November 19, 2013

Results from the City of Waterloo Bicycle Parking Survey

- It would be great if there was some kind of secure bike parking available somewhere in Waterloo. I would be willing to pay for such a service, because at present it really deters me from taking my bike places where I’d like to park. My bike is expensive and there are a lot of thefts of bikes, many bikes are unrecovered.
- A bike lock-up “cage” similar to the one at the Benton St. parking garage in Kitchener would be very beneficial to add to the Uptown parkade. It can provide safe parking for far more people than the “bike lockers” that are being piloted, and at lower cost. Additional street parking posts are also needed – there are currently not enough on King St. uptown or in Waterloo’s Public Square and I often need to lock to lampposts, signposts, etc. Safe uptown bike parking should be a priority for increasing active transportation and attracting people to uptown.
- There is not nearly enough bike parking in Uptown Waterloo, and it is shocking that there is no bike parking at the front of City Hall or along Regina Street.
- Would love to see much more bike parking in Waterloo
- People have stored their bikes in our apartment building’s laundry room. One bicycle was stolen from that room, during the 20 minutes the door was left unlocked. Waterloo needs bicycle parking that is secure.
- Bike Parking is often located in inconvenient locations (for example, there is nothing near the main entrance to the mall by the town square). While more spots is nice, location is more important than quantity.
- As with many cities around the globe, and more recently in Southern Ontario, not only is bicycle parking a needed asset but also moped, scooter, and motorcycle lock-up areas. There provided areas assist in reduced congestion and also a proper secure parking areas so that the “bikes” are more widely used and not located in undesirable locations.
- Please do not spend another nickel on bike parking racks until you consult with actual bike riders who need to lock their bikes. In the past, the city has installed bike racks that are functionally useless. Look at the bike rack that was installed near the entrance to Albert McCormick Library. The metal loops are so low to the ground that 1) bike falls over and 2) it is impossible to secure a bike to these loops without a very long chain. Most riders are forced to park their bikes at the end of the structure and then to chain their bikes to the end pieces. Bike theft is a huge concern in this university town. Many people need to secure both the bike frame and the front wheel to a structure, often using a U-bar or Kryptonite lock. The bike rack that was removed in favor of the current
bike rack at McCormick was much better. Consult people with U-bars and Kryptonite locks.

- If you would provide a new bike rack or racks to our school it would be greatly appreciated.
- We are encouraging walking and cycling to school, not just for our kids, but for adults who work and volunteer at the school. Additional bike racks designated for adults, perhaps adjacent to the property, would be very well used.
- I watched a video from 8to80. 8to80 is a nonprofit organization who shares ideas around efficient use of bike lanes in busy cities and using bikes instead of cars. In this video it shows bike racks in the front of buildings and this is for safety reasons. Great idea if you can do that.
- Some bike racks should be installed at Columbia Lake – lots of people run/bike there, but there is nowhere to lock your bike except trees.
- Rather than simply providing open bike parking across the city, I would like to see investment in more secure Bike parking – namely bike lockers and pavilions. These should be placed at major transit hubs, especially at the Via Rail/Go Train station and Kitchener Bus Terminal.
  - I would like to be able to ride my bike to the bus or train station, and commute via public transit into Toronto without having to worry about whether my tire will be flat, or spokes kicked in, or seat stolen, when I return at the end of the day. I’m not so concerned of my bike being stolen, as I am about the damage that can easily be caused. I don’t want to have to ride and lock an old beater bike because there isn’t proper storage.
  - I should also note that I don’t expect bike storage lockers/pavilions to be free. Paying per use coin/credit card operation would be fine.
  - I do appreciate these initiatives, and the increased bike lanes. I would also suggest something be done about the lack of options for bicycles along most of the stretch of Homer Watson. It is extremely difficult and dangerous to ride from south Kitchener, to Waterloo.
- One area that is lacking bike parking is the northern end of Uptown Waterloo. There is one ring-and-post rack about every block, which is not enough for the high capacity restaurants and the Princess theatre in that area.
- I support making additional space available in the central business district and at shopping areas around town for bicycle parking.
- There is not nearly enough bike parking in Uptown Waterloo. I ride my bike everywhere, and find myself trying to lock to trees or signposts when I want to go into a business. Last week I went to the Huether on a Sunday night, and there were bikes
locked to every sign post and tree within 50 meters of the place. If the City wants people to leave their cars at home, provide more bike parking!

- There should be more bicycle parking available at businesses.
- There needs to be bike parking on and around Willis Way. If I want to go to the mall and want to enter on the Willis Way side, I have to lock my bike to a sign post.
- More bike parking is required along King, all the way from Erb to Allen (and possibly further). I often bike with my children in a bike trailer and it is really difficult to find suitable bike parking in Uptown. I need space to lock up my bike and trailer, and it is difficult to find space, period, and difficult to find structures that will support a bike+trailer. I do occasionally use the parking under the Uptown Parkade but it is tricky to maneuver my way in with the bike trailer attached, and the whole space is covered in pigeon feces which I do not like because it doesn’t seem hygienic and because I am afraid my bike and trailer will be pooped on.
- I find a lack of bike parking on king street in uptown and are often left with finding trees/light posts to tie my bike to.
- This survey seems to fit only business owners – the first questions just don’t work for me – but I’ll just leave a comment here. Instead of a survey, can you take a walk around the city on a few sunny days at different times and note where people attach bikes to trees or other objects and then add bike racks where there are already bikes being parked? E.g. outside the door to Waterloo Square near Gourmet Pizza. There are often 3-5 bikes attached to the poor trees there because there’s no other place to park them nearby.
- The racks at Waterloo Public Library main branch seem sturdy, reasonably secure, and well placed. Some of the racks along King Street are not very sturdy. It would be helpful to have bike racks near the bus stop at the St. Jacob’s market.
- Below is an analysis of typical bike racks found around KW. And what you should encourage and discourage business owners from installing. Please have people deciding on designs and placements, to be regular cyclists, and not car dependent people, and to draw outlines of the rack FULL when considering placement rather than pushing them off in the corner, or against walls. Racks should be as close to any doors as possible. 30 feet being a maximum.
  - Having been an avid cyclist for 25 years in this town, and avidly discussing bike parking needs on the internet, I would like to contribute some suggestions on some of the things around KW that are fundamentally horrible about most of the current bike racks designed by people who obviously see bike parking as an imposition on the terrain instead of a functional device.
  - There are some fundamental concepts that are required in a bike rack, that non-cyclists tend to ignore, in their quest to make an excellent looking EMPTY bike
rack... that infuriate cyclists due to: being completely non-functional, dangerous to bike equipment, awkward in security requirements to actually lock the bikes, and in the wrong location to encourage use.

- First let’s examine the qualities of a GOOD bike rack.
  - AS close to the entrance or attraction as possible. Ideally, less than 30 feet.
  - An adequate assortment of posts and bars to lock both a U-lock which is quite short, and a cable lock to secure the bike, without non-function signs, decorations and preventing their use to lock any of the frame, front tire, or back tire as the cyclist chooses, but ESPECIALLY the midpoint of the frame.
  - At least two points of contact with the FRAME of the bike that is parallel to the frame itself, to prevent tipping, or worse, the “domino” effect.
  - A structure that allows the cyclist to stand at the midpoint of the bike unhindered.
  - A structure that does not hinder the handlebars when the bike is placed against 2 points of contact.
  - A design that assumes the bikes can be parked facing either direction on the rack.
  - A rack that is not up against a wall, but rather at the midpoint of the bike.
- There are 4 basic categories of bike racks around town, and most of them are completely unacceptable, one is acceptable but only on the end points, and another is better than nothing but not ideal.
- Let’s start from the dreadful to better:

1. **THE HORIZONTAL SLOT.** This is any “slotted” rack to support the bike by a lower section of the tire. It will have no location to lock the upper frame, and will immediately lead to tire repair bills of 50-200$ when the bike falls over and bends the rim.

2. **THE VERTICAL SLOT.** Same problem as above but taller. Tire rim bends upon falling, and no access to lock frame.

3. **THE ZIPPER WITH TOP OBSTRUCTION.** This is any rack where the slots are so close together that the handlebars touch unless every other bike faces each other like a zipper or worse, a set of triangles either on the ground or hanging from a bar like a closet. Most can only lock the front tire. Even with alteration there is no place to stand midpoint to lock the bike.

4. **THE WAVE.** The is an almost acceptable rack because the top is unobstructed, they are usually far enough apart for the handle bars to not interfere, you can lock any point of the bike with any lock, but fails due to lack of two point...
support. They are also occasionally too close to the wall, which reverts them to wheel only VERTICAL SLOTS.

5. **TWO POINT PARALLEL FENCE – OBSTRUCTED.** This is an almost perfect bike rack that supports the frame on at least two points (usually an inverted U or post and ring or flat tube sculpture), has no top bar, and holds only two bikes, one on each side in parallel...except that has they put obstructions (usually a flat sign indicating the donor) where the locks have to be...thus destroying the purpose of the rack in the first place.

6. **TWO POINT PARALLEL FENCE.** Heaven. The frame of the bike leans on a tube structure at least two points, with one other bike on the other side. The structure can then be part of a grid with adequate pathways between structures on both sides, and not up against a wall.

All bike racks should be of type 6. There is no excuse for bad design. Luckily I have seen a good trend to type 6. They can be fun as well. (See picture examples below)
1. **HORIZONTAL SLOTS**: non functional tire torture, unlockable

2. **VERTICAL SLOTS**: non functional tire torture, unlockable, damage. **UNLESS USED AS DE FACTO TYPE 6 ON THE ENDS**.

3. **ZIPPER WITH TOP OBSTRUCTION**: no mid point access, falls over, too close together, usually against a wall, defeating zipper configuration.

4. **THE WAVE**: acceptable but not best. far enough apart, easy to lock any part of bike, but bikes fall and dominoe due to lack of support. **note: installation incorrect support not parallel to bike frame**.

5. **TWO POINT FENCE - OBSTRUCTED**: ideal, except no where to actually lock the bike to the tubes, sign in way.

6. **TWO POINT FENCE!**: accessible at midpoint, no obstructions, easy to lock any part of bike, no falling, no damage. **USE EXCLUSIVELY**