
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM39.19	ACTION			Ward:All
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Special Recognition for Memorials: Ghost Bikes - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Joe Mihevc

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Councillor Joe Mihevc recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards, the General Manager, Transportation Services and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on how to better incorporate Ghost Bikes into our by-laws so that they are recognized as memorials rather than abandoned bicycles.

Summary

When a cyclist is struck in Toronto it is a tragedy and sadly, in recent years there have been a number of cycling related deaths across our City. While we are taking steps to improve cycling infrastructure and to educate people on how to share the road, accidents continue to take place.

The lives lost in these accidents are the lives of members of our communities; our teachers, our brothers and sisters, our parents and our children. When a cycling death takes place, Torontonians come together to put up a special and small memorial called a Ghost Bike. A Ghost Bike is simply a bicycle painted white and locked near the accident site. There is often also a memorial plaque erected naming the cyclist and reminding everyone to share the road. The practice of placing Ghost Bikes is common in close to 30 cities worldwide. They are an artistic commemoration and a subtle reminder to us all of the tragedy that took place.

Ghost Bikes remain among us for varying lengths of time. There are some families that would like them preserved and visit the site in memory of their loved ones. There are other families that request that they only be placed for a short period of time. The families' wishes are viewed as paramount by the cycling community.

Ghost Bikes place the City of Toronto in an awkward position. As people, we all understand the complicated history and purpose of the memorials. As law, our licensing and standards by-laws view the Ghost Bikes as abandoned bicycles, which, distressingly, can lead to enforcement officers having to remove them despite the wishes of the family. It is time that we reflected on our by-laws to determine how they can incorporate the wishes of the communities and families connected to Ghost Bikes, acknowledging them not as abandoned, but instead as art and memorials.

(Submitted to City Council on October 8 and 9, 2013 as Member Motion MM39.19)