



REFERRAL OF MEMBER MOTION BY CITY COUNCIL

Bicycle Safety: Cyclist Licensing

Date:	August 7, 2009
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	City Council
Wards:	All

City Council Decision

City Council on August 5 and 6, 2009, referred Motion MM38.3 to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee.

Recommendations

Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Hall, recommends that:

1. The Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards develop a cyclist licensing program, in consultation with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, to be brought forward to City Council.

Summary

Recently, City Council prioritized the user groups in public space and public roads within the City of Toronto. The four groups are prioritized as follows: 1) pedestrians; 2) cyclists; 3) transit riders; and lastly, 4) vehicle drivers.

Accordingly, with more space on roads being shared with cyclists, there is an increased responsibility to ensure public safety for cyclists. Cyclists need to be made aware of this increased responsibility for safe use of our roads. Also, City Council needs to put in place a system to adequately regulate cyclists in a manner commensurate with their increased rights and responsibilities.

Bicycle Operator/Cyclist licensing is a method of increasing awareness of the existing rules and regulations applicable to cyclists, such as the Highway Traffic Act. Also, licensing provides for a formalized relationship between the City and cyclists which the City can use to promote safe use of bicycles, highlighting requirements for mandatory bicycle equipment such as sounding-bells, reflectors and lights. Furthermore, licensing would provide for more effective enforcement of the applicable laws and clarify collision situations. Currently, there is not a requirement for a cyclist to carry personal identification so it is difficult for Police or citizens to manage collisions between pedestrians, cyclists and drivers due to the fact that a cyclist can just walk away from the

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incident; this is particularly troubling if the cyclist is at fault. Also, it is difficult for a Police officer to give a ticket for a moving violation of the Highway Traffic Act to a cyclist who is not required to have personal identification on their person and therefore few tickets are issued.

Cyclist licensing seems to be preferential to bicycle (vehicle) licensing since the main benefit of bike licensing would be increased recourse in the event of bicycle theft and there are already anti-theft processes (i.e. bicycle registration with the Police) in place that have the same efficacy as a new system of bicycle licensing. Cyclist licensing would also be preferential in order to allow a cyclist to use more than one bicycle.

The Chair of the City's Cycling Committee, Councillor Adrian Heaps, is in support of licensing cyclists like automobile drivers, as stated in a Toronto Star article of May 23, 2009. He states that licensing cyclists would be a mechanism to facilitate enforcement of the Highway Traffic Act provisions, just as licensing is for automobile drivers.

Between 1935 and 1956, the City of Toronto required licenses for all bicycles and issued license plates to be displayed on bicycles. In the last 25 years, City Council has considered licensing cyclists and/or bicycles at least four times.

Now that the City of Toronto has adopted a formal and aggressive policy to dedicate more of the city streets to cyclists and Toronto has never had such a policy in the past, it is time to license cyclists as bicycles once were. It is time to match a cyclist's responsibilities with a cyclist's rights and require that all cyclists be licensed.

(Submitted to City Council on August 5, 2009 as MM38.3)