



Alliance *for* Community Choice *in* Transportation

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**ACCT NOW**

**Summer 2008**

## BICYCLE FRIENDLY CHARLOTTESVILLE!

*Zachary Shahan*

*Charlottesville is Bicycle Friendly!*

ACCT applied for Charlottesville to be designated a “Bicycle Friendly Community” by the League of American Bicyclists this year. I brought the idea of applying for the designation to a Bike Action Team meeting in the Fall after hearing much about it at the BikeWalk VA annual conference and seeing its many benefits. Two UVA students interested in doing something fun and useful related to bicycling for a semester project jumped on the idea and completed most of the application over the course of the semester.

Vince Caristo and Becca McCurdy (the two UVA students) interviewed Charlottesville engineers, planners, police, Community Bikes staff, ACCT staff, and a host of other people connected with the area’s road cycling and mountain biking clubs to answer questions related to the application’s five categories: Encouragement, Education, Evaluation, Engineering, and Enforcement. Becca and Vince also did quite a bit of research on their own to collect needed data.

I completed the application in February and submitted it to the League.

In May, we received the news that we were awarded a designation at the Bronze level. **The Director of the program came down to Charlottesville for a press conference with the Mayor, Dave Norris, former Mayor, David Brown, and myself, to kick off Bike Week 2008.** (You can watch part of the press conference on the “ACCT in the News” webpage on our website.)



### *Bicycle Friendly Community Program*

The League’s BFC program is five years old now and there are 84 designated Bicycle Friendly Communities nationwide, but **less than half of the applicants to date have been awarded a designation.**

Charlottesville’s designation is a true accomplishment. It shows that Charlottesville is a good place to bike and encourages more people to get out there and enjoy the area on bicycle!

Furthermore, however, the designation is a great aid in another respect. We were awarded the designation at the Bronze level, not the Silver, Gold or Platinum level. **Charlottesville has a good start but we have much to do to become a truly world class bicycling leader.**

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**JOIN THE ALLIANCE,  
HELP TO MAKE OUR  
COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE!**

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:  
FIRST PLANNING GRANT FROM VDOT  
CREATING SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLANS**

*Caroline Heins*

The Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation is proud to announce that it has been awarded \$50,000 in grant money to create Safe Routes to School plans for the Charlottesville City and Albemarle County School Systems. The grant award money comes from the Virginia Department of Transportation as part of over \$1 million awarded for Safe Routes to School initiatives by the Virginia Department of Transportation this year.

The purpose of the Safe Routes to School Plans is to create a comprehensive view of existing pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure that surround the schools in a mile radius. The plan will also attempt to address current trends of children who walk and bike to school as well as what type of safety education they receive in schools. Finally, the Safe Routes plans will provide a set of guidelines and recommendations for safety infrastructure needed for future improvements to the bicyclist and pedestrian networks surrounding the schools.

The Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation has conducted Safe Routes to School Programming for six years in both Charlottesville City and Albemarle County school systems and is regarded as a leader in Safe Routes to School in the state of Virginia and even nationally. Still, there are great needs for improvements in the pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure networks that are used by children. Furthermore, with the upward trend of gasoline prices, more and more parents are expected to begin using alternative means of transportation for their morning commute to school.

The plans will be made using a variety of means and research methods. Parents and children will be given surveys to determine the rates and numbers of children who walk and bike to school and to identify existing problems and hazards that prevent a safe commute on foot and by bike. ACCT will also conduct walkability audits with community members, parents and faculty to ascertain problems and infrastructure gaps first hand. We have



already begun working with university, city, county and school district officials to create maps reflecting existing infrastructure and current traffic density and speed limits. The process of creating the plans will be open and will attempt to include input from as many community members and school officials as possible.

Once the plans are completed, ACCT representatives will seek approval from City Council, the County Board of Supervisors and both School Boards. With the seal of approval from the powers that be, the plan can be used and referenced to aid in further Safe Routes to School grant applications to VDOT. The SRTS money that comes from VDOT can fund up to \$500,000 projects for infrastructure improvements and up to \$50,000 in SRTS project grants and does not require matched funds from the localities.

Our goal in creating SRTS plans for the city and county school districts is to make our schools and our community a safe place for children to leave their house. We hope to provide children the skills and infrastructure they need to leave their house on foot and bicycle safely to school and we believe that Charlottesville and Albemarle County can become that type of place!



**HELP TRANSFORM TRANSPORTATION IN CHARLOTTESVILLE,  
BECOME A MEMBER! DONATE! VOLUNTEER!  
ACCT Now**

**ACCT IS ENTERING THE BLOGOSPHERE**

*Zachary Shahan*

We just created a blog to help you stay updated on transportation activities, learn more about the progressive transportation projects and programs that are being implemented around the world, and share *your* knowledge of anything transportation related.

ACCT members are invited to be authors on the blog and all others are welcome to comment and share information and ideas as well.

The blog site is [www.acctville.blogspot.com](http://www.acctville.blogspot.com).



**BICYCLE FRIENDLY CHARLOTTESVILLE! (CONT)**

The city has a good initial network of facilities in the urban core, but there are many gaps and many areas without even the most basic bicycle facilities.

The city is yet to venture into the more progressive facilities, such as **colored bike lanes, median separated bike lanes, sophisticated bike sharing programs (or bike fleets), or bicycle boulevards (bike only roads).**

We do not track bike traffic or have any data available on this subject except "Journey to Work" data from the 2000 US Census.

The city's public education, through informational booklets on the rights and responsibilities of cyclists and automobile drivers, driver education, public announcements, and such things, is nearly non-existent. ACCT's Confident City Cyclist Course, Annual Bicycle Rodeo, and Safe Routes to School programs help in this respect, but more could be done through formal governmental means and communications.

So, in total, **we are a bicycle friendly community at the Bronze level, but we have much more we could do** to get up to the higher levels (hopefully Platinum eventually!) and become a world class bicycling city, a stated goal of the Mayor of Charlottesville at our Bike Week Press Conference.

One critical factor in a community's designation is the percentage of regular bicyclists in the community. To make a city safer, to get more facilities built, and to build a better cycling atmosphere, there is nothing better than increasing the number of cyclists.

**So, help us reach the higher levels, help us become a more bicycle friendly community, get out and bike!**



**SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IN YOUR AREA,  
BECOME A MEMBER! DONATE! VOLUNTEER!  
ACCT Now**

**DISCOVER TRANSPORTATION FREEDOM:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST SEVEN  
NEIGHBORHOODS**



Discover Transportation Freedom has been implemented in about one third of the City of Charlottesville now. Eighty nine people have participated in "transportation socials" or neighborhood bicycle rides or both in the first seven neighborhoods. **If the trend continues, that means over 200 people will participate in the neighborhoods portion of this program.**

It is certainly interesting to walk around the city, door by door, inviting people to these events and in some cases talking with them briefly about transportation and transportation in the area. **It is like a first-hand view of the cultural consciousness of the community with regards to this issue.**

People are supportive, people are receptive, but the question remains, **"How many of us are living the life?"**

The socials are great information sharing get togethers, are expanding participants' perspectives and awareness (including mine), and are great places to meet people and enjoy their company.

The bike rides are fun and are helping people to identify great bicycle rides in their area. It is a great surprise in many instances just how easy it is to get around the city on bicycle. Some destinations that seem inaccessible end up having great backroads leading to them.

The city is a great place to bike around in, and many portions of it are excellent for walking as well. Seeing the city neighborhood by neighborhood, street by street, I think I am realizing more than anyone how great of a town this is for these "alternative" modes.

Realizing the freedom you have takes a little initiative, but I think it is more than worthwhile!

Don't just do it for transportation, though. Venture out and go discover the beauty and truly great diversity of Charlottesville. This is a beautiful and very wide-ranging community. **Be a tourist in your own town!** *And I recommend doing it on bike or foot.*



## BIKE ESCORT PROGRAM IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

*Zachary Shahan*

A local resident and bike enthusiast, Shawn Strubbe, joined up with ACCT in July to start up a bike ESCORT program for Charlottesville. Bike escorts will help you to become comfortable bicycling for local trips. They will come to your house, help to fit your helmet and do a check-up on your bike (if needed), help to select the best bicycling routes to wherever you want to go (work, stores, the pub), and lead you on your first ride or two. Take advantage of this great new program! Contact ACCT to sign up for your personal bike escort today! Or, if you want to volunteer, contact ACCT to become a bike mentor or to help with program development!



## BIKE WEEK 2008

*Zachary Shahan*

The 2nd Annual Charlottesville Area Bike Week, from May 12-17, was a huge success. We had hundreds of bicyclists come by our bicycle commuter tent (or bike pit stop), a repeat activity from last year. We kicked off the week with the Bike Friendly Community awards ceremony/press conference. Bike shops coordinated a bike-in movie (Community Bikes), a bike accessory giveaway (Syklo Bicycles), a family bike riding clinic (C'ville Bike & Tri), and a bike tune-up clinic (Performance Bicycle Shop).

We held the first annual Bike to Work Day employer competition to see which major employer (SNL Financial, LexisNexis, the City of Charlottesville, or Albemarle County) could get the most employees to bike to work. Technically, Albemarle County won, but it seemed that the City of Charlottesville won in reality (there was difficulty getting an accurate count this time around).

We gave away dozens and dozens of helmets, reflective pant leg straps, reflectors, food and drinks, and newsletters!

Syklo Bicycles donated a 1973 Raleigh Sport English 3-speed bicycle (from their great collection of vintage bicycles) and C'ville Bike and Tri donated several light and lock sets for the summer raffle that started during Bike Week. The raffle for these bike goodies will be held at the 2nd Annual Membership Picnic on August 16.

We thank all of you who enjoyed the week, contributed to the events, and biked!

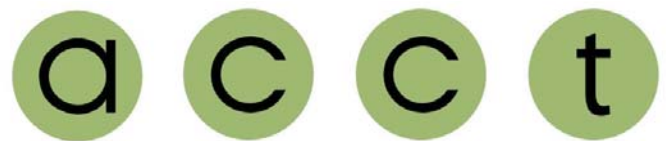
In our world, however, every week is bike week, so we encourage you to get out there and bicycle in "Bike Friendly" Charlottesville!

### THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS (MARCH 13 - JULY 24):

ANDY KINLEY & AVEN HORMEL, AUDREY DANNENBERG, BARB FRANKO, BARRIE CARVETH, BETTY BLACK, CALI GASTON, CHAD FRECKMANN, CHRISTOPHER WOOD, DAVID HIRSCHMAN & GARNETT MELLEN, DEBBIE GORDON & ERIC PATASHNIK, DICK AND NORMA DYAS, EMERALD YOUNG, GREAT EASTERN MANAGEMENT CO. (ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP), HEATHER HIGGINS, JOE CONNOR, JOHN PFALTZ, JOHN POTTER, JUAN WADE, KEVIN LYNCH, LANDERS UNDERWRITING (ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP), LAURA HARTMAN, LAUREY COMEAU & ANDREW COLLINS, LAURIE MILLER, MARGARET EDWARDS, MIKE CULP, NICK RUBIN, NICOLAS FINCK, PAUL & MARY GASTON, NEIL HIGGINS, STEFAN JIRKA, THOMAS GIVENS, WILL ROURK

**WE THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT AND YOUR VISIONARY THINKING!**

**WE RELY ON COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO DO THE WORK WE DO.  
HELP US TO FULFILL OUR MISSION,  
BECOME A MEMBER! DONATE! VOLUNTEER!**



**Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation**

ACCT is a network of citizens and groups dedicated to promoting balanced transportation options, sustainable land use, and transit-oriented development in the greater Charlottesville area. Visit us on the web at [www.transportationchoice.org](http://www.transportationchoice.org).