

Council gridlock stalls downtown bike grid

Public works committee fails to approve or deny latest move to create adjustable downtown bike lanes

CBC News Posted: Jun 27, 2017 12:36 PM CT Last Updated: Jun 27, 2017 4:53 PM CT

A decision on whether to study an adjustable downtown cycling grid was hung up in a pair of deadlocked votes at Winnipeg city council's public works committee meeting Tuesday, where unofficial party politics led to legislative gridlock.

For the third time since November, South Winnipeg-St. Norbert Coun. Janice Lukes tried to convince the public works committee to approve plans for a grid of downtown bike lanes made up of low-cost, movable materials such as temporary curbs.

Lukes, the former director of the Winnipeg Trails Association, has argued the city can create dedicated bike lanes much faster and for less money using adjustable grids, basing her claim on experiences in Edmonton and Calgary.

But her two previous efforts, in November 2016 and May 2017, failed to sway the committee led by Charleswood-Tuxedo-Whyte Ridge Coun. Marty Morantz. At last month's meeting, Morantz questioned whether dedicated bike lanes protect cyclists and suggested Lukes is unfamiliar with active-transportation theory.

- [Winnipeg city councillors exchange barbs over bike lanes](#)
- [Winnipeg playing 'catch up' in cycling infrastructure, mayor says](#)

Lukes' latest motion called for the city to consider an adjustable bike grid as part of its cycling-infrastructure plans in 2019. It met opposition from Morantz and St. Boniface Coun. Matt Allard, who argued the city shouldn't make any changes to what they called as Winnipeg's "award-winning" active-transportation strategy.

Allard also suggested the city should not to spend more money on cycling infrastructure because people may walk to work.

Both Allard and Morantz are members of EPC+2, the unofficial governing body on council that usually votes alongside Mayor Brian Bowman. When the pair of councillors moved to shelve Lukes' bike-grid motion, Old Kildonan Coun. Devi Sharma, who serves as council speaker, and opposition Coun. Jeff Browaty voted against them, creating a tie vote.

Minutes later, a move by Sharma and Browaty to ensure Lukes' bike grid sees the light of day was opposed by Morantz and Allard, resulting in a second deadlock vote.

Motions fail at city hall when deadlocks occur. That means no decision was made on the bike-grid issue.

The votes were especially unusual considering Allard is a political progressive who usually votes in favour of cycling infrastructure, while Browaty is a populist who usually votes against investments in bike lanes.

Browaty explained he believed an inexpensive means of building infrastructure ought to be explored. Allard said Lukes' plan could jeopardize cycling investments elsewhere in Winnipeg.

Later in the same meeting, Allard made a motion to complete a separate, suburban bike trail. He said the move was consistent with his earlier position because there is a difference between a cycling strategy and a cycling plan.

Explore CBC

CBC Home	Music	Documentaries	Digital Archives
TV	Life	Comedy	Games
Radio	Arts	Books	Contests
News	Kids	Parents	Site Map
Sports	Local	Indigenous	

Stay Connected

Apps	RSS	Podcasts	Newsletters & Alerts
----------------------	---------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------------------

Services and Information

Corporate Info	Reuse & Permission	CBC Shop	Jobs
Public Appearances	Terms of Use	Help	Doing Business with Us
Commercial Services	Privacy Policy	Contact Us	Renting Facilities