

CHAINMAIL

The Newsletter of Citizens for Safe Cycling
Volume 25 Issue 2



Photo by Jana Chytilova

Scene of an accident on March Rd. in the North bound lanes, where 5 cyclists were struck by a moving vehicle, in the Kanata area of Ottawa, ON, on July 19, 2009

Response to cycling deaths targets cyclists

Opinion by Alayne McGregor

This summer, there were three dreadful incidents in which cyclists were killed or seriously injured while cycling on Ottawa roads. This (combined with a bizarre killing of a cyclist by a motorist in a post-collision altercation in Toronto) created a high public interest in cycling safety, many letters to the editor, and a great deal of heated discussion in newspapers and on blogs. It was a pity any light shed on the causes of the collisions was faint and flickering. Most of the public discussion wasn't about the collisions. Instead, the collisions provided an excuse for talking about whatever cycling problems or issues particularly irritated individuals, and in general for putting the blame on cyclists.

The first two incidents involved cyclists being hit from behind on arterial roads. In the first case, no blame was attached to the cyclists, who were riding down March Road legally and properly; the driver faces several serious charges. It's still not clear why he veered into the bike lane. In the second case, the cyclist was riding on Ogilvie Road near midnight; apparently he had been drinking, and was hit by a motorist from behind when he left the bike lane. Important questions such as whether there was a good reason for leaving the bike lane (potholes, debris, too narrow), whether the cyclist

was using lights, or whether the motorist was following or passing too closely, were never raised in news stories. The cyclist died; the motorist was not charged.

The initial reaction in editorials was that 'March Road' was a freak incident where the cyclists couldn't have done anything to prevent it. But, after the first few

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Installation of counter sensors on Alexandra Bridge May 2009



Bicyclists being counted (above)

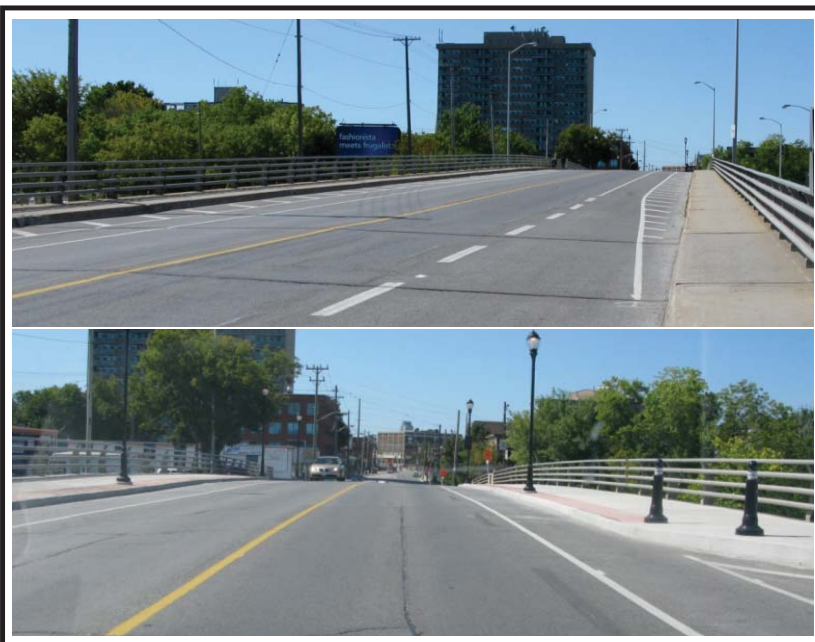
Update: Automatic Bike Counter Project

The CfSC Cycling Trends Analysis Project (CTAP) automatic bike counter project proposal, reported on in the last issue of *Chain Mail*, is still under consideration for funding by Transport Canada under their “Moving on Sustainable Transport” programme. The decision date has slipped to early October. The CTAP project goal is to install eight automatic bike traffic count stations at locations with high bike traffic across Ottawa/Gatineau; typically on NCC pathways.

In the mean-time, CfSC has managed to install a test site on the Alexandra Bridge (with the close co-operation with NCC and support by the counter vendor).

Detailed data on cyclists crossing the bridge has been captured by this counter in 15 minute increments, since June 11th.

Charts with this new data will be presented for review at the CfSC AGM on Oct 20th.



The Bright Side of Somerset Bridge

Those of you who cycle on Somerset Street where the bridge crosses over the ‘O-train’ tracks will have noticed that the City has made a marked improvement to the route during the course of bridge repairs this past summer.

Where before there were two lanes of traffic with poor sight lines, there are now clear markings of a cycling lane leading to a reduction to one lane of traffic in each direction over the crest of the bridge.



Utopian biking in Portland

by Alex deVries

Photo by David Wieprecht

While in Portland, Oregon on business, I rented a bike for the weekend to see if it really is Bike City of America. It is.

The most striking thing is how well positioned bicycles are in the grid of the downtown core. About a third of the roads have dedicated, clearly marked and buffered bike lanes. There is wide adoption of bright green bike boxes to position bikes ahead of cars at intersections to avoid the 'right turn hook'. It is clear that bicycles are more than an afterthought in transportation design.

The City of Portland has bike maps similar to those of Ottawa, except that they also highlight the places with difficult connections. They're free, and will even mail any of the several versions (like the bike parking map) to you anywhere in the USA. There are street signs that show the distances (in miles and minutes) to landmarks, like the NCC ones but everywhere you'd expect.

No matter how you look at it, the climate favours Portland. If your cold threshold is an average low of 5C, you'll get a 7 month season in Portland and 5 in Ottawa. If your threshold is freezing, you'll be biking year round. The only downside is that it rains on average every other day from November to March.

The result of this is a tremendous number of cyclists. Depending on who you ask and how you measure, around 8% of commutes in Portland are by bike. 16,000 bike the bridges across the Willamette River every day. There are bikes everywhere, all the time. Cyclists are not anomalies.

Government funding for bicycle programs is typically hard to measure, since improvements are often hidden under different budgets. Since 1971, Oregon state law dictates that 1% of all state, county and city investment in transportation must be spent on pedestrian or cycling

Cont'd Pg 4 'Utopian'




Happy Portland cyclists pull up to a well-indicated bicycle box.

UTOPIAN - Cont'd from Pg.3

across Portland. Private industry has also sprung up around cycling. Improved infrastructure has adds more than \$63M per year to the local economy, and employs between 300 and 600 people. There are plenty of bicycle accident attorneys, drive through restaurants that welcome cyclists and even a real estate agent that specializes in finding houses in bike-friendly neighbourhoods. You can get a bike loan in the same way you can get a car loan. The blog and news site bikeportland.org has sufficient traffic that its advertising supports paid staff.

But it isn't all fantastic. Things fall apart quickly when

you get 10km outside the downtown core. Bike lanes are harder to find, their surface isn't maintained and signage is poor. There wasn't a single bike parking spot to be found at the K-Mart I passed. There were tight merges, narrow roads, glass on the roads and far more cars than bikes. It felt just like home!

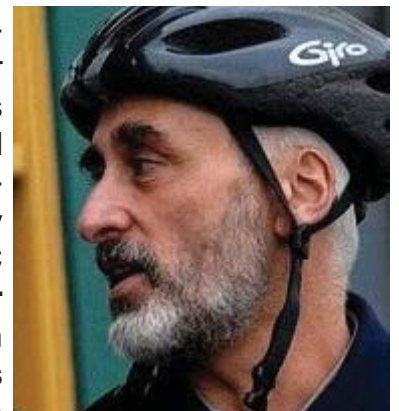
The city also has its share of accidents. Over the last five years, more than ten cyclists have been killed in collisions with cars. Inconsiderate drivers is a frequently heard complaint at community forums, as per the Portland Bicycle Master Plan. 



'Alien pod'-style bicycle parking at a light rail station in Portland. The covers protect your bicycle from the elements and your bicycle's parts from being stolen.

Special Guest Roger Geller

Roger Geller, Bicycle co-ordinator for Portland explains how his city turned the corner to become cycle-friendly city at the CfSC AGM- on **October 20th at Tom Brown Hall at 6 PM. This meeting is open to all cyclists, space permitting!**



CYCLING DEATHS - Cont'd from Pg.1

days, what became the main topic in media reports and in letters to the editor? Cyclists riding on sidewalks and being rude to pedestrians and cyclists acting like jerks on pathways.

It didn't help when a cyclist riding on the Bank St. sidewalk near Lansdowne Park in mid-August punched a pedestrian in the ribs when she asked him to ride on the road. Other complainants could point to similar lack of consideration and cyclists behaving dangerously.

There were positive stories, too: for example, Phil Marsh's organizing a highly successful benefit for the March Road cyclists to help them in their recovery and to replace their gear. In response to the Toronto incident, there was an excellent column in the Globe and Mail by columnist Christie Blatchford (which was picked up in blogs here) in which she argued that motorists bear a greater responsibility to act like grown-ups and drive safely and non-aggressively because their vehicles can do more damage. David Reevely had some interesting discussion on his blog as to whether streets with fewer signs and lanes were actually safer. But the general reaction -- especially on on-line comment forums -- was fearful and highly emotional; with many non-cyclists informing cyclists it was too dangerous for them to ride on the road. There were even calls for rumble strips between bike lanes and the rest of the road, even though these have been shown to be extremely dangerous for cyclists to cross.


In the third incident in mid-September, a cyclist was hit and killed by an STO bus on Sussex Drive near the Foreign Affairs building, after exiting from a path onto a shared bus/bike lane. The reaction did include con-

structive comments from cyclists who ride on that road about the confusing nature of the bike facilities there, and suggestions for possible improvements. But it also included many complaints about cyclists who didn't ride legally or properly. Some complainants called for licensing cyclists and registering bikes -- charging them at least \$30/year for the privilege of using the roads -- and forcing cyclists to get insurance. Cyclists were accused of wanting to "get a free ride forever". Ottawa city councillor Clive Doucet actually publicly recommended cyclists ride on sidewalks for their own safety, but a few days later retracted this -- perhaps after response from outraged pedestrians?

Cycling is still safe in Ottawa ... These are really exceptional circumstances

Some individual members of CfSC such as Charles Akben-Marchand, John Stevenson, and others did a good job of responding to specific media inquiries: for example, Charles clearly pointed that "Cycling is still safe in Ottawa ... These are really exceptional circumstances"

in response to the first two incidents.

However, CfSC has been more slow to respond -- we have had no press releases and no public information campaign at the ready to counteract the negative hype. We must make a concerted effort to explain why sharing the road and educating motorists and cyclists was an essential part of cycling safety. This should include a reinstatement of cycling safety, promotion, and education programs that were cut by the City in 2007 and have yet to be resumed. Doing so as quickly as possible will be to the benefit of all cyclists in this city. 

Bluesfest parking numbers increase again!



By Charles Akben-Marchand, CfSC Past-President

For the fourth year in a row, CfSC ran the supervised valet bike parking at the Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest, and once again the numbers went up a lot! We parked over 6,300 bikes, and raised over \$3,700 in donations, which were split between *Citizens for Safe Cycling* and *Blues in the Schools*. This is much higher than last year's 4,250 bikes.

This is my second year in charge of the bike park. Like last year, we sold red and white MEC "turtle" lights to cyclists going home in the dark, raising a bit more money for CfSC. But the big change this year was a second park on the west side of the site, which filled up almost every night.

Of course, all this was possible thanks to the team of 80 hardworking volunteers who kept *Bike Park* running as the well-oiled machine that we've come

to be known as. I'd like to give particular gratitude to the *Bike Park Supervisor Team* members, Sheila, Brian, Fred and Rob.

They volunteered 'oodles of hours to help me make it through the 12-day festival, and kept everything going when I had to be elsewhere. Thanks guys! 🐢



Cycling Summit

By Charles Akben-Marchand, CfSC Past-President

On May 30th, 2009, at the invitation of Ottawa-Centre MP Paul Dewar, about 200 or so cyclists gathered in the Glebe to talk about cycling issues. After three presentations, breakout groups discussed what they wanted to see to improve cycling in Ottawa, then presented their wish lists to the whole room.

There were many recurring themes of what people wanted. Perhaps the most concerning matter was that people wanted there to be an advocacy organization for cyclists—when one's been around for 25 years! While some CfSC members were recruited at Paul Dewar's event, this reminds us that *Citizens for Safe Cycling* needs to get out into the community and engage with cyclists more to make our mandate stronger.



There were dozens of other items on attendees' wish lists, and as I wrote each one down, I couldn't help but feel frustration that many of the problems identified are issues CfSC has pursued for years, or that there is already a solution but it's not well known. I've

compiled 16 of these into a "Problem Briefs" document, which you can download from CfSC's website from <http://www.safecycling.ca/Cycling-Summit-Problem-Briefs.pdf> These one-page briefs explain what the problem is, what has been done to try to fix it, and related issues to consider, thus giving potential cycling advocates the basic information they need to effectively push for their issue.

CfSC's Annual General Meeting on October 20th will include a follow-up session to the Bike Summit, hopefully with an expanded version of the "Problem Briefs" document presented in an interactive manner. ♪

Comments on the Police Enforcement and Education Campaign

By Peter Mason, CfSC Board of Directors

In the summer, starting on 27th of July, the Ottawa Police Service undertook a week long campaign to crack down on improper behaviour on city streets and sidewalks.

As this campaign took place not long after a series of car-bicycle collisions and during the maelstrom of subsequent debate, there was a perception among many that this campaign was a deliberate response to those events and furthermore that they targeted cyclists disproportionately.

CfSC received a number of complaints from cyclists including some who were ticketed during the campaign. CfSC supports cyclists adhering to the rules of the road. If these cannot be obeyed safely, the option of dismounting and walking a short distance is always there. While I sympathize with those who feel compelled to take to the sidewalk in areas of poor design, it is important to remember that doing so can be dangerous both to the cyclist and to pedestrians who belong there.

'POLICE' - Cont'd to Pg.8

The BIXI Bike Share Pilot



The BIXI bike in it's home town of Mon-

The *BIXI Bike Share Trial* in the Ottawa/Gatineau area ended on September 22nd. According to a news release from the NCC, more than 3,000 people used BIXI bikes for 5,361 trips among four test stations between June 8th and the end of the pilot. "We are eagerly anticipating the findings of the feasibility study which will allow us to evaluate whether a broader service can be offered in the region on a permanent basis," said Marie Lemay, CEO of the commission, in a statement.

For more information, visit the BIXI Home page at <http://ottawa-gatineau.bixi.com/home/home-bixi>



Bixi Bikes near the NAC

'POLICE' - Cont'd from Pg.7

Alienating these pedestrians robs us of important allies in getting our City to move away from a purely car-centric design. Sgt. Frank D'Aoust, an officer of the Ottawa Police Service, who patrols the streets on a bicycle, offered these comments in response to some of the criticism:

"... we targeted both cyclists and vehicles.... I can assure you that officers issued more verbal warnings than tickets to offending cyclists. The Ottawa Police will continue to encourage motorists to improve their behaviour by enforcing the Ontario Highway Traffic Act, educating both drivers and cyclists on the rules of the road and proactively patrolling for offending individuals."

If your route takes you through areas of poor design, it isn't the police who can help fix the problem. Talk to your councilor, urge proper funding of the Ottawa Cycling Plan, and help bring about a permanent solution. ♪

The Bright Side of Carling Ave. West

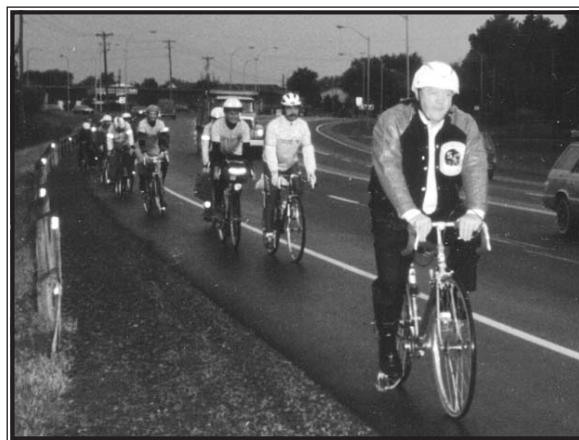


One of the main connectors between the suburbs and the downtown, *Carling Avenue West*, has been improved west of *Moodie Drive* with plans to continue the work west of the CN train bridge. The passageway underneath this bridge remains an issue beyond the immediate control of the City as it falls within Provincial jurisdiction.

Looking Back: CfSC officially opens first paved shoulders for cycling, 19 years ago

By Brett Delmage

Nineteen years ago this month, former Nepean Mayor *Ben Franklin* officially opened the first paved shoulders in the city that were made specifically to improve cycling. A paper banner saying “**Citizens for Safe Cycling - Breaking down bicycle barriers**” was placed across the paved shoulder, and *Mayor Franklin* drove his bike through it, followed by a long line of CfSC members on bicycles. Many of them already used the route regularly, including *CfSC President Ewen Todd*, who cycled that route to work on all but the iciest days of the year. The event was organized by me as CfSC Promotions Committee Chair, as a public event to attract media coverage.




In 1990, the *Ontario Ministry of Transportation's* (MTO) formal policy rejected the bicycle as a viable means of transportation in Ontario, undeserving of provincial support. This meant MTO would only provide 0.5m shoulders when they repaved the road. CfSC successfully lobbied Nepean City councillors to spend \$20,000 to extend the paved shoulders to 1.5m wide while the work was being done.



The newly paved shoulders on Highway 16 extended from *Fisher Avenue* to *Fallowfield Road*. Ironically, they were only expected to have a lifespan of four years, after which Highway 16 was expected to be reconstructed and widened. Nepean councillors felt the \$20,000 would be well-spent, even for only 4 years.

Now the City owns the road, and the widening of this road to 4 lanes is being studied. However, this time, the proposed widening would worsen cycling conditions. By encouraging the movement of thousands more cars from *Barrhaven* into the centre of the city, air pollution will increase, cyclists will have to deal with heavier traffic and more complicated, larger intersections, and higher car parking demand in many downstream neighbourhoods will compete for valuable on-street space needed for safer, more pleasant cycling. This road widening should be carefully studied, and likely be opposed by cyclists.

Paved shoulders in Ottawa continue to be an issue deserving of cyclists' attention. Some paved shoulders, as on *Robertson Road* between *Eagleson Road* (*Kanata*) and *Bells Corners*, provide an excellent link across the 'Greenbelt' for cyclists, who would otherwise have to cycle on an 80 km/h road or an isolated, unlit path. Other shoulders, such as the ones on *Fisher Avenue*, just 1 km north of the official opening on *Highway 16*, are promoted as “cycling facilities” by the City. But they are not engineered for safe travel: they intersect busy urban roads dangerously; they receive a lower standard of maintenance than the adjacent road; and are unsigned as a dedicated bicycle lane, so become convenient car parking space whenever it is frequently required. And it is likely, as it was in 1990, that positive changes will only come when groups like CfSC expect and demand better. 

A Trailer/Booth is Born

Behold the CfSC's custom, handcrafted new Booth/Trailer! Engineered from high quality spaceframe materials by one of our own members and former CfSC Director *Will Hallam*.

The sturdy design has been engineered completely from scratch to accommodate most bike configurations. It sports a generous storage compartment and stabilizers for deployment on uneven ground.

Keep your eyes peeled for it at future CfSC events!



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6pm

CfSC's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20th, 2009 at **Tom Brown Arena** (Scott Street & Bayview Ave).

All Cyclists welcome!!

Welcome & keynote address by **Ms. Marie Lemay** CEO of the **National Capital Commission (NCC)**

Mr. Roger Geller, cycling co-ordinator for the **City of Portland, Oregon** presenting how a major city turned the corner to being cycle friendly.

Interactive session, providing feedback on ideas raised at *Paul Dewar's Bike Summit*, as well as representation & information on *Bike Statistics* in Ottawa, *Cycling Impacts of the City's Transit Plan*, *Police activities* related to cyclists etc.

Pizza and Drinks !!!

Official CfSC AGM business; The AGM is an annual meeting where CfSC members elect the Board of Directors for the coming year, make by-law amendments, and hear about the accomplishments of the previous year. (Note: a member must have been a member for a full calendar month to vote at a general meeting) **At this AGM, four positions on the CfSC board will be open,**

www.safecycling.ca

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I am ... Joining Renewing

Please select one membership option:

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Membership Customization :

Quarterly "Chain Mail" newsletter:
 Send by Email Mail Both

Monthly "Chain Link" e-bulletin
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Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

My additional contribution of \$ _____ to assist CfSC volunteers with their work is enclosed.

Cycling concerns/comments?

www.safecycling.ca

WHY JOIN CfSC ?

- U** *Updates on important Cycling issues in Ottawa !*
- R** *espect for Cyclists!*
- I** *nformation on cycling smarter & safely !*
- D** *iscounts from bike stores (see list below)*
- E** *xpress opinions with other cyclists !*

**For more information visit www.SafeCycling.ca
 Or send in the attached member application**

We'll mail you your Better Bicycling Kit right away!

Bike stores that support CfSC Card holders:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Bushtukah | 10% off bike parts, accesories & clothes |
| Fresh Air Experience | 10% off parts, acc. & clothes, 5% off bikes |
| Full Cycle | 10% off parts & accessories |
| Joe Mamma Urban Cycles | 10% off parts & accessories |
| Kunstadt Sports | 10% off parts, accessories & clothes |
| McCrank's Cycles | 10% off parts & accessories |
| Orleans Cycles | 10% off parts & accessories |
| Rebec and Kroes | 10% off parts, accessories & clothes |
| Tommy and Lefebvre | 10% off accessories & clothes |
| The Cyclery | 10% off parts and accessories |
| Valiquette's Source for Sports | 20% off in stock accessories |

Mountain Equipment Co op and Cycle Logic are coporate members

Your Board of Directors (2008-2009) (as of CfSC AGM, October 2008)

- | | | |
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| Tom Trottier..... | President..... | Serving 2 yr of 2 yr term |
| Zlatko Krstulich..... | Vice President | Serving 1 yr of 2 yr term |
| Charles Akben-Marchand .. | Past President | Serving 1 yr of 1 yr term |
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