

the cyclists' vehicle

newsletter of the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters Society April 92

The City of Edmonton's Comprehensive Bike Plan

Finally, after three years of consultation by the Transportation Dept., the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (CBP) has been released. We have worked closely with Peter Heppleston and are very pleased with the results. There are over seventy recommendations and here are a few of the highlights.

In all new roadway construction gutter widths will be reduced from 500 mm to 250 mm and lanes will be striped so that the centre lane will be narrower. This simple design spec. change will result in curb lanes 4.2 m. wide! All roads will be restriped to have wider curb lines during regular maintenance at no extra cost to the tax payers.

Class 1 bike facilities (completely separate bike paths) will be constructed on arterial roadways in residential neighbourhoods with special care taken in the design of intersections and minimising the number of driveways. These pathways will also be included in all new areas naturally.

(continued on next page)

The EBC office is located at:
10701 - 85 Ave.,

Edmonton AB T6E 2K9

Bike Works hours are:

Wednesday 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Saturday noon to 4:00 pm.

Office hours are irregular until summer

Please phone to see if the office is open.

(403) 433-BIKE

City of Edmonton

NOTICES AND INFORMATION

Notice of Public Hearing

The Utilities and Public Works Committee of Edmonton City Council will hold a public hearing on the proposed Bicycle Transportation Plan on Tuesday April 21 at 2:00 PM in Committee Room 'A', 5th Floor, Centennial Building, 10015-103 Avenue, Edmonton.

All parties wishing to make written representations are requested to file their submission to;

The Utilities and Public Works Committee Secretary
Office of the City Clerk
6th floor, Centennial Building
10015-103 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J OH1

All written submissions must be received by 4:30 PM April 13. Parties wishing to make verbal presentations can make their intentions known up to the time of the hearing.

Copies of the plan can be obtained at the 10th floor of Century Place, 9803-102A Avenue. Phone 428-2986. For further information call Peter Heppleston at 428-5765.

 **Edmonton** TRANSPORTATION

(continued from page 1)

The plan recommends that a Bicycling Advisory Board be set up to implement the recommendations of the CBP, to advise and monitor Council's performance on cycling issues, promote and provide information on cycling to the general public, and review plans and policy of the Planning, Transportation, and Parks and Rec. Depts. so that cyclist's needs are not forgotten.

There are many other great recommendations covering everything from drainage grates to changes to the Highway Traffic Act. Please come to EBC and read the complete CBP.

We need people to make presentations to City Council in support of the CBP otherwise this document will be viewed as "unimportant" and get filed away like so many other such reports. Public Hearings will be held on Tuesday, April 21 at 2:00 p.m. in Committee Room "A", 5th Floor, Centennial Building 10015 - 103 Avenue. IT IS NOW UP TO YOU!

John Collier

Earth's General Store



10832-82 Ave (upper)
439-8725

Earth friendly products.

Rails to Trails Update

A great deal has happened with the Rails to Trails campaign to put a paved trail along the abandoned CP Rail right-of-way which runs from Whyte Avenue and Calgary Trail, over the top deck of the High Level bridge, to 110 Street and 104 Avenue just north and west of downtown. EBC has a committee actively investigating and promoting this fantastic bike route. It would be free of roadway intersections throughout most of its 4.5 km. length. I'll spare you the marketing pitch in this article; suffice it to say that I'm pretty enthusiastic about the concept. There is a map showing the route and development costs for the proposal at EBC office (also in window). Drop by and have a look sometime.

We thought we were going to lose the connection north of Jasper Avenue You may have read recently in the paper that the property

northwest of Jasper Avenue and 109 Street is going to be developed into, of all things, a strip mall. The developers at first wanted to tear the railway bridge over Jasper Avenue for aesthetic reasons, but the City Planning Dept. insisted that a bridge, either the existing one or a new one, was required for a bike path. The City planning Dept. also insisted that a corridor be maintained along the length of the property from Jasper Avenue to 104 Avenue In other words the City Planning Dept. is in favour of the Rails to Trails proposal in principal.

City planners also had other concerns about the proposed development. Because the strip mall encourages more car use downtown with a 421 space parking lot and because the strip mall does not compliment the rest of the development in that area, the planners felt the project does not meet the criteria of the master plan for that area. Also, the strip mall only covers about one sixth of the CPR land northwest of Jasper Avenue and 109 Street, and the developer had no specifics on how the rest of the land was to be developed; this uncertainty disturbed the City planners.

I went and talked with Ian Gillespie of Schroeder Properties, the developer, a few times in March. Their answers to the criticisms from the City planners were to include a bike path along the far west edge of the property; it would be separated from the service entrances of the mall by a rear parking lot. They modified their artist's sketches to show a bridge but not the present one. No land is specifically set aside to accommodate the bridge and it was made clear that the city would have to pay for its construction.

We have several problems with this:

- 1) Ambiguity about the bridge's design and cost will make it difficult, both physically and politically, for the bridge actually to be constructed.
- 2) It seems very wasteful to tear down an existing structure that might serve the purpose.
- 3) The bike path along the western edge of the property must zig zag around and cross an access to a parking lot. This is inconvenient and dangerous.
- 4) As cyclists are shoppers too, why is the path routed behind the mall away from the entrances? Despite these criticisms, the committee felt that there was nothing incompatible in having a bike path through a mall. We have not opposed the development on the grounds that the mall encourages even more excessive car use in an already overcrowded downtown. We would be interested in your feelings on this.

On April 6 the committee made a presentation at City Council's public hearings into the development. We had several letters from businesses in the area supporting the Rails to Trails proposal and emphasising the importance of the bridge over Jasper Avenue. Also presenting were the developers (IMC), John Collier (EBC president), and Angela Bischoff (EcoCity). City Council gave first reading to the bylaw, the land has to be rezoned, but withheld second reading and extended the public hearing until the May 26 council meeting. The council insisted that a master plan for all the CPR lands be brought forward first; that the developer examine bringing the stores closer to the roadways to encourage pedestrian traffic; and that the construction details and costs of a multiuse trail and bridge between Jasper Avenue and 104 Avenue.

We have survived this skirmish, but it will take some effort before the idea of the bike route is a *fait accompli*. If you want to help here are some things you can do:

- 1) Write to your Alderman, the Mayor, and the Old Strathcona Society expressing your support for the Rails to Trails proposal. Please praise the excellent job the City planning Dept. has done.
- 2) Walk the route sometime (Wear boots as it is quite muddy). Better yet, join us on May 2 at 2:00 p.m., weather permitting at the Old Strathcona bus barns at 83 Avenue, as we walk the route, answer questions and discuss different ideas to make this happen. One gains a completely different perspective of the city by walking this peaceful route.
- 3) If you are a structural engineer or engineering student, help us with the Jasper Avenue bridge. Can it be saved? I would like to get a few knowledgeable people together one weekend to have a look at it.
- 4) Contact and encourage the Downtown Development Corporation which is very interested in promoting the Rails to Trails proposal (c/o Armin Preiksaitis, 1503 - TD Tower, Edmonton Centre, Edmonton T5J 2Z1, ph. 424 - 9001)
- 5) Contact us! The EBC Rails to Trails Committee and help us out with your enthusiasm and ideas.

Finally, I would like to thank the store owners who, on short notice, wrote letters for our presentation. Wilf Brooks of United Cycle, Bob Moon of Edmonton Cycle, Barry Butchkowski of Tellus Corp., and Michael Kalmanovitch of Earth's General Store. It was your letters that prompted Council to vote unanimously to have the Rails to Trails proposal examined closely before second reading. I would also like to thank my other

committee members, Brian Johnston and Linda MacDonald.

Doug Barrett



A Farce In One Act

Brian: What can we agree on so that we don't look like fools?

Frank: Let's announce a plan to investigate ways to reduce health care costs.

All: Good answer, good answer.

Voice from off stage: This is really good, maybe they'll start talking about encouraging fitness.

Bob: But what about jobs?

All: Yeah, what about jobs?

Brian (reluctantly): O.K. let's think about building more roads.

Voice from off stage: So we can all spend more time in our cars, being inactive and driving into others, so that we can have lower health care costs.

Jason Moskovitz: The electorate is getting cranky.

All on stage shake hands and walk off into the flash bulbs.

RED ALERT
The annual police crackdown starts
ONE MONTH EARLY.
The police will be handing out tickets.
NO WARNINGS

LETS Have a Community Based Economy!

The LETS Edmonton Society formed in the spring of 1991. "LETS" stands for "Local Exchange Trading System". It gives people and businesses the opportunity to acquire or sell goods and services without traditional cash. It also provides a communication network through which members of the community can meet their other needs for education, recreation and social interaction. LETS responds to a well known problem: when cash is tight in a community, needs go unmet and services go unused. LETS offers a local currency, the "green dollar" which helps people exchange goods and services even when there is a shortage of federal dollars.

LETS is easy to use. A new member receives an account number to which all of his/her trading is credited and debited (or "Acknowledged" and "Committed"). Every two months, a LETS Edmonton Newsletter and updated membership directory is mailed or made available to members at specified locations (including EBC). A member identifies a good or service which interests him/her. Members may trade goods or services in any proportion of green and federal dollars that they agree on. When a transaction is made, the buyer leaves a message on the LETSline (479-0622) to credit the green dollar amount to the seller's account. Transactions are then recorded in the LETS computerised accounting system.

Of course, I believe that LETS presents a great deal to the community. The potential for networking among like-minded and even somewhat unlikely minded people is invaluable in itself. Also, people who wish to curtail their activities in the regular (read "rat-race") economy are given the possibility to do so. Other people, who have less choice to be a "rat", may help sustain body and soul with LETS as well.

To join the LETS Edmonton Local Exchange Trading Society, fill out an application form (available at EBC) and put it in the supplied envelope along with your membership dues of \$10.00 for an individual and \$25.00 for a business (cheque or money order please). Your new LETS account will also be debited a minimal green dollar fee to help offset labour costs of the society.

Rod Olstad

Quote of the Day!

" In one way, cyclists contribute a lot to pollution. Every time a car drives pass you, they have to kick it into the passing gear, just to make a statement."

John Collier

L.E.T.S. The Local Exchange Trading System

We have members trading
computer skills, massage therapy,
landscaping, legal services,
environmental consulting, and more...

For more information about the
alternative economy call 479-9622

What About the Wheel

Toronto Star, June 9, 1900.

It is not unusual to meet a man who thinks that the day of the bicycle is nearly done, and that in course of time it will be as much a thing of the past as the roller skate and the crinoline. In support of this opinion he will remind you of the great bicycle runs that used to occur; how, along all the main roads leading out of Toronto on Saturdays and Sundays, veritable swarms of wheelmen might be seen pedalling with much enthusiasm to towns twenty or thirty miles away for the sole pleasure of working their way back again. He will tell you that there is very little of this now, that the club run is not only rare, but that clubs are rare and dwindled away to the vanishing point, and that the big bicycle races no longer attract the public.

Altogether he makes out what he considers to be a pretty strong case in favour of his contention that the day of the bicycle is nearly over. But if he were a wheelman himself, which he is not, he would understand that the points he mentions, while true enough, and significant to an outsider, mean nothing more than the novelty of the wheel has worn off. If a man now rides from Toronto to Whitby it is because he wants to go to Whitby, not because he wants to shoot along the road to the supposed astonishment of all beholders.

The wheel is not now a fad, but as much a part of the daily life of people in Toronto as is the electric car. The people of this city are no more likely to abandon the bicycle than they are to tire of electric cars (street cars, not automobiles F.J.) and revert to horse-cars.

Damage Control.

Just north of 88th Ave. 92nd St. cuts diagonally for one block and becomes 91st St. (Right by the Bulgogi House) The flow of traffic southbound on 92nd St. follows this diagonal jog southeast, but there is the option to continue due south for about 25m (this little bit of roadway is not shown on some city maps) to a T intersection with 88th Ave. Whenever I have travelled southbound on 92nd, in my car or on my bicycle, I do not signal when following the diagonal jog to the left, and I do signal a right turn when going straight, down the small roadway. I have observed that most other drivers do this as well. It seems right.

Recently I was travelling by bicycle southbound on 92nd and had started the diagonal jog when a pickup truck passed me and cut me off on its way "straight" down the small roadway. I swerved to my right to avoid a broadside collision and wound up on an icy patch which took me a while to negotiate.

Now, I am a long-time bicyclist, and I've had my share of near misses. It gets less alarming each time. The traffic was light, and no harm was done. Still, there was the potential for a serious accident. I decided to follow the truck and make the driver aware of what had nearly happened. The driver and passenger were outside the truck when I met them a few blocks later. I was determined to be polite, courteous, and gentle, but that day I was a better rider than a talker. When I started telling the driver what had happened and my concerns, she interrupted and said that because I was on a bicycle it was I who should have signalled. When I suggested that the intersection isn't usually handled in the way she described, and that she would not have said such a thing if I had been in a car, she said,

"I can't handle this!" She turned her back to me, got in the truck with her companion and drove off.

There are three morals to the story. Here they are in order of importance.

1. If you are a cyclist travelling southbound on 92nd past this little turnoff, (or along any similar road), please consider that driver's advice as well as her attitude. If I had done as she suggested, and signalled a left turn at that intersection in the conventional manner, I would have probably got my left arm knocked off. A safer "signal", and one I will use in the future, is to signal left about half a block before the bend and, at a break in the traffic, move well out into the middle of the lane. That way, the cars and trucks behind a cyclist are forced to stay

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11am-9pm : Sun

behind till the cyclist passes that potentially hazardous intersection. Once beyond the hazard, the cyclist can pull back in and let them by.

2. Shortly after my adventure I rechecked the area and found a sign indicating the main flow of traffic should indeed follow the jog, as I had always assumed. I had never noticed the sign before. It is not concealed; it is simply not obvious to someone not looking for it. Perhaps the City Transportation Department could devise a way to make this sign more obvious for people like myself and the driver I talked to. A sign indicating a need for caution might be appropriate there as well. But the fact is most of us use instinct when driving or riding, and don't really pay attention. Both she and I were guessing about how the intersection is supposed to work.

3. In spite of the complete lack of understanding between this particular driver and myself, I still advocate talking with "them" when "they" do dangerous and stupid things on the road. Drivers are often careless, but they do not want to hurt cyclists. By talking with drivers about what they did immediately after the fact, you achieve two things. You make them aware, if they weren't already, that they did something dangerous, and you force them to acknowledge that the cyclist is a real person who could really be killed in a real accident. If a driver is impolite, it may be to cover embarrassment at having done something foolish and having been caught at it. In other words, even the apparently useless exchange I had with my driver may have done some good. She may be more careful at that intersection next time.

Doug Barrett

Father John's Surprise, or In Which Firm Politeness Wins Through

It was the start of a glorious summer evening and I was just off work, intending to help in the Wednesday evening Bike Works. As I was crossing a particularly rough set of railway tracks on Calgary Trail north a car sped by me at high speed and close proximity. So close that I felt somewhat embarrassed at being so intimate without a formal introduction. Fortunately my mother taught me that no means no and I voiced my protest in a rather loud, and admittedly unfriendly, "Hey!" Needless to say I was a wee bit put out. Interestingly I ended up right behind the chap in question at the next set of lights. Superior breeding won out and I resisted all temptations to wax eloquent on his apparently suspect upbringing. Unfortunately, I vastly overestimated his intelligence. Imagine my amazement as all of a sudden the car's reverse lights came on. Finding it impossible to believe that a human being of any upbringing could be contemplating any such silliness; and, having no where else to go, I stayed put. Well, when the light turned green, the car lunged backwards flattening my tire with its license plate, bloodying my shin, and then squealed away furiously.

Being no fool and realising an excellent opportunity for a pun, I made a note of the license plate number. I promptly reported the incident to the local constabulary, very sympathetic and outraged I must say, and replaced the tire and tube. After a large number of phone calls, I ascertained the identity of his insurance company and presented them with a bill for twenty-six dollars and some change. Which, to their credit, they promptly paid.

Finally my day in court arrived and I could scarcely conceal my delight when I observed that he had hired a lawyer. Verbal repartee, a passion of mine, was assured. I rather pitied the lawyer who would unsuspectingly set up one of my best puns. The usual la-di-da and falderal ensued and as I was being cross-examined, the lawyer asked the fatal question.

"Father John could you have made a mistake when you wrote down the license plate number?"

"No."

"Come now, ? It is easy to do. Wouldn't you admit that it is at least possible you wrote the wrong number down? "

"Excuse me, do you mean likely or within the realm of possibility?"

" I mean possibly!"

"It is in the realm of possibility but not likely as, after all, *his license number made quite an impression on me!*"

Needless to say he was convicted.

Yours FJ.

EDMONTON CYCLE SHOP
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10041 - 82 Ave.

Demand Traffic Lights

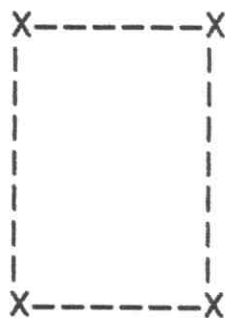
No doubt that many bicyclists wonder about demand traffic lights and whether these sensors detect (or fail to detect) bicycles. In Edmonton there are 525 traffic signals (not including pedestrian signals), 400 of which linked to the computerised traffic system (and therefore operate automatically) while the remaining 125 are not linked to city wide system but are either in a locally linked system or are one of the 80 vehicle operated traffic lights. These 125 non-linked systems (including the vehicle operated lights) are being linked (and the detectors removed) with City's computerised system at the rate of about 10 a year.

A common belief is that these demand traffic lights are operated by detecting the weight of a vehicle, this is incorrect, rather they detect metal, particularly moving metal (steel or aluminium), much like a mine detector pointing upward. If these detectors are working properly they should detect a bicycle.

How do you know that there is such a detector at an intersection? In Edmonton such intersections are marked with signs indicating where one should advance to in order for the vehicle's presence to be pick- up by the detector. If you examine the roadway carefully (being stopped

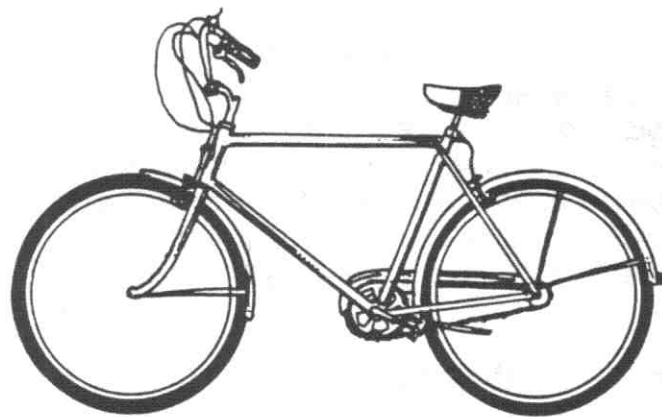
of course) you will see a line cut in the pavement (or a asphalt patch over the line) forming a rectangle. A wire loop has been laid in this cut and the metal of a vehicle and a current is passing through it, a metal vehicle disturbs this current and this disturbance is picked up by the detector unit.

If for some reason one of these lights doesn't seem to react there are a number of tricks you can try. First, make sure your bike is at one of the corners of the square as the loop is most sensitive here (see diagram). Second, with your feet on the ground, lean your bike over like your laying it down, this exposes more of the metal on your bike to the detector. Finally, you should call the City's Transportation department about the problem (428 4128). These signals are supposed to react to bicycles and the sensitivity of the detectors can be adjusted.



Most sensitive locations, place middle of bicycle frame directly over one of these points.

Robert Lewis



Advocacy!

Advocacy issues were not explored with great vigour in the past year, not for lack of projects but rather for lack of people willing to work on these issues. The lack of volunteer support may be due to active disinterest in the issues or a failure on the part of the advocacy committee to present coherent projects for potential advocates to work on. My suspicion is that the latter is at least partially responsible. In an attempt to partially rectify this failing I would like to present a number of possible advocacy campaigns that may be the subject of some coherent projects.

An investigation into automobile subsidies - The world watch institute has estimated that every automobile in the U.S. is supported to the tune of \$3000 of public money each year. Figures are expected to be similar in Canada; however, people are always interested in how such a number is obtained. It could be a very interesting research project by either an individual or a group of individuals to try to arrive at some figure (or figures) about the costs (and advantages) of an automobile based society.

Rails to Trails - Railways are abandoning tracks throughout the city, most noticeably the upper deck of the High Level bridge. We need people to convince their local politicians that converting the right of ways into multi-use trails makes for a better city.

Park Developments - Overcrowding and the general success of recreational facilities has resulted in a commitment by the city to expand the river valley trail system. An expansion may result in improvements that may or may not be practical for commuting cyclists. Some interaction with the Parks and Recreation Department may lead a system which more suited for the commuters.

Bicycle Advisory Board - Edmonton does not, at present, have a Bicycle Advisory Board, (continued on next page)

Definitions from the Bike Works' Crew courtesy *Bicycling Magazine*

Aerobic: A pen, lighter, or razor designed to cut the wind.

Ball bearings: the angle of men's saddles.

Brake pads: Where brakes live.

Braze-on: Bold, shameless, impudent.

Bottom bracket: Lowest income tax bracket.

Dropouts: Woodstock cyclists.

Gear ratio: The relationship of how much you spend on your cycling wardrobe to what you spend on the rest of your clothing. Often expressed in inches of closet space.

Handlebar bags: Parts of the anatomy that sag but are removable by plastic surgery.

Headset: Attitude.

Electrolyte: The same great taste but with half the calories of regular Electro.

Presta: Spaghetti sauce.

(continued from page 7)
which means that there is no official voice for cyclists at the municipal level (nor any other for that matter). EBC is attempting to get such a status for an existing ad-hoc committee of the Transportation Department. We are looking for people to lobby their aldermen for such a change.

Doug Barrett

Winter Cycling Manual

If you rode all this winter, we want to hear from you. EBC is going to try to put together a fairly comprehensive guide to winter cycling in Edmonton, for distribution next fall. Share your discoveries and techniques with next year's winter cyclists. You can write about winter traffic behaviour, road conditions, tire studding technique, heights, gears, chains, clothing, your feelings about winter cycling.

Contributions can be scribbled points from notes, typed documents c/w diagrams, and written in prose or poetry.

PS - If there are any potential authors looking for work, who would like to help organise the notes that

come in on winter cycling, please let us know and we will get together on this project.

Trailnet !

This is a new organisation dedicated to the development and enhancement of a network of linked recreational corridors (greenways) through out Alberta. For further information ask Doug Barrett at EBC or write: Trailnet, 1111 - Memorial Dr., N.W., Calgary, AB. T2N 3E4

For Sale

NORCO touring bike, Magnum GT 18"
- Bar comp shifters, Pump, 18 speed quick release,
Suntour parts
\$350 obo, Donna 439 4872 (after 6 p.m.)

Thanks to FJ & the Late Night Silly Billy Crew for the Newsletter

Edmonton Bicycle Commuters Membership Form

Last name: _____ First name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____ Age: _____

May we pass on your name to other groups? yes no

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

- new renewal
- address has changed
- \$10 student/low income
- \$15 individual
- \$20 dual (1 newsletter)
- \$50 supporting member

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE:

(For office use)

- Membership Card(s)
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- Welcome letter
- First newsletter
- issue _____
- Entered M'list

Make cheque payable to: Edmonton Bicycle Commuters, Box 1819, Edm. AB., T5J 2P2 Thanks.