

CITIZENS FOR SAFE CYCLING

City cycling inches toward greater recognition

by Hans Moor, CfSC President

In early July, the City of Ottawa's Transportation Committee met to discuss the progress of the Laurier Segregated Bike Lane as well as the revamping of Main Street.

The Laurier bike lane's two-year pilot was officially completed on July 10. Based on the overwhelming numbers of cyclists using its segregated lanes, City staff recommended that the lanes stay in place. All members of the Committee (except Councillor Hubley, who abstained.) voted for keeping the lanes. Although there were many concerns when Laurier's bike lanes were implemented, City staff worked hard to eliminate the fears. In the end, everyone was on board after a number of changes were implemented over the last two years.

The Laurier bike lane counters tallied close to three quarters of a million bike rides at O'Connor. The total number is higher, as not

all users cycle on that particular part. Eventually, the bike lanes are to be elevated to become cycle tracks, but staff recommended waiting until 2018, when Laurier will dug up anyway, for sewer and watermain replacement.

Main Street's sewers in Old Ottawa East are apparently about 100 years old. They need to be replaced and this is a good opportunity to renovate the road surface. Residents and retailers have worked together to bring a proposal to the table that supports all modes of transportation, a so-called 'complete street'. It includes bicycle and walking infrastructure for the local community.

The Main Street proposal also passed at Transportation Committee, although four councillors were against converting it back from four to two lanes for a variety of reasons: fear about cyclists mixing with pedestrians, fear for drivers who might have to sit in the car a few minutes longer at rush hour, and fear there will be too much road construction happening at the same time.

Both proposals later passed at City Council, too. Our Council showed leadership by implementing a number of traffic concepts that are fairly new for Canada. We are happy to see that Council recognizes the need for active transportation. This is important to make the change to a more sustainable city. We congratulate the city on this vision! ♦

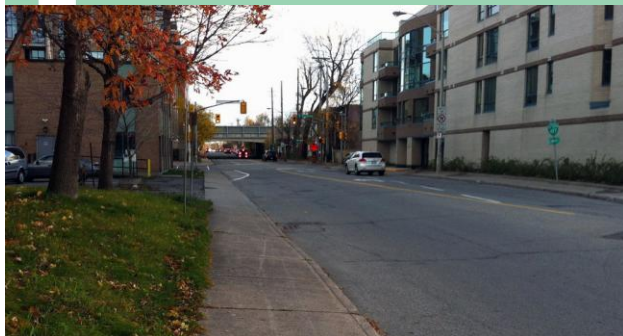


Photo: Lana Stewart

A section of Main Street between Highway 417 and Echo Drive

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Chain Mail is published by Citizens for Safe Cycling (“CfSC”), the non-profit association that promotes cycling as a viable means of transportation in Ottawa by advocating:

- Acceptance of the responsible cyclist as a legitimate road user.
- Education of all cyclists to improved riding and traffic skills as part of their normal driving skills.
- Improved engineering to facilitate cyclist traffic, such as proper traffic control systems, adequate lane width, and sufficient parking.
- Legislation that is effective and enforced.
- Representation of cycling issues to all levels of government.

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CfSC V-P Alex deVries is one of our frequent ‘spokespersons’ to the local media. Here, CBC’s Simon Gardner interviews him at the O-Train Pathway opening. Photo: Clarke/CfSC

City Moves Quickly on Bronson

In June, the City of Ottawa responded swiftly to difficult conditions on Bronson Avenue for cyclists. The conditions likely contributed to a cycling fatality last October. Only eight months after a collision that took the life of Carleton University student Krista Johnson, bike lane changes were implemented where the major north-south road crosses the Rideau Canal.

The bridge is a busy spot, and the only location for cyclists to cross the Canal between Bank Street and the Hartwell Locks. The previous bike lanes in both directions were quite vulnerable. They were wedged between a through lane and a very long right-turn lane, with a limited sight distance due to the crown of the bridge. Also, they did not extend northward far enough to reach Holmwood Avenue. Since Bronson becomes congested and yet too narrow for bike lanes north of the Canal, Holmwood is the favoured spot for cyclists to leave the corridor and move onto the calmer streets of the Glebe and the Percy Street bike route.



Photo: Clarke/CfSC

Ghost bike dedicated to Krista Johnson stands silent witness to the improved bike lanes on Bronson Avenue.

Capital Ward Councillor David Chernushenko has been pushing hard on a major improvement plan. The first phase of the plan, now completed, reduces the conflict zone between bike lane and free-flowing turn lanes for vehicles exiting to or entering from Colonel By Drive. Reflective bollards and paint-striped pavement clearly separate the bike lane from motorists. Signs are posted to indicate that the sidewalk is shared between bikes and pedestrians.

The second phase will actually realign the access ‘ramps’ between Bronson and Colonel By, so that they meet Bronson on a perpendicular angle. The removal of the free-flowing right turns will slow the traffic that might conflict with the bike lane. ♦

Our Tulips on Two Wheels event celebrates May in the Capital



Photo: Simone Rivers/CfSC

We were blessed again with super weather for our second annual Tulips on Two Wheels event, held along the Rideau Canal West Pathway on May 4.

Mechanics worked like mad on bikes, while our Vice president, Alex deVries, conducted several of his cycle tours of the photogenic tulip sites near Dow's Lake. Throughout the event, our other volunteers answered questions from passersby and provided maps and other cycling information.

Our tulip tours covered not only highlights of the horticultural kind, but also of the 'cycle-cultural' kind! Alex has in-depth knowledge of the bicycle infrastructure of the district and shared it with those joining the free tours. Our event was coincident with the [Jane's Walk Ottawa](#) weekend, and Alex did a more in-depth tour for them on the Sunday.

People dropping by our location near Fifth Avenue had their bikes checked out by Paul Wylie and assistant Mike from Cycle Salvation. This service is always a popular attraction, especially since it is offered early in the new season of riding. ♦



Photo: Simone Rivers/CfSC

Jess Wells, Réal Lambert, and Risa Sargent ham it up for the camera using our seat covers as hats, while Paul Wylie works on bikes. All are sporting the new CfSC T-shirts, too.

40,000 bikes, and counting: Another successful year of bike parking at Ottawa Bluesfest

by Hayley Price

Early in the eighth year of offering valet bicycle parking at RBC Royal Bank Ottawa Bluesfest, volunteers parked their 40,000th bike. The tradition of bike parking at Bluesfest has grown continuously since CfSC first offered the service in 2006. In that first year, a total of approximately 1,200 bikes were parked over the 12 days of Bluesfest. This year, and in only ten days of the 2013 festival, volunteers parked a total of 8632 bikes, including a single-night record of 1148 on the final evening, July 14.

Eric Labrecque, a supervisor who has volunteered at the bike parking for a few years, has witnessed the growth. This is the second year there were two compounds, and while there was still a rush at the end of the night, the team worked hard and kept line-ups to a minimum. Labrecque says cyclists were generally patient and appreciative, enjoying the fresh air and looking forward to the ride home after crowded concerts.



Photo: Hayley Price/CfSC

Franco Pasqualini, who started using the bike parking service this year, is one example of a happy patron who attests to the hard work of the volunteers. "They were sweating, running back and forth getting bikes," he says. He has avoided biking to earlier music festivals this year due to a fear of having his bike stolen.

Again this year, volunteers were concerned with more than the security of bikes: they also sold bike lights and offered pamphlets on cycling safety. Over \$6,000 was grossed in sales and voluntary donations. Donations are divided between CfSC and Bluesfest's charity, Blues in the Schools. ♦

Rockcliffe MUP: Scenic and safe

by Nancy Biggs

The National Capital Commission is in the process of upgrading its multi-use pathway going around the Rockcliffe escarpment by the Ottawa River, from the Rockcliffe Lookout to the Ottawa New Edinburgh Club's boat house. Once completed, it will be one of the safest and definitely the most scenic pathway in Ottawa! All that remains to be done is the repaving of the path on the side of the road opposite the river and finishing the traffic island placed in a straight section of the road. This island will allow cyclists to safely cross the Rockcliffe Parkway in two stages. The paved path will take cyclists all the way from the Aviation Museum to the existing multi-use path along Lisgar Road and the Parkway, and then onto the bike lanes on Sussex Drive heading into the city. It was always a pretty ride, but you were taking a chance if you took your eyes off the pavement because of the narrowness and unevenness of the path. It was difficult to fit two cyclists side by side without going over the edge! Now the path is wide enough to drive a large truck down it. There is lots of room for cyclists and pedestrians and now you can enjoy the view! ♦



Higher railings along the cliff edge and new guardrail at the roadside grace the beautiful improvements on the Rockcliffe Pathway. Note the increased width compared to the former conditions (inset).
Photos: Nancy Biggs/CfSC

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Advocacy targets Chaudière

The Chaudière Crossing over the Ottawa River links Booth Street in Ottawa with Eddy Street in the Hull sector of Gatineau. Many federal workers commute to their offices in Hull and there are also important pathways that link well with this corridor, such as the Ruisseau-de-la-Brasserie Pathway.

Prompted by the current construction on the northern end of the crossing, CfSC has been engaging Public Works and Government Services Canada to make this summer's detour easier for cycling. Signage improvements and more clearance between motorist and cyclist have been requested. In addition, implementation of permanent cycling facilities is the long-term goal—one which will require cooperation between PWGSC and the two cities.

Check safecycling.ca for updates on progress. If you have questions or suggestions, please drop us a line at info@safecycling.ca. ♦