



a Volunteer Advisory Group to the City of Burlington's Dept of Public Works

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Comments on 1/26/16 draft of Plan BTV Walk-Bike Chapter 4 – Beyond Infrastructure

The following comments were developed during a meeting of the Burlington Walk-Bike Council on January 29, 2016, discussing the 1/26/16 draft of the “Beyond Infrastructure” chapter of PlanBTV Walk-Bike. In general, the chapter did a good job of identifying the important non-infrastructure ways to improve the city for walking and biking, but we did have a number of specific suggestions for improvement. Notes were compiled by Erik Brown Brotz.

Evaluation and Planning

#2 – Make the dashboard public for all to see, not just officials. Also, police department should be included as partners.

Include an evaluation plan for the effectiveness of this walk-bike plan, scheduled at regular intervals. The first evaluation should be no more than 3 years out.

Education

#2 – There is no reason to wait until 2015 to have all schools participate in SRTS – the goal should be 2018. The high school should also be included, as well as colleges. In addition, the language does not include much in terms of actions – just having a committee doesn't do much. Consider including some specific actions they can take. Some examples include accessible, secure, covered bike storage facilities at the school, making neighborhood short cuts official, safety education and training, events, etc.

Add a suggestion for a Safe Routes to Parks program, sponsored by the Parks Department.

#3 – Success metrics should include commercial drivers as well as city drivers, perhaps including the number/percent who have gone through the training. Also mention SSTA as a target group. DPW and CCTA should be included as partners.

#5 – Reword to include drivers in title to reinforce that they are the focus of attention. Include enhanced driver education classes to incorporate discussion of safe behavior towards people

walking and biking in, as well as lobbying for inclusion of more walk/bike safety-related questions on tests.

Include AARP as a partner, and link with their existing driver training program.

Include training for police officers on unbiased investigation and filing of crash reports, and revision of crash report forms.

Encouragement

#1 – The bike light outreach program is important and should be more frequent than once a year. Consider also including reflector tape/kits. This can also be linked to other events (such as Open Streets) rather than being a stand-alone event.

#2 – Seniors, a growing part of the population and one that is underserved by current infrastructure, should also be a focus. The focus there may be more on walking, but many seniors could also bike given the right infrastructure, encouragement, and skills. For that matter, children should also be a focus, beyond the Safe Routes to Schools programs.

The plan in general should incorporate more consideration and promotion of public transit. In particular, the goals for increased use of transit seem very modest and should be enhanced. Transit and walking/biking enable and complement each other. There are many ways to improve mode share of transit, such as smaller busses running more frequently, expanded routes beyond the current hub system, commuter rail service, etc. Some specific actions that would help the interaction with walking and biking (which may be in the infrastructure section) include improved shelters and bus stop locations, bike racks at key bus stops, and increased capacity for bikes on busses. Satellite parking with shuttles is also an important component of reducing single car traffic in the city. While the scope of this plan may not include promotion of transit and satellite parking, it should at least include some positive and powerful discussion of the need for it. This calls out the need for a multi-modal transportation plan.

Secure and accessible bike parking is important for encouragement; ensure that it is included prominently in the plan (probably already in infrastructure section).

Enforcement

#3 – Rather than sting operations, include traffic enforcement into normal operating procedures of officers, so that it's more consistent. The focus should be on unsafe driving behavior (motorized vehicles) including speeding, running red lights (including pushing yellows) and stop signs, unsafe passing, and distracted driving. For cyclists focus on only the most unsafe behavior, such as riding without lights. Enhanced enforcement should come after a safety education campaign, and should start with warnings.

Ensure that police investigate crashes and cite drivers for violations that result in crashes (currently the driver often seems to get a pass).

Equity

#2 – It doesn't seem reasonable or desirable to aim for complete equity; consider softening the language (reasonably equitable considering different needs?). Different areas of the city have different needs so we should look at where the greatest needs are and bring all areas up to

same level of service. All areas of the city don't have to look the same with respect to infrastructure. Also some areas will require more expense to achieve the same purpose so will take longer. So neither spending nor improvements need to be the same across all districts. Perhaps it can be framed in terms of the final result rather than improvements or spending.

Et Cetera

Focus on collaboration between departments to achieve these goals – DPW, Parks, schools, etc. For example, formalizing short cuts may require multiple parties to be involved.