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### West Vancouver officer cleared in longboarder run-in

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Longboarders and a West Vancouver police officer in the midst of a confrontation caught on video and posted online. The officer has been cleared of any wrongdoing. Photo supplied, Youtube

A West Vancouver officer accused of running a group of longboarders off the road did nothing wrong and was acting according to his training, the province's civilian police watchdog has concluded.

[The incident happened on April 9, 2014 on Finch Hill Road. \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/updated-longboarders-dodge-west-vancouver-police-suv-1.962639\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/updated-longboarders-dodge-west-vancouver-police-suv-1.962639) One of the longboarders captured the run-in on a helmet-mounted camera and posted the footage to YouTube. The video, which also depicted the ensuing argument between the officer and longboarders, racked up almost 650,000 views online and triggered debate about who was in the wrong.

The West Vancouver Police Departments' disciplinary authority and the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner have now effectively settled that debate.

"The OPCC confirmed the findings that no disciplinary default under the Police Act was substantiated and that the officer's actions were confirmed to have not been materially different than what any officer with similar training would have done in the circumstance," said Const. Jeff Palmer, West Vancouver police spokesman.

Longboarding is against West Vancouver bylaws. The longboarders were each served a \$45 fine.

Though it may have looked bad to many people who watched the video and followed the reaction online, West Vancouver police were operating with public safety in mind, Palmer said.

"There were very hyperbolic descriptions of the circumstances associated with it on social media. All of the facts and technical analysis of the video were all placed into the report before the OPCC," Palmer said. "Our officers are always working to respond in a way that is safe for themselves and safe for all parties."

Danny Carlson, the longboarder who recorded the confrontation, said he has no regrets about what happened that day or the attention it garnered.

"I think it sent a clear message to police that running us off the road is unacceptable, illegal or not," he said. "I talked to the officer a week or two following the incident and it was clear to me that he . . . felt bad about it. I'd tell him there are no hard feelings."

There are other lessons that can be gleaned from the incident, Carlson added.

"To fellow longboarders, this should serve as a reminder that not all drivers know how to react to longboarders. . .," he said. "I'd advocate that drivers and longboarders can get along just as well as drivers and cyclists have been doing for years."