

Memorandum

To: Lawrence Douglas County Planning Department

From: Phani Gubbala, Graduate Research Assistant, The University of Kansas.

Re: Bicycle parking issue in Downtown Lawrence

Date: 2/3/2016

“A Bicycle can’t stand on its own because it is two-tired”

Issue:

Bike Parking in Lawrence has come to the attention of city planners. This issue came into attention mainly because of the usage of lamp posts, parking meters and other furnishings, on the sidewalks of downtown, as parking stands by bicyclists. In an article posted on this issue, Jessica Mortinger, a Transportation Planner for Lawrence-Douglas County Planning Department, said that for most of the new developments in the city, one bicycle parking is required for every 10 car parking spots. But there are 4,042 car parking spots in downtown and only 271 bicycle parking spots. These 271 parking spots are traditional bicycle racks on the sidewalks near the midblock area of most Mass. Street block in downtown and also other bike racks, which are scattered throughout downtown. So to overcome this problem City Planners are considering to install new bike corrals with expense of losing traditional parking spots. [1]

Stake Holders:

The Stake Holders involved in this issue are General Public, Downtown Lawrence Inc., Lawrence-Douglas County Planning Department, Bicycle Advisory Committee, and Lawrence City Commission.

General Public:

Usage of bicycles for commute is increasing day by day and the demand for parking is also increasing. People riding a bike would like to park their bike as close as possible to their destination as it will be easier and more comfortable for them. Hence even though bike corrals are present in downtown people tend to park their bike on lamp posts and parking meters which

are near to their destination. Hence public would like to have parking as close as possible to their destination.

Downtown Lawrence Inc.:

Created in 1972, Downtown Lawrence Inc. (DLI) is a non-for-profit organization which helps promote the interests of Downtown business district. Its main mission is to preserve, promote, and protect Downtown Lawrence as the retail, service and professional, governmental, entertainment and social center of our community [2]. Since usage of bicycles is increasing day by day businesses in Lawrence would like to have parking near them as it will be comfortable for their customers. Even planners had some discussions with this group about this issue [1] and I think this group will be favorable towards providing parking closer to businesses.

Lawrence Douglas County Planning Department:

Planning department will take general public's, DLI's, and BSA's views into consideration and will be planning the new parking facilities for bike in Downtown Lawrence. From the article in Ijworld [1] planners interest is to remove some traditional parking spots and convert them in to bicycle parking.

Bicycle Advisory Committee:

This committee provides a communication linkage between the City and County Commissions and the community on bicycling related issues. It works to improve safety and awareness of bicycles through education of motorists and non-motorists [3]. This committee might try to find the safe and comfortable bike parking spaces for the community by knowing their interests and passing them to city and county commissions. Previously in 2001 BAC has worked in coordination with BAC in conducting a bicycle parking inventory and recommendation of BAC to improve the quantity and quality of bicycle parking and their efforts have been fruitful [4]. Now they might discuss with the community again and give recommendations for new bike parking facilities which can be easily used.

Lawrence City Commission:

Lawrence City Commission is the decision maker in this situation. It passes ordinances, establishes policies for the city and approves budget [5]. So if City planners, by discussing with

BAC, designs a new parking facilities for bikes in downtown City Commission will have the final authority to approve budget for this project.

Recommendations on the Issue:

As show in Image 2. Bicycle parking spots are spread out in downtown and these spots can be only be used comfortably by the people whose destination is in the 100 Foot Buffer. For other locations it will be difficult which is leading to parking near tress, lamp posts and parking meters.

Personally as a bicycle user, for daily commute and also bring my groceries, I would like to park as close as possible to my destination as it is easier for me and I think this is the same case for other people using bicycles and that why we are seeing more bikes parked to light poles and tress. So if bicycle parking is provided near every business the problem can be solved.

So instead of decreasing the trading traditional car parking spots it would be more appropriate if parking meters can be used as bike parking spots. The meters near the handicapped parking spots shouldn't be installed with these racks. There are already some parking meters in Lawrence Downtown provided with temporary oval rings as shown in Image 1. If this kind of parking is available throughout downtown, and it will also be easier as the parking meters are also spread throughout downtown, the parking issue can be solved without losing any car parking spots.

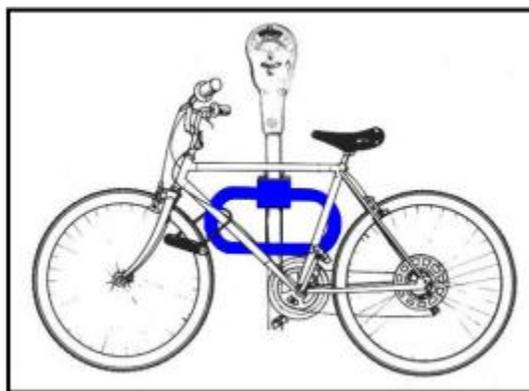


Image 1. Source: www.lawrencks.org

Locations of Bicycle Parking in Downtown Lawrence: Downtown Bicycle Parking Map-2010

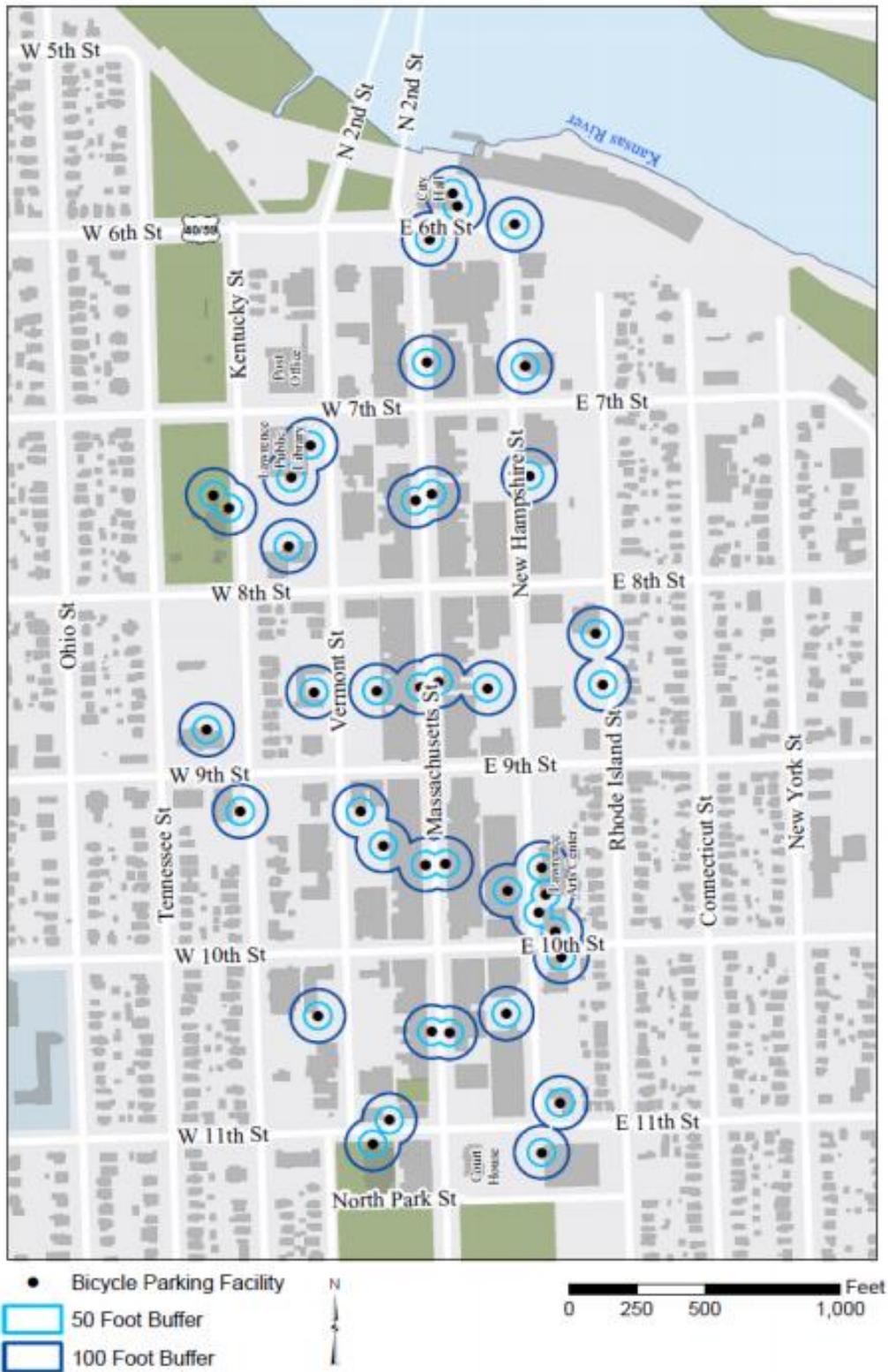


Image 2. Source: <http://www.lawrenceks.org/assets/pds/planning/documents/BikeParkInv.pdf>

These oval rings should also be installed such that they do not cause any discomfort to the pedestrians. There are some places in downtown where some restaurants provide outside dining facility, which occupies most of the side walk space and the oval rings should not be installed at such places.

City planners can do a survey of which businesses experience customers who use bicycles and concentrate more near these areas. This is what was done by Portland Bureau of transportation, which installs free bicycle racks on the sidewalks, if requested, in front of businesses as long as the location meets the minimum requirements.

I contacted Portland Bureau of Transportation [5] and asked them few questions regarding their program and the questions and answers are as follows,

- Who can request for a Bicycle rack?

People with businesses and who feel that they are losing customers because bike racks are not present near their business. And they will be installed in main business areas.

- Where will the racks be installed?

The racks will be installed on the side walk near to the road so that it won't be a problem for the pedestrians walking on the sidewalk. The condition of the side walk is also considered. The site also meet some minimum requirements which are listed in the following link - <http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/?c=31911&a=43223>

- Who will be installing these racks?

City employees will be installing these racks.

- How much time does it take to install these racks?

It might take from 2 weeks to 1 and half month depending upon the availability of city employees. If they are busy with some major project bicycle rack installation will be delayed.

- What are the funding sources?

General Transportation revenue (mainly money coming from the parking meters) and funding from Developers.

BAC should try to find out what will be the best locations for parking in downtown by communicating with bicycle users.

Downtown Lawrence Inc. should cooperate with city planners and help them decide best place where new racks can be installed. As the group members in this group are business owners in downtown they can help city planners and the **City Commission** should find way to fund this program.

Motivation which encourages stakeholder participation:

Each Stakeholder has different motivation which encourage them to participate and support this.

- People who use bicycle as a commute are increasing day by day and the bike racks in downtown are very low or a bit far from their destination. Which is making them use the parking meters and lamp posts as racks which is not safe and is also causing discomfort to pedestrians mainly in the areas where the businesses also occupy some portion of side walk. This encourages them to get easily accessible and safer bike parking spots.
- As the customers, who use bicycles as daily commute, would like to have safer and easily accessible parking spots the Downtown Lawrence Inc. would also show their interest in this issue.
- BAC, whose main aim is to provide safety and better riding experience for all the bicycle users will also be interested in this issue.
- As the present bicycle parking, near lamp posts and trees, is providing discomfort for both bicyclists and pedestrians, city planners will want to better plan the downtown to decrease the discomfort for both bicyclists and pedestrians.

Interaction with each other:

In this situation the main role is of BAC as it is acting as a communication bridge between community and city planning department and city commission. So by knowing the views of the community and sharing them with city planning department, to help them better plan and sharing them with city commission, which will encourage them to raise funds to resolve this problem.

References:

1. http://www2.ljworld.com/weblogs/town_talk/2015/aug/25/planners-looking-at-trading-some-downtow/
2. <http://www.downtownlawrence.com/about-us/>
3. <https://lawrenceks.org/boards/bicycle-advisory-committee>
4. <http://www.lawrenceks.org/assets/pds/planning/documents/BikeParkInv.pdf>
5. Portland Bureau Transportation Contact information: 503-823-2925 and press “3”.