

June 2010 BttF City Committee Report

Election 2010 Preparations

The City Committee will be meeting June 15th noon-1:00pm in the MB Eco-Centre board room to discuss the 2010 civic election strategy meeting. This will be the first of several meetings, as I anticipate us putting a considerable amount of effort into the election process. Minutes are attached.

Sherbrook Bike Lane

At the June 8th city centre community committee meeting, a motion to remove the section of Sherbrook between Ellice and Cumberland from the City's AT network was discussed. As Brad Sacher, the head of the city's public works department made clear, a decision to remove this section of Sherbrook from the AT network would have stopped the proposed bike lane on Sherbrook (from the Maryland Bridges to Notre Dame). We were able to rally our membership to create a public campaign to defeat this motion, and the result was that the city centre committee did not approve this motion. Highlights of which were:

- Approximately 100 petition signatures (on-line and hardcopy)
- Speakers in favour at June 8th City Centre Committee Meeting
 - Mark Cohoe
 - Anders Swanson
 - Katherine Thompson
 - Tim Heibert
- The Motion failed, and we were asked to find compromises

Following this city center committee decision, a stakeholders meeting was held June 18th. The meeting resulted in the following compromises:

- Loading Zone to be built into boulevard (may extend a bit into bike lane, but still leaving enough room for safe passage)
- The city/consultant will look into moving the Ellice Street bus stop either east or west to provide parking in front of Ellice Street Café on Ellice.
- The bike lane will only be seasonal (April 1st to November 1st)
- Residential permits and 2hr parking limitations will be considered to help maintain parking turnover
- The city will conduct a parking study in the area
- The bike lane will be reviewed in the fall of 2011

Thanks to everyone who came out to speak or support the speakers, signed on to the petition, helped create and distribute posters, hand bills or petitions, or provided media interviews. We need to continue to monitor this situation and must remain ready to act. The city centre committee decision will be forwarded to the standing committee on public works meeting, now scheduled for July 13th.

Multi-use Pathway and Bikeway Design Guidelines Workshop

On May 19th, I attended a city of Winnipeg workshop aimed at creating a set of guidelines around the design of multi-use pathways and bikeways. This meeting was just a beginning, and was attended by members of the AT Advisory Committee, Public Works, the provincial department of transportation, and several engineering/consulting firms. The goal of the meeting was to brainstorm a table of contents for a guidebook. From there, they will come up with a set up design guidelines for Winnipeg.

Portland Trip

I travelled to Portland June 2nd to June 7th to attend a Bikeway Design course, the Oregon Bike Summit, and to get a bit of a holiday.

Keys to Portland Success

Portland's success at turning itself into a bicycle friendly city is the result of multiple policies, public works and programs that compliment each other. On their own, each policy/public work/program would have a benefit, but this is truly a case of the whole being more than the sum of its parts.

Land Zoning

People live and work downtown in Portland. Off street parking is behind buildings, or in structures. Parking structures have street level retail and office space.

Paid Motor Vehicle Parking

Education

The Bicycle Transportation Alliance has 10 full time staff dedicated to adult bicycle training course. Five are in the Portland office, and five others are spread throughout the state. They also have a full time person dedicated to teaching children. One really interesting program let people take a bike education course in lieu of payment for a traffic ticket. The courses were available to cyclists as well as motorists.

Free Downtown Transit

Portland has a large free fare zone for it light rail and streetcar network that takes in the downtown, stadium, cultural district, and several inner city shopping districts.

Encouragement

Fun programs aimed at getting people on their bikes were evident throughout the city.

Engineering

Portland has shown a lot of innovation on bikeway design, and has put a lot of emphasis into creating better cycling options on its bridges.

Tightly Meshed Network

The goal of the Portland Bike Network is to have a mesh width of 200m, or about 6 Portland blocks. With that distance between bike routes, you are never more than 3 blocks away from a bike route.

Speed Downtown (not controlled by traffic control devices)

Bike Racks Everywhere

Walkable Neighbourhoods

Transit Integration

All buses, street cars and light rail have racks for bicycles.

High Cycling Rate

Portland's high rate of cycling is in itself a factor in the bikeability of the city. People new to cycling learn proper cycling method/positioning/etiquette by following the example of the many cyclists already on the street.

Courtesy Stops – Cars regularly stop to let pedestrians cross or to let cyclists cross.

People are more likely to see cycling as normal

Immediate Requests

I have a number of immediate requests for changes/discussion in the way the city designs/manages its cycling facilities that I will be forwarding to the city's AT Coordinator.

Bike Lanes

Line Widths

Portland uses a 200mm (8") outside line marking on their bike lanes, which is double the width of line recommended by the Transportation Association of Canada, and the width used in Winnipeg. If traffic is on both sides of the bike lane (for instance next to a right turn lane or a bus lane, both lines are painted at 200mm. When next to parking, the inside line is 100mm (4") wide.

The extra width makes the bike lane stand out, and is clearly visible from cross streets. It also feels a lot safer. I will request that Winnipeg follow this standard.

Paint

Portland uses thermoplastic paint on all lane markings. On the bike lanes, there is a mineral inserted to add slip resistance, leaving the painted lines less slippery than the surrounding surface. This is more expensive, and in Winnipeg this has been resisted, partly out of fear that the thermoplastic paint would not survive winter ploughing. I will request that we take a second look into this, and at least paint one of our bike lanes in thermoplastic paint as a trial.

Painting Bike Lanes right up to Intersection

All bike lanes are painted with a solid line up to the intersection. Drivers are required to look before turning right to ensure no cyclists are in their way, and Oregon State law prohibits driving in the bike lane except in an intersection. Where turning volumes are high, a right turn lane is added to the right of the bike lane, and a transition zone (dashed line, sometimes with a solid green paint in between the bike lane lines) is added where cars cross over. That puts the conflict zone before the intersection where motorists only have to deal with cyclists (no pedestrians). This is contrary to the guidelines developed by the

Transportation Association of Canada, which recommend a dashed line prior to the intersection where motor vehicles would cross into the bike lane prior to the intersection. I won't recommend this change, but will bring it forward as I think it merits further discussion. Velo Quebec follows a similar standard, so there is precedent in Canada.

Bike Boulevards

Wayfinding Pavement Markings

On Bike Boulevards (they are starting to call them neighbourhood greenways), there is a solid white circle with a bike symbol left blank painted onto the pavement to indicate to cyclists that they are on a bike route. At intersections, there is an arrow indicating the direction of the bike route, which is particularly useful where the route turns left or right (think Nassau/Roslyn or Fleet/Warsaw). On bikeways where the roadway is not ploughed to street level, it would make sense to use a thermoplastic paint to ensure longevity. I think we would like to make our symbols larger than they are in Portland, as they were somewhat easy to miss.

Crossings

By law, they cannot use half signals (federal law or MUTCD), so they use Hawk Signals. The benefit of the Hawk Signal is that it only lights up when a cyclist needs to cross, so motorists don't get in the habit of ignoring it, which may be the case with a half signal. They also activate as soon as you press the cross button, which is pretty cool. The draw back on the Hawk Signal is that it does not allow cyclists to platoon at crossings as they do with a half signal, which could be problematic where cyclist numbers are substantial. If half signals are to be used, a warrant system should be worked out based on cyclist volume that can help decide between pedestrian signals, Hawk signals and half signals.

Reflectors on Traffic Calming Devices

Portland made extensive use of reflectors on their traffic calming devices (e.g. traffic circles, refuge medians, etc). While I don't think we can replicate their use of reflectors in pavement markings, I do believe we can make good use of embedded reflectors in say the walls of traffic circles, etc.

City of Winnipeg Bicycle Map

Our Bicycle Map is really well done, and I think we should ask the city to submit it into any design contests that might be out there.