

CHAIN MAIL

The Newsletter of Citizens for Safe Cycling
Volume 27 Issue 2 – Spring-Summer 2011

Timmermans Award ceremony tops off Ottawa Bike to Work on May 31st

Kathleen Wilker was presented with the 2011 Individual Award named in honour of one of CfSC's pioneers, the late Bruce Timmermans. Kathleen was recognized for her efforts in helping to found the new advocacy group 'Hintonburg Cycling Champions' in her Ottawa neighbourhood. Also presented at the ceremony, held at Snider Plaza on Bank Street in the downtown core, was the Timmermans award to an organization. In this case, Pathway Patrol was



recognized for its work, through its many volunteers, to keep the region's multi-use paths safe.

The Hintonburg group organizes a kids' bike parade and other activities to encourage young riders.

The ceremony was attended by many people involved in the cycling community. It was the last official event in recognition of May as Bike to Work Month in Ottawa. See more coverage inside this issue. ♦



Award winner Kathleen Wilker addresses the lunchtime crowd attending the Bruce Timmermans Awards ceremony. Also in photo are her husband, Derek Heffernan, and their children. At right is Councillor Marianne Wilkinson, Chair of Ottawa's Transportation Committee. Photo: CfSC

Laurier Street West SBL pilot project

Laurier Street repaving and the installation of new street 'hardware' have begun. Rapid construction work may speed the start of the pilot project to test segregated bicycle lanes in Ottawa. Divider curbs had already been placed in both directions from Bronson to Lyon as of the first weekend in June. ♦



At left: 'Caution' tape and construction drums block a section of westbound segregated lane on Laurier West. Now we just wait for the whole length from Bronson to Elgin to be done before it can be tried. Photo: CfSC

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Chain Mail is published by Citizens for Safe Cycling ("CfSC"), the non-profit association that promotes cycling as a viable means of transportation in Ottawa by advocating:

- Acceptance of the responsible cyclist as a legitimate road user.
- Education of all cyclists to improved riding and traffic skills as part of their normal driving skills.
- Improved engineering to facilitate cyclist traffic, such as proper traffic control systems, adequate lane width, and sufficient parking.
- Legislation that is effective and enforced.
- Representation of cycling issues to all levels of government.

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The 2010-2011 board of directors of CfSC is composed of:

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This issue contains hyperlinks that may be followed when viewing the pdf version on the safecycling.ca website.

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Harvest House is a treatment centre for drug and alcohol addiction.

All proceeds go towards helping a young man change his life.

Cycling Trends Analysis Project: CTAP counter added to study weather impacts on cycling

The three existing CTAP automated bicycle counters (Alexandra Bridge, Ottawa River Pathway, and Rideau Canal Pathway/Colonel By Drive side) will soon be joined by a fourth counter on the Rideau Canal Pathway/Queen Elizabeth Drive side, just south of Patterson Creek. This latest counter is on loan from McGill University, to help collect data for a research project which evaluates weather impacts on cycling rates. The new counter installation on the Canal was included as one component of the re-build of the retaining wall and pathway along this section.



Detector loops for the new counter are laid out on the compacted stone dust prior to being embedded under asphalt. Note there is a loop for each direction on the pathway.

Photo: CfSC

The CTAP project was made possible through the support of the NCC, City of Ottawa, TELUS, McGill University, and—of course—CfSC! A thank-you to CfSC member John Black for helping to collect counter data. ♦

Photo on Page 3 (opposite):

Citizens for Safe Cycling President Hans Moor poses with EnviroCentre's Elyse McCann (l) and Jessica Wells (r) at one of the 'Celebration Stations' coordinated by EnviroCentre during the month of May—"Bike to Work Month" for Ottawa.

CfSC President's message

By Hans Moor



By sheer coincidence, I visited both the east coast and the west coast of Canada recently. I was invited to speak at the annual conference of the Nova Scotia Planning Directors Association. The Halifax Cycling Coalition and Trips For Kids Yarmouth and the Yarmouth and Clare Cycling Summit Committee seized the opportunity to ask me to give a talk at Dalhousie University and in Yarmouth about cycling in the Netherlands and what we can learn from it in Canada. It gave me a good opportunity to compare notes with the people from Nova Scotia who are involved in cycling.

When the active transportation advocates and the Halifax Regional Municipality proposed a bike lane along a major road, the retail sector was up in arms and collected over 2000 signatures to stop the bike lane. The idea was that renovations on the road made it a great opportunity to put a bike lane in. It didn't happen. It was a learning experience, city staff told me, and next time they'll take a different route (pun intended) to convince people that a healthy lifestyle is not necessarily a bad thing.

The good news is that I received an email from Lauralee Sim, a driving force in the Halifax cycling community, that their biggest event, the *Open Street Party*, attracted 1400 people—about twice as much as the previous two years. Many people of all ages were out on bikes enjoying car-free streets for an afternoon.

For the end of May, I was asked by the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) to come to Vancouver to talk about *cycling and safety* in Canada. I met Alayne Crawford of the CAA about half a year ago, just when the CAA was in the very first stages of looking more seriously into cycling. Many CAA members cycle, and there is increased demand for cycling-related information and services. To learn about the cycling community, the

CAA put a conference together to allow cycling experts to talk to CAA execs and provincial clubs, like the Alberta Motor Association, the BCAA and others. I used the opportunity to point out a number of wonderful cycling situations—like our canal pathways—but also to show motorists a number of dangerous situations from the viewpoint of a cyclist. I ended by providing three tips for motorists to increase safety that do not cost a thing extra: look over your shoulder if you open a door, look over your shoulder when you turn right and don't underestimate the speed of cyclists. It takes an average cyclist one second to cover the length of a car.

I met a number of Vancouver cyclists, like Hans Jürgen (Jack) Becker, Arno Schortinghuis and Tess Kitchen. Jack and Arno have been active in the cycling world for a long time; Tess is the brand new president of the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition. Like Lauralee in Halifax, not even 30 years old, Tess is representing the new generation of cyclists. For them, cycling is not a discussion about the best sprocket on the market, but simply a part of daily life. I learned from Jack that, during the Olympic Games, the bike modal share went up quite a bit, but it wasn't sustained. Obviously, people didn't all of a sudden care for nature for the two weeks during the Olympic Games; the reason was that the city was full and the only way to get around quickly was by taking a bike. This might prove that people do not take the bike because they embrace the environment, but because they want to travel efficiently within their cities.

In the first half of 2011, I spoke to a total of 450-500 people on the benefits of cycling, sometimes from a Dutch angle, sometimes from a Canadian angle. Of course, I make sure to put Ottawa on the map. I show some great examples, but also some hazardous situations, the latter one to show motorists where cyclists' complaints are coming from.

The people in Halifax are very impressed with the progress we are making in Ottawa. In Vancouver, they were surprised to hear that we counted 82,000 bike rides in July last year at a single measuring point near the war museum. We don't always realise how much we have already. And the number of cyclists out on the road this year shows that we are making great strides in promoting cycling. It is all coming together. ♦

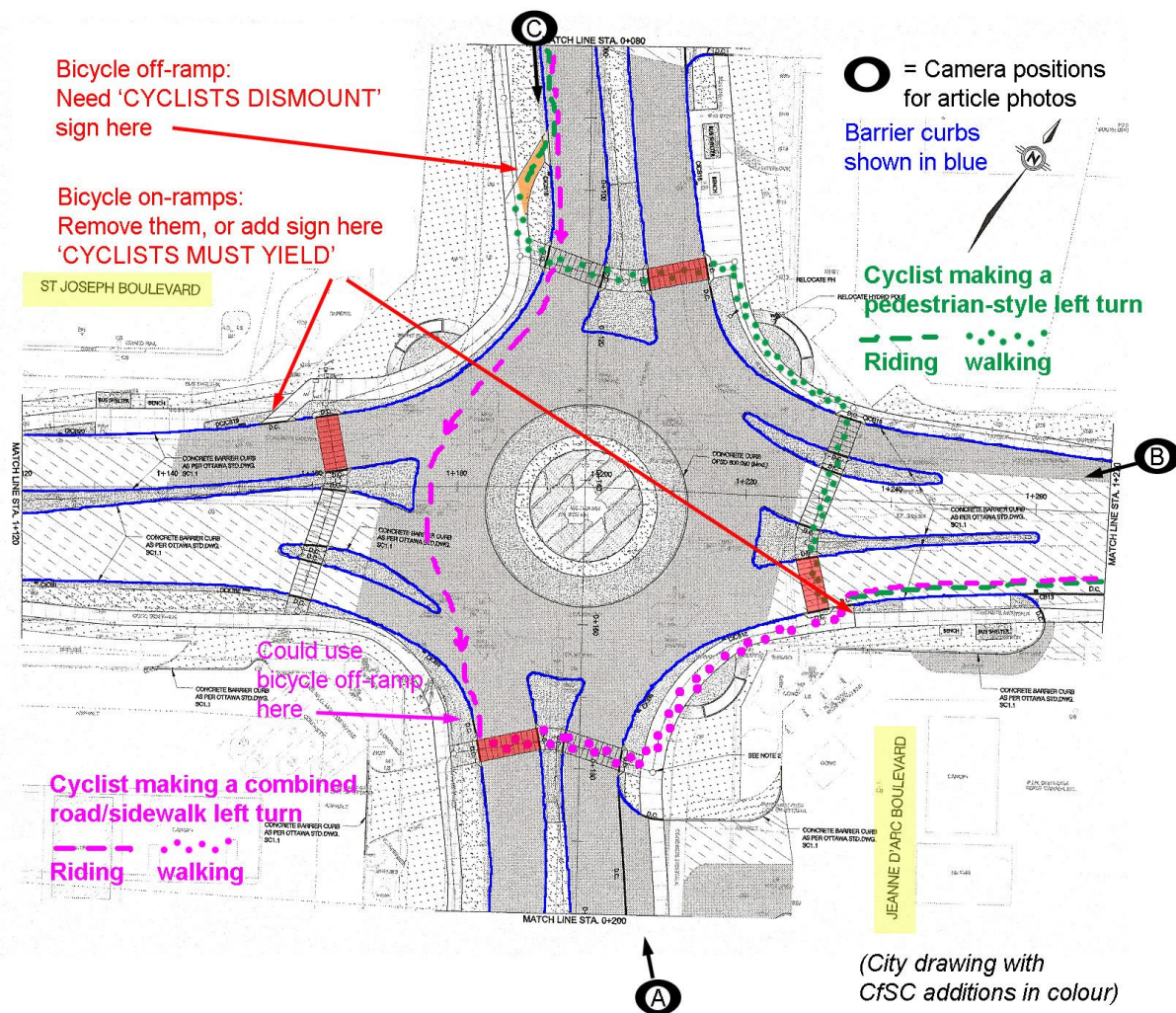
The Orleans roundabout from the cyclist's perspective

November 2010 saw the opening of a roundabout in the business district of Orleans, at the intersection of St. Joseph Boulevard and Jeanne d'Arc Boulevard. It is the city's first two-lane roundabout. This report looks at this new facility and makes suggestions to address numerous concerns with the design. Photos taken in May of 2011 (six months after opening) and an engineering drawing of the roundabout are spread over these pages. The plan-view drawing indicates where the photos were taken with letter designations.

The first thing that one notices is the complete lack of any instruction specific to cyclists via signage or paint marking. It seems you are expected to have already consulted the city website to know how to ride through the roundabout! Thankfully, there is a brochure on-line (and probably available in print, by now) entitled "Navigating Roundabouts" that gives

some cycling tips—see the sidebar on the opposite page for the details. The same brochure also has a graphic on 'Navigating Two-Lane Roundabouts', but it seems aimed at motorists only because some of it would be considered dubious advice for cyclists.

Let's take the case of using the roundabout as if you are a motor vehicle. One problem is the S-curve that is created at some of the entry points. In **Photo A**, you see that when vehicles approach from the south on Jeanne d'Arc, they have to steer left and then turn right into the circle. Narrow lanes mean long vehicles pinch off any space to their right—so cyclists should avoid getting trapped in this zone by 'taking the lane'. While visiting the roundabout, a route 130 OC Transpo bus was observed to be so close to the right edge of the lane that its back wheel actually rolled up onto the curb as it pulled into the roundabout. That wheel came back down on the road with a resounding thud! (Cont'd ►)



Cyclists have two options for navigating a Roundabout [from City of Ottawa brochure]

1. Operate as a motor vehicle. Take control of the lane and ride in the middle, obeying the same rules as motorists.*
2. Dismount at crosswalk and use the sidewalks and crosswalks as a pedestrian.**

* Only experienced cyclists should take control of the lane at two-lane roundabouts and, when doing so, like drivers, cyclists must be in the proper lane when entering the roundabout.

** Where off-road multi-use paths are present, it is permissible to ride your bike up to the sidewalk/crosswalk. Cyclist on and off-ramps have been provided where practicable.

Reference:

http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/onthemove/driving/traffic/roundabout/roundabout_brochure_en.pdf



Photo A: S-curve of inbound lanes from the south.

Another problem is the interface between old and new road pavement. Cyclists approaching the roundabout may encounter a longitudinal seam along the typical line of travel. You do not want to catch your tire in this crack. **Photo B** shows the St. Joseph westbound situation. Another layer of asphalt would hopefully correct the situation.



Photo B: Pavement seams on the path of travel.

As with any two-lane roundabout, it is doubtful that many cyclists acting as a motorist would be confident enough to stay entirely on the road when making a left turn. To follow the established rules, this would mean taking the **inner** lane of the roundabout. More likely is that the cyclist would do a straight-through movement in the outer lane and then stop on the far curb and walk the bike for the last part using the crosswalk. This brings us to the cyclist-as-pedestrian mode.

The crosswalks do not seem as secure as in a signalized intersection. Naturally, as drivers approach a roundabout, they have to slow down and yield until they can enter the circle. Since they are slowing down anyway, it is not a big deal to yield to those waiting to use the crosswalk over the inbound lanes. It is also helpful to have the refuge islands in mid-road for pedestrians and cyclists who are walking their bikes. However, the crosswalks on **outbound** lanes (highlighted in red on plan) are a much different story. Here, the motor vehicles are accelerating out of the roundabout and are much less inclined to stop. So, if it is a time of day when the traffic is steady, you really have to hustle to cross if you ever see a break. Plus, you may not know which cars are coming your way unless they signal their intention to leave the roundabout.



Photo C: Diagonal path shown is one of the off-ramps to facilitate leaving the road to walk the bike on the sidewalk. Pink concrete strip next to road is for snow storage. Photos: CfSC

There are a few areas with depressed curbs that are not at crosswalks, which must be the cyclist off-ramps mentioned in the city brochure. (**Photo C.**) But nothing tells cyclists that they are allowed to ride up onto what, from all attributes, looks like a sidewalk (all concrete, and no yellow line down the (*Continued: p.8, 'Roundabout'*))

NCC E-bike consultations

by Nancy Biggs

The National Capital Commission (NCC) recently held public consultations to determine which power-assisted bikes (PABs) will be allowed on NCC recreational paths and bike lanes. An Ottawa public meeting was held on May 4th 2011. This meeting was attended mostly by people supporting the use of e-bikes. Attendees included users of the conventional e-bikes and scooter e-bikes, representatives from the Electric Vehicle Council of Ottawa, owners of e-bike businesses, as well as two people concerned about the safety of walking on the pathways-especially the one along Colonel By.

The Capital Pathways are now 240 km in total length and will potentially increase to 300 km by 2016. There has been a substantial increase in annual visits of 17 million in 1998 to 52 million in 2008. Over the past 3 years, many new types of e-bikes have been observed on the pathways. The NCC has found that speed is the biggest issue and is trying to promote respect for the speed limit, with the focus on user safety.

A power-assisted bicycle is equipped with an electric motor for which power output does not exceed 500 watts and which is incapable of providing further assistance once the bicycle attains a speed of 32 km/h on level ground. Definitions for power-assisted bicycles are provided in regulations published by the [federal government](#) and by the provinces of [Ontario](#) and [Quebec](#). Electric bikes can be similar to conventional bicycles, scooters or motorcycles.

The two models of interest to the NCC are: 1) conventional e-bikes and 2) scooter e-bikes. Presently, Ontario allows Power-Assisted Bikes anywhere that bikes are allowed. It should be noted at this point that this is the position that the board of CfSC supports. The e-biker must be at least 16 years old and must wear a helmet. In Quebec, the e-biker must be a minimum of 18 years old. Municipalities have the final say on where e-bikes are allowed.

The NCC proposes the following rules:

For the [Capital Pathway](#) network

Electric-powered vehicles are prohibited on pathways. Power-assisted bicycles that are physically similar to conventional bicycles are allowed.

For bike lanes

Electric-powered vehicles are prohibited in bike lanes. Power-assisted bicycles (of any type) are allowed.

For [Sunday Bikedays](#) and [Saturday Short Loops programs](#)

Electric-powered vehicles are prohibited on parkways closed to motor vehicles for the Sunday Bikedays and Saturday Short Loops programs. Power-assisted bicycles that are physically similar to conventional bicycles are allowed.

For the [multi-use trails in Gatineau Park](#)

Electric-powered vehicles are prohibited on natural surface trails intended for hiking and mountain biking.

Exceptions

These rules do not apply to motorized mobility aids (wheelchairs, three-wheel electric scooters and four-wheel electric scooters).

It should also be noted that the NCC is considering allowing e-bike scooters on the Champlain and Interprovincial Bridges.

The main objectives of these rules are to maximize user safety, improve accessibility and promote active mobility and sustainable mobility.

Public input pointed out that, during the three-year period of the provisional e-bike program in Ontario, there has been no factual evidence in Ottawa to support a case against e-scooters or e-bikes, with most complaints being anecdotal. It was argued that e-scooters are safer because of the hydraulic braking system that allows them to stop with a much shorter distance than non-PABs. Most people present felt that the main problem with PABs/bikes/pedestrians/dogs is sharing the pathways in a safe and courteous manner. There was a concern that moving e-scooters off bike lanes and pathways and onto the lanes with motor vehicles would result in very serious injuries. It was agreed by everyone attending that speed is the key factor in the extent of the injury. There were some very impassioned pleas from riders of e-scooters to not be prohibited from paths. For these riders, this is their main mode of transportation.

Following the approval of the new rules, during the summer 2011, the NCC will inform the public of its decision. ♦

Out & About



Somebody goofed—sharing never ends! We hope this doesn't appear elsewhere. This sign on Carling Avenue is to be corrected, after a message was sent to 3-1-1.



Construction on the Woodroffe Avenue water main has temporarily closed that road's southbound cycling lane. Detour notices direct cyclists to the sidewalk on the east side of the road, where they are being permitted to ride by signs saying "SHARED SIDEWALK – CYCLISTS YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS". If you have ridden in this area recently, do you think the sidewalk detour is acceptable? Please let us know about other locations around town where this signage is being used. (E-mail to editor@safecycling.ca.)

All photos this page: CfSC



Bike to Work Ottawa – May 2011

by Nancy Biggs

Bike to Work in Ottawa was promoted by [EnviroCentre](#) for the entire month of May, with the backing of CfSC helpers. It encouraged Ottawans to cycle to work, by getting participants to pledge to win a bike. Celebration stations were set up along the multi-use paths where cyclists commuting to work could stop for drinks, snacks, giveaways, and a chance to tell of their commute. Workshops, specially designed for commuters to teach techniques and tools for safe cycling, were given at workplaces and in communities. Free workplace toolkits, including posters, maps and lots of information, were a great way to promote this healthy mode of commuting. ♦

Did you know...

...that the traffic circle at an intersection of several popular cycling routes is being changed into a roundabout? Where Prince of Wales Drive meets the NCC's Scenic Driveway through the Central Experimental Farm and the Arboretum, a roundabout is being implemented. No longer will Prince of Wales drivers/riders have the default right of way. ♦

DISCOUNTS FOR CfSC MEMBERS

Bicycle shops that offer discounts to CfSC members:

NOTE: "P&A" means bike parts and accessories.

Bushtukah	10% off P&A and clothes
Fresh Air Experience	10% off P&A and clothes, and 5% off bikes
Full Cycle	10% off P&A
Joe Mamma Urban Cycles	10% off P&A
Kunstadt Sports	10% off P&A and clothes
McCrank's Cycles	10% off P&A
Orleans Cycles	10% off P&A
Rebec and Kroes	10% off P&A and clothes
Tall Tree Cycles	10% off P&A
The Cyclery	10% off P&A
Tommy and Lefebvre	10% off accessories and clothes
Valiquette's	20% off in-stock accessories

Scenes from the inaugural Capital VéloFest on June 4, 2011



All different types of bikes were present at Marion Dewar Plaza in front of City Hall, during the "Bicycle Rodeo". CfSC had its roving booth trailer on site to spread the advocacy word.



Ottawa bike polo club enthusiasts put on demonstration matches during VéloFest daytime activities. Photos: CfSC

Thanks to Dick Louch and his [VéloFest](#) team!

Roundabout... (continued from p.5)

middle). There should be pavement markings showing this as an option, but not an obligation. Signs should be located where the off-ramp meets the sidewalk to indicate that bikes must be walked. And has anyone considered whether these ramps will be plowed in the winter?

For the bicycle on-ramps, motorists may not be expecting cyclists to enter the roadway at those locations. The angle they form with the travel lanes increases the chance of a bike launching further from the curb and into the path of an automobile. The off-ramps at this roundabout should be removed or at least be fitted with signage ordering cyclists to yield.

In the drawing on page 4, the shortest route for a southbound cyclist to make a left turn by using an off-ramp and then walking the bike is sketched in green. A hybrid left turn by using part road and part sidewalk is shown in magenta. The latter route indicates where another off-ramp would be useful.

In summary, while one-lane roundabouts have not been a problem for cyclists, there are safety issues at this initial two-lane effort. While it may improve motorist convenience, a design where many cyclists have to get off the road and walk is not progressive. The City should:

- Postpone installing more two-lane roundabouts until the problems for cyclists are solved.
- Consider grade-separated pathways (as exist on certain large roundabouts in Holland) for cyclists and pedestrians to pass under the roads and meet at a common junction in the centre of a two-lane

roundabout. This would solve the crosswalk problems where there are high traffic volumes.

- Provide cyclist-specific signage and more intuitive pavement marking and treatment (e.g. make the off-ramps in asphalt or in a different colour of concrete than the sidewalk).
- Improve lane geometries to avoid 'squeezing out' cyclists, plus add signage to motorists to not pass cyclists.

Become a Member Today!

Go to safecycling.ca and choose the menu item Participate / Join CfSC / Become a member.

No internet access? Then please mail this form to

Citizens for Safe Cycling
Box 248, Station B
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Please select one membership option:

Individual: ☐ 1 Year (\$ 25) ☐ 2 Years (\$ 45)

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Low Income: ☐ 1 Year (\$ 10)

☐ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

☐ Please send mailings by e-mail when possible.

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

Any cycling comments/concerns? _____

*Household Memberships Only:

2nd Member's Name: _____

2nd Member's E-Mail: _____

Citizens For Safe Cycling