



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

Bicycle Engineering Division, not Coordinator Program

12 June 2014

Looking at how the City Manager has presented and framed the budget item for bicycle funding (and pedestrian funding), it will not begin to achieve what Sustainability Action has proposed, nor what the Commission has now indicated for a year would move beyond the 38 years of “hurry up and plan and wait” mentality in Public Works.

In his 5 June memo, Mr. Soules proposed a “program manager (Coordinator/Engineer)” within Public Works. This will not do. We want to stress that the discussion has centered on creating a new Bicycle Engineering Division with a Bicycle Division Manager (Engineer), not a departmental program that can be suspended at City staff level. The Commission, and the Commission only, can create a Bicycle Engineering Division within the General Operating Fund 001, not subject to staff suspension of departmental funds.

In addition to controlling the year-to-year continuation of the proposed new program, the City Manager also wants to maintain existing transportation priorities by having the Public Works Director develop the current proposal. The nature of this proposal assures that the auto-centric outlook of Public Works will continue as before, that the same range of cyclist-pedestrian issues will be addressed as before, that the inter-agency communications will shift somewhat, but with a Complete Streets Coordinator label costing \$200,000 more than before.

There is ample evidence – and public support – for abandoning the piecemeal funding and fragmented bicycle infrastructure in favor of a dedicated line-item for bicycle system build-out, and a dedicated line-item for a Bicycle Division Manager (Engineer) to proficiently design the build-out of the system. Once the Commission has created this post, then the Human Resources Division, not Public Works, can go about drafting a job description reflecting your commitment to building a city-wide, inter-neighborhood bicycle system, and initiating a candidate search for the position of Bicycle Division Manager (Engineer).

The Pedestrian Coalition has an interest in a pedestrian coordinator, but they are in the early stages of formulating policy. With at least 17 bicycle plans under our belt, Lawrence does not need a bicycle coordinator. We already have two very competent Transportation Planners as well as a Sustainability Coordinator, all of whom currently fulfill such coordinator functions.

Mr. Soules program description is inappropriate. It is burdened down with needless tasks like a transit study (Transit Administrator purview), boards and commissions coordination (Sustainability Coordinator purview), and grant funding applications (a dedicated line-item fund supercedes piecemeal grant funding). But most problematic is to “Recommend improvements for pedestrian and bicycle projects”. The Bicycle Division Manager would be authorized to place bicycle projects in the Capital Improvement Plan for construction.

We request the Commission reject the proposal by Mr. Soules, create a Bicycle Engineering Division, and direct Human Resources to advertise for a Bicycle Division Manager (Engineer)



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Benefits of Budgeting for a City-wide Interlinked Bicycle System and a Bicycle Engineering Division Manager 12 June 2014

The essence of what Sustainability Action has proposed is that bicycle transportation be acknowledged as important enough to fund adequately, by reallocating \$2 million from motor vehicle spending per year over to a bicycle system build-out. Initial Commission reaction was in agreement to provide greater bicycle system funding, but to “not take money from the streets budget because we're still playing catchup there” (Riordan), and instead raise either sales taxes or property taxes (Schumm).

But when examined accurately, bicycle transportation is not at odds with motor vehicle transportation or with the streets budget. In reality, both vehicular forms constitute “traffic”, and in a correctly designed system, bicycles will supplement and enhance motor vehicle presence, while being safer and more convenient for cyclists. The Commission really can move money from motor vehicles to bicycles, not only without regret, but with kudos.

The overall urban transportation system is measured in vehicle trips per day and roadway capacity. In a net-zero count, the greater number of trips fulfilled by bicycle, the fewer trips are made by auto. Fewer autos on the road means less auto lane congestion, lower auto parking requirements, less pavement damage, and shorter intersection queues and wait times. A bicycle uses less than 1/60th the space of an auto on the road, about 1/5th the parking space needed for an auto, and about 1/8th the funding outlays to build bike lanes.

Traffic engineers cite the Braess' Paradox to explain that building more auto lanes actually increases congestion – provide the lane capacity and autos will materialize to fill them. But conversely, by “right-sizing” a four lane street to two travel lanes, one center turn lane, and two bicycle lanes, the overall capacity of the street increases.

A community that chooses to fulfill a greater number of trips by means of bicycles will spend proportionately less on infrastructure construction and maintenance. Beginning in 1990, Portland OR began investing in bicycle infrastructure, resulting in bicycle transportation use rates now higher than the national average – averaging 10% of vehicle trips, 20% in some areas. Portland reports that “Bicycling provides the best return on investment for transportation dollar spent in terms of providing personal mobility”. Portland achieved the high bicycle use rate by spending about \$75 million over 15 years on bicycle infrastructure.

Shifting budget dollars over to bicycle system build-out will reduce the pressure on the streets budget. Consider it a revenue source. It's the fiscally responsible thing to do.



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Bicycle Engineering Division Manager
Position opening advertisement contacts

The career profession of Bicycle System Engineer does not seem to be part of any college transportation degree program. Cities who hire such a person generally advertise for a transportation engineer or a traffic engineer. But most of those professionals are trained for motor vehicle roadway design, without the creativity or insight to accommodate bicycle features in a complete-streets transportation system.

The kind of Bicycle System Engineer Lawrence needs will be intimately familiar with the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) [Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#), and similar documents such as [Fundamentals of Bicycle Boulevard Design.pdf](#). To find such a person will probably require a broad search of professional organizations who embrace state-of-the-art bicycle system design. Following is a list.

Alta Planning & Design
711 S.E. Grand Ave., Portland OR 97214
(877)347-5417 <miabirk@altaplanning.com>

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
PO Box 93, Cedarburg, WI 53012
(262)228-7025 <info@apbp.org>

Initiative for Bicycle and Pedestrian Innovation
P.O. Box 751, Portland OR 97207
(503)725-8545 <askotrec@otrec.us>

League of American Bicyclists
1612 K Street NW, Suite 308, District of Columbia 20006

(202)822-1333 <bikeleague@bikeleague.org>

Linked In Professionals

Job posting category

<http://www.linkedin.com/>

Bicycle Engineering Division Manager

Position opening advertisement contacts

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National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

120 Park Avenue 14th Floor, New York NY 10017

(646)324-8352 <nacto@nacto.org>

Ped-Net Coalition

P.O. Box 7124, Columbia MO 65205

(573)999-9894 <Annette@PedNet.org>

Sustainable Cities Network

801 Bluff St., Dubuque IA 52004

(563)588-3853 <info@sCityNetwork.com>

University of Oregon Sustainable Cities Initiative

10th & Mill Building, Suite 202, 360 E 10th Ave., Eugene Oregon 97401

(541) 346-2046 <schlossb@uoregon.edu>