



**DUTCH
CYCLING
EMBASSY**

Effective Messaging to Frame the Transition to a Cycle-Friendly City

Chris Bruntlett • Dutch Cycling Embassy
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Dutch Cycling: For a Bicycle-Friendly World



The Dutch Cycling Embassy is a vast network of public and private organizations from the Netherlands who wish to share their knowledge and expertise to help cities experience the many advantages of cycling.



Experience the Dutch cycling culture first-hand



Think about best possible solutions and achievable results



Act by applying these solutions to your local context



Learn more about effective policies and best practices

www.dutchcycling.nl





OPINION

Bike city, great city: How Vancouver can inspire a better Perth

By **Chris Bruntlett**

October 31, 2018 – 6.12am

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In 2008, when Vancouver's newly elected mayor proposed taking out a general traffic lane of a busy city bridge and replacing it with a protected bike lane, some pundits predicted it would be the end, not just the beginning, of his political career.

Television helicopters were sent to capture the impending "carmageddon". A prominent business leader declared it would "choke the lifeblood out of the downtown".



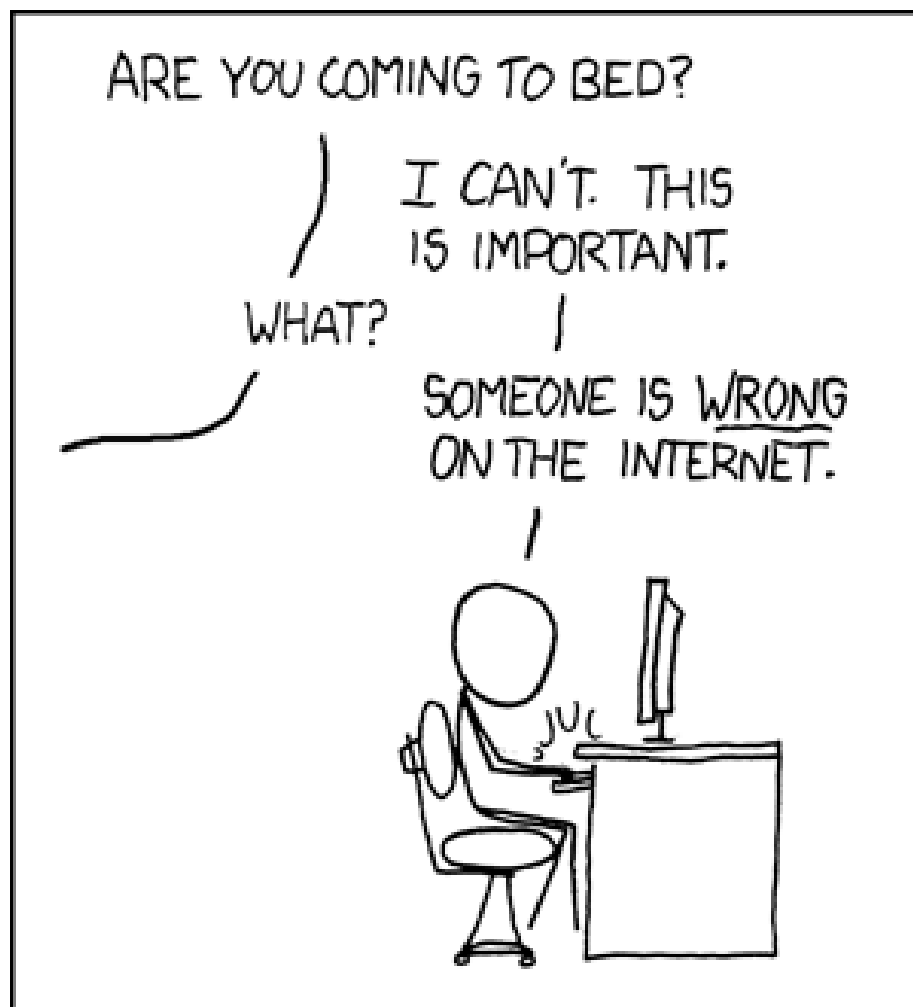
What Are We Trying to Accomplish?



- o>o **Change Hearts and Minds:** Get public, press, politicians, and business community on board; as building safer streets is easier with them on your side
- o>o **Encourage New Users:** Ideal scenario being that someone sees the images you are presenting and says, “I can do that”
- o>o **Create Empathy and Understanding:** Presenting a face and a story to the “person on a bike” will humanize them and hopefully shed the label of “cyclist”
- o>o **Normalize the Act of Utility Cycling:** Attempt to make cycling in regular clothes, hauling a bag of groceries as normal in your city as it is elsewhere



1. Ignore the Bad Faith Arguments



“But what about...”

- o>o ...hills?
- o>o ...bad weather?
- o>o ...business attire?
- o>o ...long distances?
- o>o ...licenses?
- o>o ...young families?
- o>o ...the elderly?
- o>o ...people with disabilities?
- o>o ...bike insurance?
- o>o ...mandatory helmets?
- o>o ...carrying things?

2. Think Bigger Than the Bicycle



How can we improve...

- o>o Livability
- o>o Physical Health
- o>o Mental Well-Being
- o>o Sustainability
- o>o Equity
- o>o Resiliency
- o>o Affordability
- o>o Social Cohesion
- o>o Age-Friendliness
- o>o Noise/Air Pollution
- o>o Traffic Congestion
- o>o Public Space
- o>o Local Economy
- o>o Road Safety
- o>o Social Safety
- o>o Opportunity Access



3. Share the Stories, Not the Statistics



- o>o In a post-truth society, people believe what they feel to be true, not what the facts and figures actually state
- o>o Fear, uncertainty, and doubt are perfectly normal reactions to change
- o>o Bringing facts to a culture war is like bringing a spoon to a knife fight
- o>o We must set aside the graphs, charts, statistics, and connect to people on a human level; explain how they benefit personally from the change
- o>o It is imperative that we tell stories, craft narratives, shape messages that appeal emotionally to fellow citizens, rather than intellectually



4. Be the Diversity You Want to See



- o>o It's important to show a variety of ages, ethnicities, and body types: "If you can't see it, you can't be it."
- o>o The worlds of cycling, transport, and urbanism are still very pale, stale, and male; but getting better
- o>o In the meantime, we should share the stories of those often-ignored people that are cycling, or would like to cycle more frequently
- o>o Reinforces the idea that safer streets level the playing field for all users, regardless of income or influence



5. Engage the “Interested, But Concerned”



- o>o Both our personal and professional circles – online and in real life—are becoming increasingly self-reinforcing
- o>o Surround ourselves with like-minded people; algorithms feed us ideas that strengthen existing world views
- o>o Need to stop preaching to the converted, and start thinking bigger and more creatively to get outside of our existing feedback loops
- o>o Help spread message to broader audience, challenge us to think differently about our problems, take diverse range of perspectives into consideration

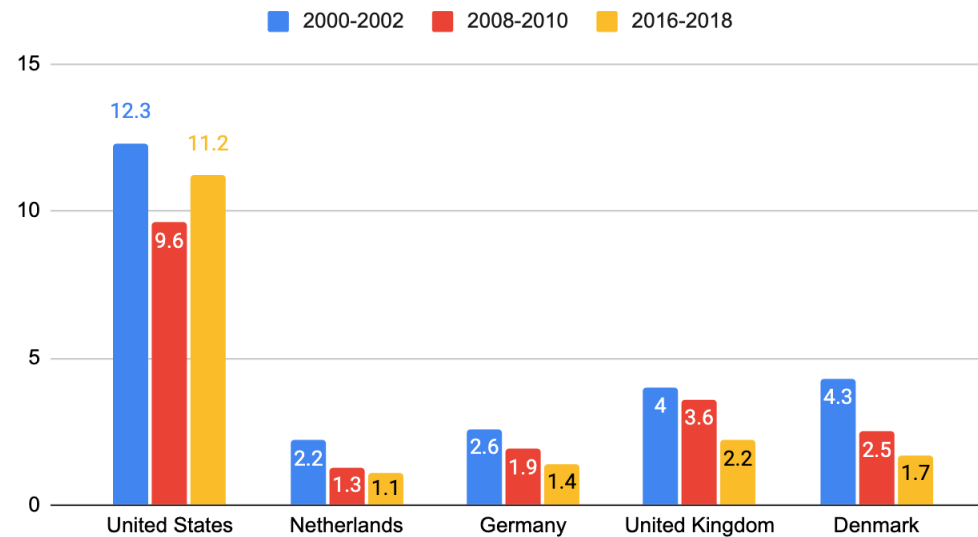


6. Reframe this Topic as a “Win-Win-Win”

Surprise: Bike-friendly Netherlands named best place in the world to be a driver



Pedestrian fatality rate per 100 million kilometres walked



“IF YOU DESIGN A CITY FOR CARS, IT FAILS FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING DRIVERS. IF YOU DESIGN A MULTI-MODAL CITY THAT PRIORITIZES WALKING, BIKING, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT, IT WORKS FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING DRIVERS.” - BRENT TODERIAN



7. Find Your Allies; Form a Broad Coalition



- o>o Sustainable mobility advocates
- o>o Public health organizations
- o>o Chambers of commerce
- o>o Tourism associations
- o>o Environmental groups
- o>o Senior/accessibility groups
- o>o Sporting associations
- o>o Women's organizations
- o>o Public and social safety



8. Celebrate the Success Stories



- o>o The media loves a conflict, and with proposed bike infrastructure, it will unquestionably focus on controversy
- o>o Seldom see “good news” stories of new users and businesses resulting from those “controversial decisions”
- o>o Need a compelling counter-narrative that reinforces triple bottom line: social, environment, and financial benefits of cycling infrastructure
- o>o These are more convincing if presented in an accessible and emotional manner, rather than using facts and figures





Let's Create a Cycling Campaign!



- o>o What is your central message/theme?
- o>o Who are your main partners/stakeholders?
- o>o What would you like to include in your images?
- o>o How will you reach your target audience?






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