf. Important to GVCC members are two programs, the *Capital Budget* and the *Greenways Matching Grant program*. The second is for smaller projects (up to \$25,000) which "fill in" gaps in the capital program. The deadline for this year's submission is May 1st and must be made in cooperation with a neighbourhood association. Perhaps with some lobbying the City might be talked into extending applications this year. The program involves matching the funds donated by the City in kind or by other means. The hourly cost of volunteer work is described in the City application instructions. So those of you out there with an irritating infrastructure problem and friendly neighbourhood contractor and a group of GVCC contacts with some time to spare this summer, please take note. Solutions may be closer

than you imagine.

The web addresses for the Greenways Matching Grant information, including Program Guidelines and Application Form are:

http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/grants_grnwys_gdlns.pdf
http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/pdfs/grants_grnwys_applct.pdf

Afterwards, I had a chance to have a discussion with Common Energy of UVic (www.commonenergy.org) representative Jill Doucette, TDM and Climate Change Coordinator, UVic Sustainability Project who attended along with Mark Chandler. Dan Pollock is the communications points person and sits on the Campus Planning Committee. Jill is one of three employees of Common Energy. The goal is to move UVic beyond Climate Neutral. They have managed to overturn the development of a parkade on Campus and have developed a wikipedia online. Four teams and six working groups are meeting weekly. The most important component identified by Common Energy is transportation. Staff, faculty and students (mainly graduates) are participating and it is hoped that the initiative will spread to other campuses across Canada. It is an interdisciplinary undertaking with all faculties encouraged to become involved. The work will not stop over the summer and a major launch is expected next fall in conjunction with orientation in September.

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greater victoria cycling coalition

general meeting

wednesday march 28, 2007

guest speaker **guy dauncey** from the *bc sustainable energy association* will discuss **cycling and climate change**

esquimalt high school, 847 colville road

refreshments @ 6:30, meeting @ 7pm

everyone welcome!

Come hear guest speaker Guy Dauncey, President of the B.C. Sustainable Energy Association and long-time GVCC member speak about the role bicycling can play in the battle against climate change. In addition, learn about the GVCC's strategic plan and upcoming advocacy and educational initiatives, and find out how you can play a part by volunteering. For your information, due to a bylaw technicality at the last Annual General Meeting, we will be reintroducing 2 bylaw changes at this meeting for voting by the membership. Come and be informed of what's happening in the cycling community, just as the spring cycling season is getting under way! For more information, please call the GVCC office at 480-5155 or email at gvcc@gvcc.bc.ca.

hello and welcome to the relaunch of cycle therapy. when i moved back to victoria in november, i noticed that this publication hadn't been published for a while. so i took it upon myself to get cycle therapy running again, hopefully for a long time. anyway, if you're love or despise the new format or would just love to write an article related to cycling advocacy, drop us a line. we welcome your submissions even if you do insist on using capital letters. jason.

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CYCLE THERAPY

Published six times a year by the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (GVCC), #12 Centennial Square, Victoria, BC V8W 1P7
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The GVCC's purpose is to promote and improve conditions for cycling in Greater Victoria by:

- Improving cycling education and making it universal for cyclists, for motorists and others dealing with bicycling;
- Facilitating communications between cyclists and government;
- Improving facilities for bicycle use;
- Improving the legal climate for cyclists;
- Encouraging more people to ride bicycles more often;
- Developing a cycling information base.

To contribute to Cycle Therapy, please e-mail: communications@gvcc.bc.ca
(We reserve the right to edit copy in the interest of clarity or where necessary to conserve space.)

The views expressed in Cycle therapy are not necessarily those of the GVCC.

Visit our website: <http://www.gvcc.bc.ca>

To join the GVCC members email discussion group, send a blank message to: gvcc-members-subscribe@yahoo.com

Cycle Therapy Coordinator: Jason Weedmark
381-8172 jasonweedmark@hotmail.com

Website: Greg Merkley gmerkley@shaw.ca

GVCC Board of Directors
President: Darren Marr
Vice-president: Bill Birney
Treasurer: Tim Isaak
Secretary: Vacant!!!
Director: James M. Grayson
Director: Patrick O'Connor



The GVCC is a proud member of the British Columbia Cycling Coalition

President's Report

by Darren Marr

Hello Fellow Cyclists!

It's been awhile since I last communicated to you in this format, but it has been a long time coming. First of all, I want to thank newsletter coordinator Jason Weedmark for stepping forward to lead the effort to revive Cycle Therapy. It's nice to know the GVCC has once again found its voice, so it can better serve its members.

Secondly, I wish to report that your Board has been busy working behind the scenes since the last AGM in October to advocate for improvements to the cycling network in Greater Victoria. Endorsements and requests for input were sought from and given by the GVCC for proposed greenway projects on Mortimer Street in Saanich, Fort Street in Victoria, Wale Road in Colwood, Millstream Road and Station Avenue in Langford, and East Saanich Road in Central /North Saanich. We have also identified a potential problem area for cyclists at the Galloping Goose Trail crossing of Sooke Road near the Luxton Fairgrounds, and are in contact with the relevant authorities in order to find a resolution.

Finally, an update on strategic planning. We are currently embarking on an implementation plan to fulfill our strategic initiatives as outlined in our strategic plan completed last summer. Two critical factors identified by stakeholders for the GVCC to focus on were an increased emphasis on cycling education and continued advocacy for improved cycling facilities. To that end, the GVCC is pleased to announce the following initiatives to help us

address these key success factors:

- 1.) Re-establishment of the Education Committee to oversee educational and legal awareness issues and activities,
- 2.) Re-establishment of the Facilities and Infrastructure Committee to handle issues over building new cycling facilities and improving existing facilities,
- 3.) Obtaining insurance protection for CanBike certified instructors so they may be able to give cycling instruction classes through the GVCC,
- 4.) Exploring avenues to introduce bicycle instruction to school-age children,
- 5.) Establishing a bike lane policy for the GVCC.

These initiatives will require a considerable amount of investment in volunteer power. Therefore, the time is ripe for you the member to get involved in the heart of cycling advocacy in Greater Victoria. Your Board will be on hand at the next General Meeting (Wednesday, March 28 7:00 at the Esquimalt High School) to answer questions about volunteer opportunities and the latest strategic initiatives of the GVCC. Remember, the GVCC is your organization, and you have an opportunity to play a role in making Victoria a better place to cycle!

See you on the road!

Cheers,
Darren

Greenways Information Likely to Appear Soon

They are working on a car-free day slated early in that month. A second conference is to be held Monday, March 19 titled *Common Energy2*. Registration information can be found on the website and although it may be too late for GVCC members to attend, they are encouraged to participate in the organization's other public processes.

Common Energy Greenway priorities are connections between downtown and the University through Saanich and Oak Bay. These would include Finlayson, Shakespeare, Haultain, Dean and Richmond Streets. Currently the City of Victoria is the only municipality that has a greenways initiative underway in the CRD. However, other municipalities are being encouraged to participate. Oak Bay has just struck a Climate Change Task Force. The ideal Common Energy greenway infrastructure depends on the location. Some areas just

need brushing up to improve sight distance. They would expect different treatments on McKenzie versus Wharf Street per se. They would also like to see more/better covered bike parking and lockers and showers on campus. A main concern is the fifty-year time line of the Greenways Plan. "We are hoping that the funding will increase" (which could correspondingly shrink the time line).

To conclude, this initiative is very new and the results are not necessarily easy for the layperson to access. *This article may be the only readily available source of up-to-date contact information in the City for those who wish to get involved!* The results of the workshop discussions were to be posted on the Internet by Common Ground but had not appeared by press time. The *Greenways Plan* would appear to be a very noble undertaking and really gives some flexibility

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to those of us living in Victoria to participate in a very hands-on fashion. There is some highly inspiring energetic support around the City.

I can recall one weekend many years ago, when volunteers came from as far away as Nanaimo to clear brush, sinks, stoves, couches, beer bottles and rubbish from what then seemed a mere drainage ditch between Alpha Street and the Selkirk Trestle. The action of these people led to a backbone for cycling throughout the region, the Galloping Goose Trail, and helped make our community the Cycling Capital of Canada. Big dreams can be realized starting with grassroots efforts. We hope to see the Greenways initiative expand in terms of dollars assigned and geography covered. I am willing to bet major local particip-action would jump start those changes.

2007 GVCC Rides Calendar

Saturday, April 28

Broadmead Artists Tour

An interesting bicycle tour that provides an inside, personal view of artists studios in the Broadmead area. Organized in conjunction with the local Artists Tour. Ride starts at 10 a.m. from Starbucks at the Broadmead Mall.

Sunday, May 27

Sidney Picnic

GVCC's popular annual bicycle ride and picnic! Ride starts on the Lochside Regional Trail at Darwin Avenue (by Saanich Municipal Hall) at 10 a.m. Cycle to Sidney exclusively via the Lochside Trail to Tullista Park for a picnic. Total distance approximately 50 easy km. Bring a potluck picnic lunch to share.

Saturday, June 9

Sooke Potholes

Enjoy an easy ride along the Galloping Goose Regional Trail among large old trees, passing by picturesque Matheson Lake to the Sooke Potholes and a bicycle-friendly campground. The trail is composed of well packed gravel, suitable for both road and mountain bicycles. Total distance about 60 easy km. Meet at the Luxton Fairgrounds (Sooke Road by Happy Valley Road) at 10 am. Bring a lunch.

Sunday, June 24

Gabriola Island

New this year! Ride starts from the Nanaimo ferry terminal to Gabriola Island on the 9:30 a.m. ferry. Enjoy a somewhat hilly 35 km of varied scenery and terrain before returning on the 4:30 p.m. ferry to Nanaimo. Bring a lunch. Call Paul Rothe (595-2315) for details about car pooling, parking, and ferry costs.

Saturday, July 7

Peninsula Wine Tour

Explore the Saanich Peninsula and visit a boutique winery plus two new wineries on this tour of approximately 60 km. Ride has some hills. Start at the Galloping Goose at the Switch Bridge at 10 a.m. Some wineries may charge a small fee for wine tasting. Bring a lunch.

Sunday, July 22

South Cowichan Wine Tour

Another fine winery and cidery tour! This one features a ride on BC's best ferry route. Leave from Brentwood Bay at 9:30 a.m. (Mill Bay Ferry) or at 11 a.m. at Thrifty Foods at the Mill Bay Shopping Centre for a 45 km ride with some challenging hills. Some wineries may charge a small fee for wine tasting. Bring a lunch.

Sunday, July 29

'Magical' Historical Sites Tour

Back by popular demand with a new route! Enjoy a bicycle ride led by renowned, local historian John Adams for a spellbinding look at Victoria's past as seen on two wheels. Ride is approximately 20 km. Meet at the GVCC office (#12 Centennial Square) at 10 a.m.

Saturday, August 25

Butchart Gardens / Fireworks

Join us on this annual nighttime tour to view the amazing Butchart Gardens Fireworks Display. Choose your start, either near the Switch Bridge at 4 p.m. or the Red Barn Market on West Saanich Road at 5 p.m. The total trip from the Switch Bridge is about 45 km return; from the Red Barn less than 8 km return. Butchart Gardens admission fee is \$25. See note below regarding night rides.

Saturday, September 15

Tour de Lac

Starting at the East/West Shawnigan Lake Road junction at 10:30 a.m., cycle around Shawnigan Lake with a side trip to view the largest wooden rail trestle in Canada, plus ride part of the Trans Canada Trail along the West Side of Shawnigan Lake. The tour is approximately 35 km with a few hills.

Sunday, September 23

Victoria's Secrets Tour

New route this year! Ride in places where bikes can go but cars cannot on a 20 km ride. Meet at the GVCC Office (#12 Centennial Square) at 10 a.m.



Sam Macey at the 2006 Ghost Ride

Photo: Tim Isaak

Saturday, October 27

Ghost Ride

Back by popular demand! Come ride this easy 20 km night tour and learn about the spirits who live in some of the finest homes and castles of Victoria. Leaves at 6 p.m. from the GVCC Office (#12 Centennial Square). See note below regarding night rides.

Saturday, December 15

Christmas Lights Ride

A perennial family favourite, join us on a new night route, viewing colourful Christmas lights followed by refreshments. Leaves at 6:30 p.m. from the CNIB Building, 2340 Richmond Road (at Bay St.). See note below regarding night rides.

Notes: Participants must wear helmets and bicycles must be in good mechanical condition. Functioning front and rear lights are required for all night rides.

There will be rest stops but we recommend you bring water and food.

All rides are by donation (suggested donation \$5)

For further information call the GVCC at 480-5155 or view our website at:

www.gvcc.bc.ca

All dates, times and routes are subject to change

cycling destination **Cycling in Cuba: a Country of Contrasts and Complexities**

by Paul Rothe

It seems like every other person you talk to has either been to or would like to go to Cuba. Be wary. There is Varadero, the hotel beach strip to the east of Havana—and then there is the ‘real’ Cuba. Because we were cycling, and, in some cases, staying in casas particulares (B & B’s), we did get to meet some of the locals and experience a bit of basic Cuban culture.

Our coach-supported, (quality) bike-supplied, cycle tour was arranged through WowCuba.com (of MacQueen’s Tours in P.E.I.). There were 15 in our group, all but two from Victoria, plus a super tour leader, fabulous guide and bus driver extraordi-

belching vehicles ‘gun it’ when passing. Air quality in the cities is not pristine, but it is not overbearing. However, the diesel soot on the roads turns them into skating rinks in the rain!

A few treats in Cuba include the relative absence of cell phones, MP3 players, and total absence of weed-eaters, leaf blowers. But unfortunately, there is a lack of cross-walks! Everyone keeps their heads up front, and those behind show patience. Even crossing the six-lane Malecón in Havana isn’t drastically dodgy.

The majority of traffic on country and town roads is pretty slow-moving: rickety old, Chinese coaster bikes, pedicabs or carts, horse-drawn carts and buggies, the odd ox cart, old vehicles and trucks. There are lots of motorcycles in various states of repair. Many of the vehicles are throw-backs to the 50s, but there is increasing evidence of late model non-U.S. cars. There are lots of taxis, and buses of varied vintage.

Cyclist fatalities occur mainly at night outside of the main urban areas, as there is no lighting and cyclists don’t carry lights. Even

vehicle lighting can be poor, and carriages may only carry a dim light or a four-way coal-oil lamp slung beneath. Doubling or tripling on bikes is commonplace and sometimes comical.

And, I know you’re wondering... no one in Cuba, other than tourists, wears a helmet! Motorcyclists have been recently required to do so, but I assume that most cyclists couldn’t afford it? The road conditions are generally pretty good, if a bit rough or pot-hole in some rural areas - not an issue. Some of the older city streets - most of Trinidad - are cob-b-b-b-led!

If you have an itch to visit Cuba, either with a tour as an individual, please don’t hesitate to contact me - paulrothe@shaw.ca. For a few candid shots from our tour, visit the following web sites (password - Cuba):

photoshare.shaw.ca/gallery/paulrothe and photoshare.shaw.ca/gallery/margrothe



A typical rural town - note bar seat

naire. Our 10-day route covered Havana, Sancti Spiritus, Trinidad de Cuba, Cienfuegos, Havana, Soroa, Vinales, Pinar del Rio and Havana. A few of us stayed on for four more fun days cycling in Havana.

You may hear mixed tales about cycling in Cuba regarding the pollution, the safety issues and all that. But in terms of safety, we have never felt more secure—another chapter in itself.

Cycling in Cuba is a real joy! First, there is relatively little traffic. Second, drivers are generally very respectful of cyclists. On country roads vehicles often toot - or whistle - a warning well before reaching you. True, some main thoroughfares in Havana during rush hour have overtones of Shelbourne Street, but there are lots of scenic alternatives.

Cycling in the countryside is heaven! Traffic is light, and you soon learn to hold your breath as old - and newer - dirty, diesel-

Join the GVCC

Your contributions will help us (and you) take a proactive approach to creating a more hospitable cycling environment in Greater Victoria.

As a member you will get:

- Cycle Therapy Newsletter:**
E-mailed to you and/or delivered to your door six times a year. Find out what’s going on and who’s involved.
- Better Cycling Facilities, sooner:**
Get involved or support those who are working to make our region more cyclist-friendly.

Join online at www.gvcc.bc.ca/join.shtml

- \$20: Member (\$10 for students, seniors & the unemployed)
- \$35: Household
- \$50: Sponsoring
- \$100: Sustaining
- \$300: Life
- \$80: Corporate Member (eligible for 10% off all transactions with the GVCC. Please name corporation and designated voting member on this form).

Make cheques payable to the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition and mail to:
#12 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P7

- Check Here if you would like to receive *Cycle Therapy* by e-mail
- Check Here if you would like to receive a hard copy of *Cycle Therapy*
- Check Here if you would like us to contact you about volunteering
- Check here to join the BC Cycling Coalition (\$5 per person. Details at www.bccc.bc.ca)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Thanks for your support