

Subject: News from the VT Bike/Ped Coalition - Feb. 03

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From: VT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coalition <becka@VTBikePed.org>

News from the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition

The Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition emphasizes safety, education, and access, to make Vermont bicycle- & pedestrian-friendly for residents and visitors alike. We promote bicycling and walking for transportation, health, recreation, and fun -- to enhance our communities, environment, and economy.

Feel free to share this email with a like-minded friend! To ask to be added to or removed from our email list, which averages about a message a month, please email becka@VTBikePed.org - Thank you!

If you have news to contribute, please send it along at any time.

Dear members and friends,

It's been a cold, cold winter, but bicycle and pedestrian issues have been hot hot hot in the news these last couple months, especially the controversial bicycle & pedestrian bridge across the mouth of the Winooski River. Read on for the full scoop with what's going on with the bridge, related happenings in the legislature, and much more about walking and bicycling in Vermont...

CONTROVERSIAL \$2.9 M BURLINGTON-COLCHESTER BRIDGE INCHES FORWARD

The **Burlington-Colchester Bridge** has been getting lots of press with it's \$2.9 million price tag. The current state of affairs has the bridge in the new administration's budget recommendation to the legislature, abet at original \$1.4 million. The **legislature is faced with the decision** whether to approve the needed \$1.5 million increase. In the meantime, the contractor has been given the green light for this season's construction, and is placing piers to support the structure. The bridge isn't a done deal, but it is moving along... slowly.

If you're thinking this bridge is pretty pricy, well, there's little debate about that. It is an expensive project. There's also broad support for the project concept. But lead advocates on the project, **Local Motion**, point out that the trail already has a **\$1.5 million economic impact, resulting in \$75,000 in state tax revenues.** Local Motion is supporting this project as an economic development project; an improved trail and connection to the Lake Champlain Islands will make this trail a world-class attraction. Local Motion, the City of Burlington and the Town of Colchester are coordinating with VTrans on the most productive strategies for the project. Want to know more? Contact Chapin Spencer at chapin@localmotionvt.org or 802-652-BIKE.

STATEWIDE BIKE/PED FUNDING FACING MORATORIUM ON NEW PROJECTS

In the meantime, the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition is keeping its eye on projects across the state. **The news for bike/ped facilities across the state is not good.** While the Douglas administration has recommended keeping VTrans commitment to projects already in the construction pipeline, the **governor's budget has placed a moratorium on funding new bike/ped construction projects** in both the Enhancements program and the Bike/Ped Program this year.

In raw numbers, there's a close to 30% increase in Bike/Ped and Enhancement construction spending since last year. However, last year was not a strong construction year, and this year was slated to be. **The moratorium does represents a significant decrease in expected funding.**

Both of these programs use federal funds, matched with state and local dollars, to construct bicycle & pedestrian facilities -- ranging from sidewalks to multi-use trails. In the case of the Enhancements Program, 70 applications had already been submitted to VTrans last fall; these applications are now on hold with no projects selected for funding.

We've already connected with one potentially powerful ally -- the **Vermont League of Cities and Towns; their policy paper on transportation supports continued funding for bicycle/pedestrian facilities** balanced by improvements in roads and bridges. VLCT will be testifying in support of reinstating the Enhancements funding.

The Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition is working on a **positively-focused strategy to get funding reinstated.** Please contact Becka at 802-861-3300 if you want to be part of this discussion.

More action alerts will be forthcoming -- you have unfortunately not heard the last of this topic.

FUNDING FUNDING FUNDING

Not to sound like a broken record, but across state and federal government, funding is clearly an issue for many many services.

Transportation is a meat 'n' potatoes kind of service (with apologies to any vegetarians out there), but bike/ped is a little like a side dish of carrots -- it's sweet, good for you, but also seen as non-essential. Maybe our transportation decision-makers just don't know about all the healthy benefits of bike/ped projects. Just as with the FDA food pyramid, all those vegetables are a little new to some folks!

Do you understand the food pyramid of transportation funding? Read our primer on Bike/Ped funding in Vermont on our website: <http://www.vtbikeped.org>

While it's not necessary for all of us to become transportation-funding gurus, it's very helpful for citizen advocates to understand the basic funding mechanisms that come into play.

\$15 MANDATORY BICYCLE REGISTRATION BILL

You may have heard about H. 3 -- a bill introduced by Rep. Warren Miller (R-Elmore). This bill would require a mandatory \$15 annual registration for bicycles ridden by adults on Vermont's roads.

The Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition opposes this bill, because we believe it presents a barrier to bicycle riding. Legislative Committee Chair David Jacobowitz has already talked with Rep. Miller as well as House Transportation Committee Chair Frank Mazur (R-S. Burlington) about the bill. While it seems unlikely that the bill will obtain the support of the Transportation Committee, the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition is following the bill, will testify as needed, and will let you know if your voice is needed.

See below for the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition's full position statement on the
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VERMONTERS HEADED TO WASHINGTON FOR NATIONAL BIKE SUMMIT

A contingent of Vermont advocates will be heading to Washington D.C. for the **3rd Annual National Bike Summit, March 5-7**. This year Congress is reviewing the Federal transportation policy known as TEA-21 (Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century). This policy has required each state to have a Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator in each state DOT (Amy Bell and Jon Kaplan in Vermont's case), and has provided millions of dollars for projects across the state from the Springfield's Toonerville Trail to segments of the Lake Champlain Bikeways to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail to sidewalks in many villages across the state. The League of American Bicyclists is hosting the event. **It's not too late to sign up -- and early bird registration has just been extended until Feb. 8.** (Save \$100.) If you are interested in joining us in DC to meet with our Congressional officials, please call Becka at 861-3300 to coordinate!

WINTER BIKES EVERYWHERE!

Who says you can't ride a bicycle in Vermont in the winter?

About 15 Burlington-area bicyclists got a head start on their 2003 mileage, by riding in the **"Icycle Bicycle Ride" on January 1**. This was the first Icycle Bicycle ride, which may become an annual event. Yours truly was featured in **The Ride Magazine** (www.ridezine.com) as a winter bicycle commuter.

I'm heartened to see a bicyclist or two practically every day even over the past couple frigid weeks, and on Monday witnessed two lycra-clad roadies speeding down Rt. 116 in Hinesburg.

WE NEED YOU - SHARE THE ROAD & OUTREACH PROJECT TEAMS

Two of our project teams could use members-at-large. Both have board member leadership and will meet in Waterbury on Mon. eve (2/10). Contact Becka 861-3300 or becka@vtbikeped.org for time & location.

1) Help define our **Share the Road message** - and get the message out to the mass media. TV, radio, and print. We're planning to record some radio PSAs (we already have TV), plan panel-style presentations to talk shows, etc., and strategize angles for print media coverage. All this, plus our bumperstickers to get the message visible actually ON the road.

2) We're putting together a **display booth to take around to fairs, fundraiser rides**, etc. this summer to distribute our educational materials about bicycling & walking. We have a canopy, a couple tables, and lots of literature, but we need YOUR ideas and help to help make our booth fun, snazzy, and informative! Help design the display itself, develop a list of "must attend" events, and attend a few events in your area over the summer!

RUTLAND MOVES AHEAD ON GETTING MOVING

A "WALK TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT!" program has recently been launched in Rutland, with walking activities available, yes, even during the winter (to tie in with all those resolutions). To date partnering walkers are available at the Diamond Run Mall, Downtown Rutland, Rutland City, Pittsford, and Wallingford. Additional locations and departure

times will be added as demand and leadership grows. For more information on days of the week and departure times of groups, to be linked to a walking group, or to volunteer as a walking leader-partner call 773.2747 [x209] TODAY!

Congrats to the Rutland Area Physical Activity Coalition for recently receiving a Bowse Trust grant. The Coalition, which focuses on increasing daily physical activity primarily by improving conditions for walking and bicycling, is now poised to hire staff.

BICYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS

Vermont has 11 volunteers who are nationally-certified bicycle safety education trainers. If you want to invite a trainer to speak to kids at your school this spring, contact the nearest trainer on the list on our website to see if you can arrange a time. <http://www.vtbikeped.org>

Presentations work best for individual classes or smaller assemblies, and the best age range is 4-5th grades.

If you're interested in becoming a trainer yourself, we are hoping that we will be able to offer another training class in Spring 2003 or Fall 2004 -- we are still awaiting word on funding. This will be a slightly less intense class than the last one, which was 3 whole days! We're probably looking at a full-day format, based strongly on the courses offered by our sister organization, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine. Interested? Contact Becka to get on the list - becka@vtbikeped.org or 861-3300.

BICYCLE RODEO COORDINATOR'S TRAINING: FALL 2003

Do you teach kids how to ride safely through a bicycle rodeo or other community event? (Or do you want to learn how?) Vermont SAFE KIDS and the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition are organizing two trainings for individuals who coordinate bicycle rodeos in either professional or volunteer capacity.

The trainings will help coordinators to know that they are teaching kids the correct, standard information. It will also give you **tips and tricks for a fun & successful rodeo**. The basic curriculum will follow Dan Burden and John Williams' Guide to Bicycle Rodeos. Perhaps you're already a multi-year veteran of putting on bicycle rodeos in your town? We'd like to know about your experiences, and also connect you with our network. Or maybe you'd like to recommend the training for community volunteers and/or new staff, so that you have a local team to help you in your next rodeos?

Registrations are being accepted now for the trainings, tentatively scheduled for Rutland and Montpelier/Waterbury on Saturdays in late September 2003 or early October. Tuck that timeframe into the back of your mind -- and we'll let you know as soon as the date is firmed up.

If you want to get on the list to receive registration information, please contact Becka at 861-3300 or becka@vtbikeped.org

2003 BICYCLE EDUCATION LEADERS CONFERENCE, PORTLAND OR

The League of American Bicyclists will hold its 2003 Bicycle Education Leaders Conference June 4-6 in Portland, OR. Building on the success of last year's conference in Madison, WI, which attracted 170 participants from 28 states, the event will bring together leading experts in the field to discuss best practices, opportunities and challenges in

bicycle education. The Bicycle Transportation Alliance is co-hosting the event with the League and the Oregon Bicycle Conference. Speakers and panels are planned on innovative teaching techniques, Safe Routes to School curricula, and progress on meeting the goals of the National Strategies for Advancing Bicycle Safety, and more.

Interested in going? Register on-line at www.bikeleague.org

MEMBERSHIP DUES & WATERBOTTLES

Your membership may be up for renewal. The Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition board of directors recently approved a switch from an annual to a quarterly system of membership. Depending on when you join or renew, memberships will now be **due for renewal Feb. 1, May 1, Aug 1, and Nov. 1** of each year. I'm just about to mail membership reminders for our Feb. 1 renewals -- thanks to those who have already proactively re-upped without prompting!

We're also just about to start mailing our **new Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition waterbottles** as a special thank-you to members who join at levels of \$25 or more.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN AWARENESS POWERING ALONG IN BRATTLEBORO

The Regional Bike/Ped committee of the Windham Regional Commission is moving along with renewed vigor. Two task forces are meeting - one looking at a bicycle map of the region including Class IV roads, and another to plan Bicycle/Pedestrian Awareness Week in June. Contact Kendall Gifford at the Commission <kendallg@sover.net>, or Chair Tim Chock <tchock@bratbike.com> at the Brattleboro Bike Shop.

And finally, here's our full position statement opposing H.3, the mandatory bicycle registration bill:

POSITION STATEMENT ON H. 3 – BICYCLE REGISTRATION

The Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition opposes H. 3, because it presents a barrier to bicycle use for adults. We need to remove barriers to bicycle use rather than create barriers.

- 1) Nearly all adult bicyclists in Vermont are also car owners and pay taxes. Almost all adult bicyclists pay gasoline taxes when we drive our cars. Bicyclists also pay property taxes which goes to maintain local roads and also toward the local match for state/federally funded road projects.
- 2) As Vermont seeks ways to contain health care costs, we should be encouraging healthful activities. Recreational or fitness bicycling is a healthful activity which should be encouraged.
- 3) Bicycling for transportation is also healthful and furthermore reduces pollution and traffic congestion.
- 4) Bicyclists cause almost no damage to the road bed or surface. Motor vehicle use, particularly by heavy trucks and farm equipment, causes deterioration of the roads.

5) Other users of the roadways are not required to register. Pedestrians, equestrians, and farm vehicles fall into this category. Where separate facilities exist, so-called "bicycle paths" are also heavily used by walkers, rollerbladers, x-c skiers, joggers, dog walkers, and baby carriages. None of these users are required to register.

6) Bicycle tourism is a low-impact type of tourism that should be encouraged. Vermont bicycle tourists pay lodging, meals, and sales taxes even if they don't buy gasoline while in the state. A 1992 study estimated direct expenditures by visiting bicyclists at \$13.1 million. A 1999 study in Maine found that bicycling contributes \$66.8 million and 1,200 jobs to the state's economy.

7) No other states have a mandatory bicycle registrations. A few municipalities do, but the registration fee is much lower (\$1-2 per year). The purpose of these registrations is usually to track and return lost or stolen bicycles.

8) Enforcement and administration of bicycle registrations would tap already overburdened resources in our police departments and the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Therefore, a "new tax" on bicycling is not in the best interest of the citizens or the state.

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To ask to be added to or removed from our announcements
email list, please email becka@VTBikePed.org - Thank you!

We also maintain a "discussion list". To sign up, please
see our website: www.VTBikePed.org

The Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition is a member-
supported organization. Please join, and share the word!
For more info and membership forms: www.VTBikePed.org
