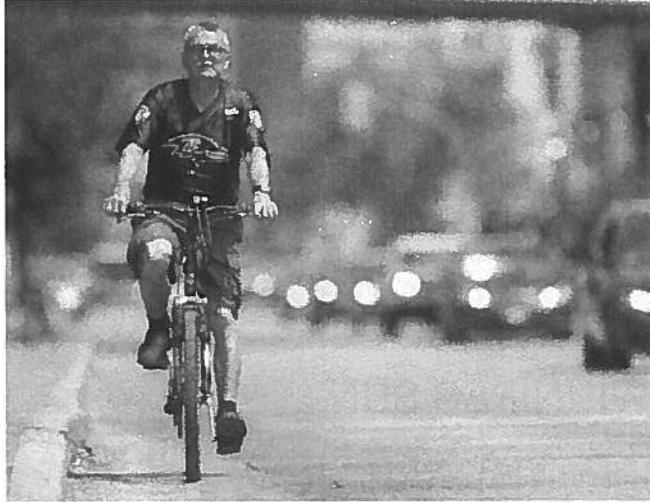


City committee deadlocked on how to pedal forward on active transport plan

BY JOYANNE PURSAGA, WINNIPEG SUN

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Downtown cycle lanes are being debated at City Hall, in Winnipeg. This cyclist is on Portage Avenue. Tuesday, June 27, 2017. Chris Procayo/Winnipeg Sun/Postmedia Network

Council's public works committee was deadlocked Tuesday on how it should pedal forward on downtown active transportation.

The committee cast two tied votes on how to handle a request from Coun. Janice Lukes (South Winnipeg-St. Norbert) to have city staff consider a grid of adjustable downtown bike lanes within its 2019 active transportation plan.

Councillors Marty Morantz (Charleswood-Tuxedo-Whyte Ridge) and Matt Allard (St. Boniface) voted not to act on the protected but temporary lanes, which councillors Devi Sharma (Old Kildonan) and Jeff Browaty (North Kildonan) rejected. Sharma and Browaty then voted to approve the original Lukes motion, which Morantz and Allard rejected.

The pair of two-two ties means both motions were deemed lost.

Lukes said cities like Calgary and Edmonton have used adjustable downtown grids to get cycling links completed sooner.

"This has been proven across North America that protected bike lanes increase safety and that our own public works department said ... they're a cheaper way to do it," said Lukes.

But Morantz, who chairs the committee, argued devoting active transportation funds already earmarked for other projects threatens to jeopardize multiple elements of council's long-term active transportation strategy.

"In this case, the suggested motion would be a dramatic altering of (the) path from the pedestrian cycling strategy," he said.

Allard suggested the city should wait to fund only permanent downtown cycling lanes to avoid paying for the same routes twice.

"There would be a considerable overage in terms of paying for temporary facilities, seeing if those work, and then paying again for permanent facilities," he said.

Browaty (who voted for it) often oppose motions the mayor, council's executive policy committee, its deputy mayor and acting deputy mayor support. Meanwhile, Allard and Morantz (who both rejected this motion) tend to side with the mayor, his backups and EPC.

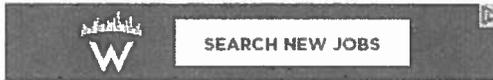
Allard has often voted in favour of active transportation in the past, while Browaty has often opposed its funding.

Browaty also argued at Tuesday's meeting that council places too much focus on AT paths at the expense of roads. But he insisted he supports the grid simply because it makes sense.

"We already have significant suburban routes that connect to the downtown but they sort of fall off once you get to the downtown ... That final stretch to get to people's offices and that, where people work and play, is what's really missing right now," said Browaty.

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