



Notes

Sustainable Transportation: How do I bring it to my community?

August 9th, 2011

Firehouse Grill
750 Chicago Avenue
Evanston, IL 60202

Panelists Present:

Sharon Feigon- CEO, I-Go car-sharing
Catherine Hurley – City of Evanston Sustainable Programs Coordinator
Barb Cornew – Active Transportation Alliance North Suburban Coordinator

Questions/Issues that were addressed

1. Is congestion caused by road diets?

Catherine: I am constantly looking at consequences of doing nothing, versus what happens if we do something. We also have best practices from other cities to learn from.

Sharon: what we are looking at in Evanston is behavioral change. Expanding the roads increases congestion, so how do we get people out of their cars? Making it easier for people to do the right thing makes walking and biking more attractive. People want to be out if you close down the streets.

There seemed to be genuine interest in road diets in Evanston. The key is framing the issue correctly to convince others that this does not in fact cause more congestion.

2. Year round cyclist often finds herself taking side streets, are there plans for dedicated lanes for cyclists?

Catherine: the City's engineering department is focusing on improving surfaces. However, collaboration and discussion is needed to decide what to do. Need to start with a pilot project and then show how it works.

Sharon: what happened to the Bike Plan?

Catherine: a multimodal transportation plan exists, but there are severe resource constraints. These are things that need to be advocated for to make sure the money goes there.

3. What about bike boulevards?

Catherine: The City's Environment Board is trying to identify a place to have bike boulevards.

4. Which campaigns are there to make motorists aware of bicyclists?

Catherine: There are already stencils on the sidewalks in Downtown Evanston. There also needs to be consideration of all people (cyclists).

Barb: Informal education and encouragement programs are critical to create behavioral changes.

5. Are alleys part of the City's multimodal plan? There are safety issues with bicyclists not in the bike lane.

Catherine: there is no plan to look at using alleys for bike lanes. The issue is looking at the resurfacing of alleys. There is a pilot program to implement permeable paving.

6. Where can I find out about other ways to get around if I am not in a place with access to transportation (with two children)?

Suggestions about ridesharing and OhSoWe.org

Questions/Issues in need of further exploration

1. What about Bike lanes on Sheridan?

The biggest roadblock for this is that Sheridan is a state road, and any improvements/changes would need to go through IDOT.

2. How can we work on adding incentives for active transportation users? Can CGE partner with the Chamber of Commerce to reward these people?

The Active Transportation Alliance has an event coming up in September to promote transit as part of their work.

Boulder created a pool of funds for public transit through the water bill to lower the price for everyone.

3. How can we implement consolidated stops on PACE buses?

PACE has a policy for stopping for anyone at all corners. Processes at CTA/RTA are convoluted.

Given the RTA culture, this may be very difficult, but could be a consideration when the CGE's transportation taskforce looks at combining bus services in Evanston.

4. Is it possible to create a “cyclist right-of-way” in a certain area around town?

5. How do we make driving more difficult in Evanston? It is often too easy to park in Downtown Evanston.

6. How can we slow down traffic in downtown, can we use bulb-outs or green infrastructure to slow down the traffic?

The last two questions are most relevant to the Bike Corral issue being addressed by the City parking and transportation committee right now. The Transportation taskforce is working to support this and other bike infrastructure that would provide a disincentive to car use.