



October 3, 2014

David Corliss
City Manager
City Hall
6 East Sixth Street
Lawrence KS 66044

Re: Relocation of library bicycle racks

Dear Dave,

At its October 7 meeting, city commissioners will consider a revision to the city's site plan (SP-12-81-11) to relocate bicycle parking for Lawrence Public Library. We fully support the planning staff's recommendation to move 10 bike spaces from the area near the library's front door to the parking garage entrance and to add additional bike parking to the southwest corner of the building.

I would like to relay a few additional comments on this issue. In addition to avoiding a conflict with the entrance to the reading garden, the library also is concerned about bicycles creating access problems for our special needs patrons. There are a significant number of community members using the library who rely on wheelchairs, walkers, or simply have general difficulty with mobility. The original location for the bike racks was immediately adjacent to the handicapped entrance to the library. Bicycles that are not properly parked on the racks could potentially create an obstruction for patrons needing to enter the library through the handicapped-accessible door.

The library certainly understands that cyclists would prefer a closer location than the garage to park their bikes. Plans to install "loops" to the parking meters along Vermont Street will provide a reasonable alternative. In addition, cyclists have expressed concern regarding the security of their bicycles parked in the new southwest location. The library will install security cameras in this area to deter theft or vandalism to bicycles.

Thank you for your consideration of our additional comments. Should you or any of the commissioners have questions or need more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 785-843-3833, x102 or at brad@lawrencepubliclibrary.org.

Sincerely,

Brad Allen
Executive Director



Sustainability Action Network

Local Solutions for Transition to a Sustainable Economy

P.O. Box 1064, Lawrence KS 66044
a Kansas 501(C)(3) not-for-profit

Lawrence City Commission
6th East 6th Street
Lawrence KS 66044

6 October 2014

re: 7 October agenda item #5, bicycle parking at Lawrence Public Library

Mayor Amyx & Commission:

As one of our most effective means to conserve petroleum and lower our greenhouse gas emissions, bicycle transportation has been one of the main programs of Sustainability Action. More people will tend to choose the bicycle option if bicycle lanes and tracks are safe and convenient, but equally so if they find convenient parking at their destination.

The City of Lawrence has long recognized the importance of bicycle parking, having enacted Code provisions in August 1980 when Commissioner Schumm was Mayor. Bicycle parking is one of the easiest ways to encourage cycling, which so many of Lawrence plans and policies mention. A bicycle uses only 1/12th the parking space needed for auto parking, making it considerably less expensive. And bicycle parking can easily be located much closer to building entrances, and can safely intermingle with pedestrian space. Former Mayor, Marci Francisco, frequently notes that “bicycles are portal-to-portal transportation”.

Given that, it is astonishing that the Planning Office and/or the Library Board would want to skimp on bicycle parking at the new library. The minimum auto parking requirement is 260 spaces (though 400 was stated as desired). Code requires 1 bicycle parking space per 4 auto spaces, for a total of 65 bicycle spaces (but desirable would be 100). By what rationale would anyone want a variance to reduce that to only 40? That goes counter to encouraging bicycling or making it at all convenient.

Of all our public buildings, the one with the highest bicycle use potential is the library. The clientèle is largely students, car-less people on limited budgets, and millennials who by choice cycle more than drive. And unlike procuring bulky or heavy merchandise, books can easily be transported on a bicycle.

Consider also that the Vermont Street Parking Structure's size is minimal for it's intended uses. At 324 auto spaces, it doesn't meet even the library's desired parking profile. And it's also supposed to serve the Senior Center, Fire Station #1, and the Outdoor Aquatic Center. These other uses of themselves could absorb the entire parking availability of the garage. For all four of these uses, there should at least be 100 bicycle parking spaces on site, and probably up to 150.

Currently installed are a total of 38 bicycle spaces. Not only is this far below even the minimal requirement, but most of them serve dual facilities. The 8 Senior Center bicycle spaces are “borrowed from Peter to pay Paul”, portrayed as serving the library quota. The 10 bicycle spaces in the S.W. corner of the garage are de-facto Fire Station spaces, as well as serving the outdoor pool. The 10 bicycle spaces outside of the N. W. corner of the garage are for library staff. So that effectively leaves only 10 spaces at street level on the east side of the garage for library users. On any given day these 10 spaces are full.

Recommendations from Sustainability Action:

- 1) Overturn the original Planning Director's site plan variance that reduced the bicycle parking requirement from 65 to 40. Instead, increase the requirement up to 100 spaces.
- 2) Move the Reading Garden to the south courtyard that is a 15,000 square foot area. Install 50 bicycle spaces in the former Reading Garden area of about 3500 square feet. Surely, the new library should have significant bicycle parking adjacent to the front door, if we were able to do the same at the old library.
- 3) Provide 20 bicycle spaces for library staff under the west overhang (either at the S.W. corner, or by widening the sidewalk along the west wall).
- 4) Add 20 bicycle spaces at street level on the east side of the garage, and install traffic bollards where needed.
- 5) Add a weather canopy to cover all bicycle parking spaces adjacent to the library entrance and on the east side of the garage. If this is not favored, then construct 50% of the bicycle parking spaces as bicycle lockers that are weather proof and lockable.
- 6) Do not allow Planning staff to atone for their earlier inadequacies by permitting meter pole rings for bicycle parking. Those would be in the turf and snow, and are only a last resort option as a retrofit.

It is unfortunate that the library's architect was not up to the task, and unable to think from a bicyclist's perspective. Sustainability Action also apologizes that we had not checked the plans in 2012, or we would have pointed out these mistakes before construction took place. We hope that the proportionately small bicycle investment we are calling for in the context of a \$6 million parking structure and a \$19 million library will strike you as completely warranted. It's really pennies on the dollar.

Thank you,

Michael Almon
Bicycles & Alternative Transportation Chair
Sustainability Action Network