

Johnson Street Bridge and Cycling Survey - Results

A membership survey was conducted by the GVCC during the week of August 2-6, 2010, seeking input on the replacement versus refurbishment options for the Johnson Street Bridge. All 370 members (18 yrs+, as of August 1st) were contacted by email (or by phone, for those without email) and provided with an individualized link to the on-line *Survey Monkey* questionnaire.

Responses from 113 members were received for an overall rate of 30%, which is considered robust for the size of the membership. Answers for some questions are also broken down further into subsets based on other factors, where significant differences are noted (e.g. gender, municipality). Rounding of numbers sometimes causes the total of individual percentages to be 100% +/- 1%. Interpretation of some results is provided by the Survey Administrator, noted by text in *italics*.

(Text of email sent to individual members on August 9th)

Hello (GVCC member name) :->

The Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (GVCC) would like to hear from its membership on the issue of the future of the Johnson Street Bridge. Victoria city council will be making a decision on August 12th whether to replace or rehabilitate this key piece of infrastructure. The results of this resolution will affect cycling in the area for years to come, and the GVCC is working to make sure that cyclists' voices are heard in the decision making and design process.

To facilitate hearing from members, we have created a 10 question survey, which should take about 3-5 minutes to fill out. The survey will be active until Friday, August 6, 2010.

Here are the links to your individual surveys. Note that identifying information will be kept confidential and will be used only by the survey administrator to verify that you are a GVCC member.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8ZTCS22?c=xxx>

For more information on the issue, read the latest Cycle Therapy article on the Bridge: "Form and Function: A Bridge for Everyone", found at: <http://www.gvcc.bc.ca/>

Full engineering and economic reports can be found on the City of Victoria's website:

<http://www.johnsonstreetbridge.com/the-project/rehabilitation-option/updated-technical-information-june-14-2010/>

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Susanna Grimes, GVCC Survey Administrator at survey@gvcc.bc.ca or 250-920-5705.

Thank you for taking the time to respond: your input will help form the GVCC's recommendations to the City on this issue.

Darren Marr
GVCC President

Susanna Grimes
GVCC Survey Administrator

(Survey – Introductory paragraph)

The Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (GVCC) would like to hear members' views on the issue of rehabilitating or replacing the Johnson Street Bridge. The final choice between the various options will affect cyclists for decades to come, and your input will help form the GVCC's recommendations to the City on this issue.

1. Your Name (first, last) (Note: this will be kept confidential and will be used only by the survey administrator to verify that you are a GVCC member).

| | Survey respondents | All members |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Men | 67% | 59% |
| Women | 33% | 41% |
| Type of member | % | % (#) |
| Household | 30% | 39% |
| Individual | 70% | 61% |
| Corporate | | <1% |

Note: Members and memberships are different. There were 370 members (as of August 1st), comprised of 225 individual members, 144 household members and one corporate member. In terms of memberships, there were 295: 225 individual, 69 household (almost always comprised of two people) and 1 corporate.

2. In which municipality are you eligible to vote?

| Municipality | % |
|-------------------|-----|
| Victoria | 38% |
| Saanich | 35% |
| Oak Bay | 5% |
| Esquimalt | 5% |
| Sidney | 5% |
| Central Saanich | 2% |
| North Saanich | 2% |
| View Royal | 2% |
| Sooke | 1% |
| Colwood | 1% |
| Other city/region | 5% |

3. Do you own a business or property in the City of Victoria?

| | All members | Victoria residents only | Residents of other municipalities |
|-----|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Yes | 27% | 51% | 12% |
| No | 73% | 49% | 88% |

Note: “businesses” cannot vote in a referendum.

**4. How many trips on average do you make - on a bicycle - over the Johnson Street Bridge?
(NOTE: A trip means a one-way, single trip. A return trip is two trips).**

| | All members | Victoria residents only | Residents of other municipalities | Women | Men |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|
| 10+ trips per week | 14% | 19% | 10% | 8% | 16% |
| 4-9 trips per week | 15% | 17% | 14% | 19% | 13% |
| 1-3 trips per week | 18% | 24% | 14% | 22% | 16% |
| 1-3 trips per month | 32% | 26% | 36% | 31% | 33% |
| rarely or never | 21% | 14% | 25% | 19% | 21% |

Note: Responses in the “10+ trips per week” category very likely represent daily bicycle commuters, with some of those in “4-9 trips per week” very likely representing occasional bicycle commuters.

**5. How important to you are the following bridge features that affect cycling and walking?
(Very important / Somewhat important / Not important)**

| Bridge Feature | Importance | | |
|---|------------|----------|-----|
| | Very | Somewhat | Not |
| Safe bridge surface | 83% | 15% | 2% |
| Smooth connections to Galloping Goose, E&N and Harbour pathways | 82% | 17% | 1% |
| Dedicated sidewalk for pedestrians | 74% | 25% | 1% |
| Dedicated multi-use path (5.0m) | 65% | 25% | 10% |
| Improved approaches to the bridge | 64% | 27% | 9% |
| On-road bike lanes (1.8m) | 61% | 31% | 8% |
| Elimination of the S-curve | 28% | 39% | 33% |

Note: Only 15% of all cyclists over the bridge ride on Esquimalt Road through the S-curve, including those both east- and west-bound.

6. Would you cycle over the bridge more often if the above features were implemented?

| | All members | Women | Men |
|---|-------------|-------|-----|
| No, I am comfortable cycling over the bridge as is. | 23% | 23% | 23% |
| No, I have to cycle over it anyways, regardless of comfort level. | 32% | 20% | 38% |
| Yes, as I occasionally avoid cycling over the bridge. | 33% | 40% | 30% |
| Yes, as I always avoid cycling over the bridge. | 12% | 17% | 9% |
| Other (please specify)* | | | |

Note: The wording of this question wasn't able to capture all of the possible answers, and so 18 respondents provided an anecdotal response. However, most of the replies can be interpreted as an avoidance or dislike of the current bridge's accommodation of cycling (see 18 responses below).

6. * Other responses

- I often avoid it, not always
- I only use it recreationally, but consider it unsafe at present.
- I rarely need to cross the bridge.
- No - as my travel rarely takes me that way.
- No occasion to cross it by bike, currently 87, not cycling.
- Although I don't avoid cycling over the bridge, I would likely consider it more if it felt safer.
- The few times I take that route, it would feel safer.
- Rarely cycle Victoria – resident up-island; maybe future more.
- I don't feel it is safe for cyclists the way it is, so it is very important to make it safe and convenient for riders (and pedestrians).
- I would feel safer if features were improved, and did not have to share the bridge surface with vehicles/the north boardwalk with pedestrians.
- We use the bridge 3 - 4 x/year when cycling the Lochside Trail from Swartz Bay to a hotel in James Bay for a getaway. The Blue Bridge is definitely uncomfortable (dangerous).
- I'm okay with crossing the bridge today but the improvements above would certainly increase my likelihood of crossing the bridge
- Yes, however I think we need to make it safer for walkers and bikers.
- Yes. I nearly always avoid cycling over the bridge.
- prefer a new bridge
- The grating is not very nice to ride over.
- With a new and better bridge I could take my family across to the trail.
- Yes, if the visitor tourist rail service was moved to terminate at round house

**7. How important to you are the following bridge decision factors?
(Very important/Somewhat important/Not important)**

| Bridge decision factor | Importance | | |
|--|------------|----------|-----|
| | Very | Somewhat | Not |
| Cycling & pedestrian friendly features | 93% | 6% | 1% |
| Seismic upgrading | 40% | 47% | 13% |
| Traffic disruption/length of closures | 35% | 47% | 19% |
| Cost | 33% | 60% | 7% |
| Economic impact of disruption/closures | 22% | 60% | 18% |
| Heritage value | 12% | 27% | 60% |
| Widening of navigation channel | 6% | 43% | 51% |

8. How important to you is maintaining the rail service into downtown?

| Importance | % |
|--------------------|-----|
| Very important | 39% |
| Somewhat important | 27% |
| Not important | 34% |

9. Based on the City of Victoria's current proposals, do you favour replacement or rehabilitation of the Johnson Street Bridge?

| | All members | Decided members |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Replacement | 67% | 87% |
| Rehabilitation | 10% | 13% |
| Note sure | 23% | |

10. Any suggestions or comments to the GVCC on the bridge issue?

Note: comments have been grouped into general categories (55 responses)

General GVCC

- Please be a strong voice of advocacy for cyclists!
- Keep up the good work you are doing
- Keep up the good work - you guys rock!
- Let's get on with it!
- Move forward with the decision soon.
- Keep it a high priority issue.
- We should remain consistent in saying our primary interest is better cycling infrastructure
- Thanks for asking our input. Good on you to do this. Cyclists will be better served with a new bridge.
- Thanks for preparing this survey!
- Thanks for your work! My wife and I cycled to work for over 25 years. I think you do a great job.
- Thanks!
- A strong voice (one way or another) is important.
- I'd prefer GVCC be more solution-agnostic. There are many solutions to improve bike access that could be accommodated with the current bridge.

The Future/Big Picture

- The Johnson St. Bridge has had it's time. We need a new bridge for a new century.
- Yes - plan for a future in which up to 50% of all commuter trips are by bike, and make your recommendations accordingly. Ignore the fact that today's cyclists "make do" with the current bridge inadequacies, as I do.
- ...the eventual elimination of casual vehicle traffic downtown
- There are higher priority transportation issues than the bridge
- Given the need to improve green transportation, it is imperative that pedestrians and cyclists have safe passage over the bridge and on all the connections to the bridge. Also the train should go right into Victoria and should extend out to Metchosin and Langford to help get cars off the road.
- In terms of long term cost and an effective solution for car, bike, pedestrian & boat, replacement is the only thing that makes sense.

Bike lanes/road lanes

- One dedicated bike lane that is not on the metal bridge or shared with pedestrians would be ideal!
- Separated bike lanes like the Burrard Bridge?
- One vehicle lane in each direction. Twice out-bound capacity is completely unnecessary.
- Absolutely need a dedicated lane for cyclists that has more than a painted stripe to separate it from traffic including busses. This is also important for pedestrians.

- Although I'm normally a confident cyclist, I almost always get off the road & dismount on the current bridge. Even when I cross the bridge at 30-40k, I have a driver right behind me, who would run me over if I slipped. I'd feel similar with on-street lanes.
- I only ever use the path on the railroad track side because riding over the bridge deck with the traffic scares the hell out of me!

Multi-use path/pedestrian facilities

- Why not put a pedestrian/bike friendly surface on that skinny walk way on the N side of rails and make it usable. Also, why not make the actual rail bed less intimidating by filling in between them, as in street car rails.
- Pedestrians and cyclists don't mix well together, particularly older pedestrians.

Heritage/aesthetic value

- present bridge has no architectural or aesthetic merit
- try to keep a "heritage look" if possible
- Whatever is done, it should not be repainted blue! Tacky!
- I come from Europe and know how beautiful bridges can be, especially the newer ones. They are light and airy even and accommodate cyclist and walkers as well as cars. This blue monster is an eyesore and not worth keeping. It has no value as a heritage thing.

Rail service

- Re: the rail service -- I do not feel that the rail service needs to cross the bridge. I take the train up-island sometimes, but I'd be just as happy if the station were on the west side of the bridge and didn't cross the channel. It's only 100 metres! But it's very important to me that the rail service reaches the west side of the bridge.
- That, even if rail connections are not on, for the time being, the bridge be designed so that, when rail comes back into its own, it can be incorporated easily.
- Though pedestrian and cycling facilities are obviously my top priorities, I think it is vitally important to keep the rail station downtown. If the final bridge replacement proposal does not include this, I would have to support the rehabilitation of the existing bridge.

Approaches & connections

- The City must find a much better method of safely handling eastbound cyclists who use the current railway bridge.
- Straighten curves, very important.
- Bike and pedestrian convenience is very important. Rail service can end on the west side. Need a better on-ramp to the roadway from the Goose.
- Engineer bike lanes into a rehabilitated bridge - and more sensible access from Wharf St.
- If a dedicated multi use path is used, there has to be a good transition from the path to the street traffic

The City's bridge/consultation process

- The city's comparison presentation is so biased on NEW
- The decision should be based on engineering and safety considerations, rather than it being a popularity contest.
- The process is essential to maintain trust with the citizenry. The sly, underhanded way that the new bridge proponents in city hall is only destructive and causing alienation

Cost-sharing

- The GVCC should support CRD contributing to the cost of upgrading the cycling and pedestrian friendly features of a replaced or rehabilitated bridge
- The work should be financed by the whole region, therefore we need amalgamation now

- As someone mentioned in the T-C letters to the editor, perhaps business farther up the harbour should pay a major portion of the cost of a bridge which accommodates marine traffic, or perhaps they should just move their business location.
- I feel all municipalities should contribute, they will all benefit.

Miscellaneous

- Need to look ahead and make the Bay Street Bridge cycle friendly regardless of the outcome of the Johnson Street Bridge changes
- Both the Johnson St and the Pt Ellis (Bay St) bridges are vital to the region. Both bridges are needed for traffic flow. If the Johnson St. Bridge is gone, the Pt Ellis Bridge will be over-used, and it will crumble as well.
- Strongly suggest CULVERTS! No need for a bridge to go up and down. Pay companies to leave harbour.
- Although I currently rarely use the bridge since I'm not downtown often, I've commuted (cycled) on it daily in years past.
- Treat John Luton to a beer!
- Eventually have a large webcam supervised bicycle parking facility very nearby (like in Holland near the railway stations) Also look into a bus interchange close by.
- Get proper pavement painting for cycling lanes across the entire area, (can be done ASAP)
- I'm from outside Greater Victoria I ride in Vic. as a tourist with a variety of destinations the BRIDGE to Dallas Rd. is a favourite
- My preference in all of this would be to only have a pedestrian/bike/train bridge at the Blue Bridge location and do some serious contemplation of twinning the Point Ellice Bridge and really get serious about bikes and alternate methods of transport rather than always defaulting to supporting the car!! This proposal would likely of course involve the necessity of reconstructing a bridge at bridge street where there once was one, and of course this would mean an entirely different shift of traffic into an area that has been wanton of development for a number of decades now....it surprises me that none of the bike bunch have even wanted to discuss this possibility. If this was to occur and the blue bridge became a non car bridge, the area of the so called S curve could become a bus type terminus for BC Transit on that side of the bridge.