

# CHAIN MAIL

The Newsletter of Citizens for Safe Cycling  
Volume 27 Issue 3 – Fall 2011

## Ottawa wins Bicycle Friendly Community award

The City of Ottawa received recognition for its efforts to support cycling in an award ceremony held during the recent Ontario Bike Summit. Ottawa achieved silver-level status as a Bicycle Friendly Community, under a new program spearheaded by Ontario's Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Other municipalities awarded at the summit were Waterloo (silver), Ajax (bronze), and Windsor (bronze).

The Bicycle Friendly Communities Program was launched in Canada in August 2010, after successful experience in the US by the Washington-based League of American Bicyclists. Ottawa had to submit a thorough application to be judged in the five areas of Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation & Planning. The more achievements across these so-called "Five Es", the higher the recognition level awarded.

*(Continued: p.2, 'Award')*

**Vote in the Ontario election  
for candidates who support  
cycling! Election day: Oct 6.**



### INSIDE:

More on Ottawa's award.....	2
CfSC President's Message...	3
Bike Lane Ambassadors.....	4
CfSC community activities this summer.....	4,5
Bike routes on Google Maps and Ride the City.....	6
Park and Cycle.....	7
U of O underpass changes...	7
CfSC's 2011 AGM.....	8
In brief .....	8

## Why this new signage may help you as a cycle commuter



Photo: CfSC

The National Capital Commission has a new project to coax commuters onto their bikes for the downtown run.

See the full story on page 7.

## Bike mapping options abound!

Ottawa and Gatineau cyclists now have so many new choices for charting their routes and finding their way. Many paper- and web-based resources have appeared in the past year, and there are more to come.



Released in conjunction with the kick-off of the Laurier Avenue Bike Lanes, a new specialized city map puts the focus on riding in the core. The *Downtown Ottawa Cycling Map 2011* is a pocket-sized wonder that opens to provide handy tips to drivers and cyclists on negotiating the new Laurier facilities. The map portion is a convenient 9" x 15" in size. It also pinpoints the new Capital BIXI bike-share stations and locates some of the major sightseeing attractions. It will surely be a handy guide for visitors and new riders trying out the segregated lanes.

*(Continued: p.6 'Maps')*

**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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For inquiries about CfSC membership, please send e-mail to [Membership@SafeCycling.ca](mailto:Membership@SafeCycling.ca), or join on-line through our website or by using the form on p.5.

This issue contains hyperlinks that may be followed when viewing the PDF version on the [safecycling.ca](http://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.

#### Award... (continued from p.1)

"Share the Road is proud to announce that the four communities who applied in this first round of applications all received awards. The strength of these applications was impressive and the awards [are] an indication of the excellent progress these communities have made thus far in terms of their investments in bicycling," said Share the Road Cycling Coalition CEO Eleanor McMahon.



Ottawa receives its Bicycle Friendly Community award at the 2011 Ontario Bike Summit in June. Pictured left to right are Councillor David Chernuschenko (Ward 10 - Capital) and Mona Abouhenidy (Program Manager, Transportation Strategic Planning), both representing the city, and Eleanor McMahon (CEO of Share the Road Cycling Coalition). Photo: CfSC

A second announcement of award winners was made at the beginning of September by the coalition. Accreditation was given to Hamilton (silver level), London (bronze), Oshawa (bronze) and Town of the Blue Mountains (bronze).

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition was created to unite cycling organizations and cyclists from across Ontario and work with and on behalf of municipalities to give them the tools they need to become more bicycle-friendly. The organization's mandate is province-wide.

Ottawa's next challenge will be to 'go for gold', and see if it can reach that level before Waterloo or Hamilton. ♦

**MORE ABOUT SHARE THE ROAD CYCLING COALITION – See *In Brief* on page 8**

## CfSC President's message

By Hans Moor

Recently, The Ottawa Citizen's columnist Kelly Egan wrote that: *"a good portion of the motoring public hate[s] cyclists, particularly the reckless ones who fly through stop signs, red lights, hop on sidewalks, and whatnot"*. Further down, he writes that a possible one-metre passing law could be a sign *"that cyclists are winning this war on the streets"*. *Hate* and *war* in one paragraph. And this is about cycling? I wasn't even aware that there was a war going on. I have seen neither bullet holes, nor tanks in the streets, nor snipers on the roof along Lyon or Wellington. I didn't read of ambushes behind the War Museum.

The noun "hate", according to Merriam-Webster, is:  
a : intense hostility and aversion usually deriving from fear, anger, or sense of injury

b : extreme dislike or antipathy.

That is pretty strong wording. And what about *'a good portion'*? How much is *'a good portion'*? Twenty-seven percent? Eighty-three percent? And what actually covers *'whatnot'*? I wrote to Mr. Egan's email address that I don't think he should use heavy words such as *hate* and *war* as he helps to set a tone that is unnecessary, irresponsible and certainly not helpful to make our city a more liveable space. I also suggested that it would be nice if he'd write about solutions. As a road user, I don't hate fellow Canadians on the road.

Although I don't read the local newspapers very often, I do pick up on the odd article on cycling, because someone forwards it or I just happen to skim over the web site. It is not a good sign that columnists go this far to have their articles read. On the other hand, the Citizen also offers [CitizenCycle](#) on line, run by very dedicated people. Herein lies the dilemma for me as a reader: I used to trust a newspaper as an authority and loved reading newspapers as a window to the world. But how do I deal with unfounded one-liners and poorly researched articles?

The newspaper business is a strange business. *'A good portion'* is not news at all, but filler material to attract advertising. It is no secret that *'a good portion'* of the newspaper industry is searching for ways to survive. Meanwhile, news is given away at

bus stops and through web sites as income of ads keeps the newspapers alive.

Meanwhile, other forms of media are starting to make inroads into the traditional news industry. Take a blog like Eric Darwin's [WestSideAction](#), that keeps us informed on what is going on in the west end. Eric is not bound by anyone, and offers ideas and solutions. Another Ottawa group, [Apartment613](#), is showing us the alternative hip scene in Ottawa that regular media hardly touches on—probably because it doesn't attract advertising. It gives us some insight into the generation that is going to shape the city: cycling will be part of it, like it or not. In all fairness, Kelly himself concludes that cycling is here to stay.

I have talked to a number of newspaper staffers, who explained that egging on drivers and cyclists is one of the best ways to create controversy and anger. (This non-existent division between two groups gets milked every summer; apparently it sells newspapers.) Ottawans who cycle do not need to defend themselves. It is a cheap, clean, effective and pleasant way to get around. The best thing is not to take the bait. *'Good news'* does not make news, and therefore newspapers have to invent some non-news once in a while, like *"War: drivers hate cyclists"*. I propose we hold back a bit on the rhetoric if only out of respect for people who go through real wars and uprisings. ♦



Hans Moor in conversation with Ottawa Deputy City Manager Nancy Schepers at the official opening of the Laurier Segregated Bike Lanes on July 10, 2011. Between them is CfSC Vice-president Alex deVries. Photo: CfSC



## Laurier Segregated Bike Lane Ambassadors

*By Nancy Biggs*

The Laurier Segregated Bike Lane was opened on July 10, 2011, and has seen a three-fold increase in the number of cyclists using Laurier to cross the downtown core. Almost 50,000 trips at Laurier and Metcalfe were recorded during the first month of operation. On September 19, 2011, the count reached 100,000. This is the first segregated bike lane in Ontario in a downtown core and it is a real sea change for Ottawa.



*The city's Colin Simpson is the front man on the Laurier SBL pilot project.*

*Photo: CfSC*

Citizens for Safe Cycling and other cycling groups, including the Pathway Patrol, volunteered as Bike Lane Ambassadors. City staff members who were involved in the extensive planning process volunteered as well, as they were keen to see it in operation. Ambassadors attended an evening briefing session given by Colin Simpson, Senior Project Manager, to explain how to properly use the

bike lane. The volunteers, wearing bright yellow bike vests, were stationed at the eight major intersections along Laurier, on opening day Sunday and the first workday commute on Monday. Thousands of postcards that gave a link to the City website [www.ottawa.ca/bikelane](http://www.ottawa.ca/bikelane) and maps were distributed. The website has a great video of how to use the bike lane. Ambassadors answered questions and directed people to where they could get more detailed information. As an Ambassador, I found the experience very rewarding to see so many people of all ages, shapes, and sizes using the bike lane. The feedback from the cyclists was very positive.

Opening day was attended by City officials, including the Mayor and the Chief of the Fire Department and, of course, a large number of enthusiastic bell-ringing cyclists. The 45 volunteers found the whole experience very rewarding. On Monday morning, the Mayor came out to see how well the bike lane was working and to personally thank the Ambassadors.

Just recently the Ontario Medical Association stated that, "A safer environment for cycling is crucial to creating a healthier population. Ontario's doctors want to make sure that Ontarians feel safe when riding their bicycles. The debate about bicycle infrastructure is so often politically driven, but should really be about the health of the population and safety of those who choose to cycle. Ontario's doctors are committed to working with the province and municipalities to create a safer Ontario for our cyclists."

Thanks again to all the wonderful Laurier Bike Lane Ambassadors. Let's hope we are called upon again in the not-too-distant future to help in the opening of another segregated bike lane. ♦

## CfSC out in the community: another busy season of advocacy

Our members have been engaged in a lot of cycling events around Ottawa this past summer, in addition to being ambassadors for the Laurier bike lanes, as described above. We ran our outreach booth at the Bike to Work Month finale, Capital VéloFest, MEC BikeFest, The Ottawa FolkFest, and also at several workplaces.

Another successful BluesFest Bike Park was capably run by Charles Akben-Marchand—and none of the bicycles blew away in that freak windstorm that collapsed the main musical stage on the last day! We even made a tidy \$1576 from donations and bike light sales over the 12 days of the festival. Thousands of bikes were securely stored, giving many people the two-wheel freedom to avoid crowded buses and traffic.

At the bottom of the opposite page are photos to show examples of our exploits.



*Ribbon cutting ceremony to open the new Laurier lanes. In the photo are (l-r) Councillor Mark Taylor, Mayor Watson, and Councillors Marianne Wilkinson, Mathieu Fleury, and Katherine Hobbs.*



*Where the new lanes intersect with cross streets, the surface has been delineated with bright green paint. It is a special treatment with a texture that does not become slippery when wet. The plastic bollards have retro-reflective tape to enhance nighttime visibility of the bike lane by motorists.*

## Become a Member Today!

Go to [safecycling.ca](http://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  
Ottawa, ON, K1P 6C4

☐ J'aimerais recevoir la documentation en français lorsqu'elle est disponible.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you... ☐ Joining or ☐ Renewing?

Please select one membership option:

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

Household\* ☐ 1 Year (\$ 30) ☐ 2 Years (\$ 55)

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:

2<sup>nd</sup> Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Member's E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Citizens For Safe Cycling**

## Did you know...

That on-line membership payment/renewal through our website is easy with **PayPal™**?

## Some Citizens for Safe Cycling activities during this summer



*Sam Iverson and CfSC board member Risa Sargent look after booth duties at MEC BikeFest in late June.*



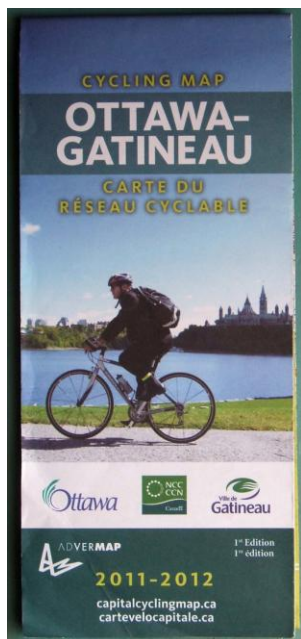
*Charles Akben-Marchand gives an orientation to some of his new volunteers at this year's BluesFest Bike Park, the valet parking service for bicycles that we have run since 2006.*

*All photos this page: CfSC*



## Maps...(continued from p.1)

A private company working under the *AdverMap* name has produced its first edition of the *Ottawa-Gatineau Cycling Map*. It is available both on-line and in paper form measuring 27" x 39" when unfolded. The *North Side* of the map covers all of Gatineau and a little bit of downtown Ottawa. The *South Side* shows mainly the Ontario side of the river from the Greenbelt inward, plus parts of Barrhaven and Kanata.



Although the on-line version is almost as static as the paper one (that is, neither can plot a route for you based on origin and destination), a nice feature is that the legend 'floats' so that it is always in view as you navigate within a

map subsection.

The National Capital Commission (NCC) issues a new printing every year, and the 2011 version of its *Cycling Capital* map provides a more detailed view of the downtowns, complete with BIXI locations. Surprisingly, it lacks some new NCC paths in parts of Nepean (such as the Bruce Pit link) that the *AdverMap* one includes.

Finally, an updated paper-based official bike map for the entire City of Ottawa will be released either this fall or in 2012. It will cover the many outlying areas that all the maps described above do not. In the meantime, you can consult the City's website to access an on-line map. The good thing about all the city maps is that not only are paths and bike lanes shown but also suggested unsigned routes along streets are indicated.

All the resources mentioned above allow you to do manual route planning. However, the new trend is automatic route planning, which is the subject of the next story.

Links: [www.ottawa.ca/bikelane](http://www.ottawa.ca/bikelane)  
[www.capitalcyclingmap.ca](http://www.capitalcyclingmap.ca)  
[www.canadascapital.gc.ca/cycling](http://www.canadascapital.gc.ca/cycling) and  
[www.ouaouaiscycling.com](http://www.ouaouaiscycling.com)



## Which serves Ottawa cyclists better? *Ride the City* or *Google Maps Bike Route*?

We're in what could be termed the 'pioneer' period of web-based bike route mapping. Ottawa cyclists now have several options for getting advice on how to pedal from A to B. Google Maps began supporting bike directions in Ottawa last November. In June, [Ride the City](http://www.ridethecity.ca) went 'live' with its service for the nation's capital. How do these applications stack up against each other in their early phases?

Google's bike directions are in beta-trial as of this writing. That means the developers admit there could be hiccups—and there are. They openly state:

*"Use caution and please report unmapped bike routes, streets that aren't suited for cycling, and other problems."*

So, let's get out there and work out the bugs!

Ride the City is a service piggybacking on the OpenStreetMap (OSM) project. Being newer, it may have a few more erroneous route selections than Google. Here, also, the consumer should view all recommended directions with skepticism.

Both applications give travel times by bike—Google providing just one figure and Ride the City ("RtC" for short) giving a range of times. Both enable you to view and to print detailed directions in word form, if that is easier for you to follow.

Google has advantages in being able to see a satellite view and its unique StreetView. These options really help to convey the terrain better than a standard street map. You may be able to tell the condition of the pavement and even if it's a treed street, if that's important. StreetView does not yet cover the pathway portion of routes, but a CfSC board member saw a special cycle version of the Google car-cam on the Canal paths in August, meaning this feature could be on the horizon.

With Google, you can edit the route if you need to override the directions, based on your knowledge of the area.

Ride the City allows you to specify either a "safe", a "safer", or a "direct" route. This is a good strategy, but could be improved or clarified. While it appears that "safer" routes use off-road facilities

*(Continued: p.7 'Routing')*

## NCC Park and Cycle



*At the parking lot along the Ottawa River Parkway near Champlain Bridge on a recent Friday morning, half of the vehicles in this view were fitted with bike racks. Counting racks is the informal methodology used by NCC to gauge public uptake on the pilot project.* Photo: CfSC

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is running a pilot project called Park and Cycle to expand your commuting choices. Modeled along the lines of the Mid-Rider Program (see *Chain Mail - Late Summer 2007*), Park and Cycle allows commuters to drive part of the way to their workplace, park their vehicle without incurring a fee, and then cycle the rest of the way. In this pilot, there are ten NCC parking lots—three in Gatineau, four in Ottawa to the east of downtown, and three in Ottawa to the west of downtown—at which you may leave your car and not be subject to the usual four-hour time limit on parking. (See website for a list of the lots.)

Do you work downtown and is your bike commute from home too long? Try this! You'll get exercise, avoid paying for a parking pass, and reduce congestion in the core. Even those suburbanites who cycle all the way during summer could take this up in the fall, so that the riding portion of the commute is enjoyed in bright daylight.

Gatineau residents can avoid the car-clogged bridges at rush hour by parking on the Quebec side and cycling into Ottawa.

The pilot project will run until October 28, 2011. Access to park is unrestricted from 6AM until 10PM at a total of 360 parking spaces. The NCC estimates that close to 1000 commuter trips were made from these lots between mid-June and August, and this was with only a modest advertising effort. Link: <http://www.canadascapital.gc.ca/> and search for Park and Cycle. ♦

## U of O's Nicholas St. underpass changed: Now possible to bike in it

There is a tunnel under Nicholas Street and the Transitway that connects Colonel By Drive and the Corktown Footbridge to the University of Ottawa campus. In our 2010 Top Ten List of Easy Fixes to improve cycling, Citizens for Safe Cycling suggested that the ban of bike riding in the tunnel be lifted and segregated lanes be installed.



Photo: CfSC

This summer, bollards were added at each end of this underpass along with signage and pavement marking to create bike lanes down the middle. The remaining space in the tunnel is reserved for pedestrians. A good solution! ♦

## Routing...(continued from p.6)

as much as possible, many cyclists would not feel that riding at night on an unlit multi-use pathway is safer than using an illuminated street.

In their written directions, RtC tells you when you are using a "rec" path and what its name is. Some paths, such as along Holly Acres Road, are missing from their database, however. It also tells you which parts of the journey are in a bike lane. None of these features is in Google as yet.

RtC even shows bike stores and bike share (BIXI) stations on their map. You can selectively turn these attributes on or off. Integrated display of current temperature and weather conditions in the city are nice-to-haves.

Considering everything, Google Maps will likely be preferred due to its photographic images, and so it gets the nod for now. However, keep watch on both services as they evolve—it's an exciting time! ♦

Citizens for Safe Cycling

## Annual General Meeting

Tuesday November 1, 2011

Tom Brown Arena,  
141 Bayview Rd., Ottawa

**6pm:** Doors open (mingle and sandwiches)

**7pm:** Guest Speaker **8:15pm:** AGM starts

This year's guest speaker:

**Hayley Richardson**

of Bellevue, Washington



***"Telling bicycle stories –  
Using social media to build  
coalitions, generate enthusiasm  
and sweeten the real-life ride"***

Hayley is the outreach coordinator for the City of Bellevue's (near Seattle) transportation demand management program and a community organizer/lobbyist who focuses on social media and creative elements such as cycle fashion shoots and group rides to generate enthusiasm.

**All are welcome for this presentation.  
Free admission – Donations appreciated.**

Bike racks available. Convenient to transit.  
(Bayview station for O-Train and Transitway).

### 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
McCrack'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

**NOTE: Valiquette Source for Sports is ceasing to carry bicycles and accessories, and their stock is being cleared.**

### In brief

#### Take the Active Communities Pledge

The Share the Road Cycling Coalition, (SRCC) an Ontario-based non-profit organization which promotes bicycling as a mode of transportation, recreation and fitness through provincial advocacy, encourages you to take the Active Communities Pledge. By doing so it will send a message to Ontario politicians in the upcoming election that you support bike friendly communities. Point your browser at [www.activecommunitiespledge.ca](http://www.activecommunitiespledge.ca). For more about SRCC, check out [www.sharetheroad.ca](http://www.sharetheroad.ca).

#### Another way to find a good bike route

Further to our stories on maps and automated bike trip planning in this issue, you might prefer to look at [www.bikely.com](http://www.bikely.com) for routes with a more personal touch. The routes are posted by individuals and include maps and distances. Some entries lean more to the touring or training side, while others are specific commutes. The contributors are able to enter comments about such characteristics as the travel surface and degree of difficulty. Have a look—maybe someone else has already worked out a good way to cycle to where you want to go!

#### CfSC Advocacy Blitz coming – November 26th

Help shape the future projects of CfSC! Our first annual advocacy blitz will be held on Saturday, November 26th in the cafeteria at the Causeway Work Center, 22 O'Meara Street (Hintonburg) from 1pm to 4pm. All are welcome. Come for part of or all of the event. Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to [risa.bikes@gmail.com](mailto:risa.bikes@gmail.com). No ideas are too big or too small! ♦