

Bryant, Shellie

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Sent: May 25, 2020 8:35 AM
To: City Council
Subject: Email - Communication - Maaya Mitomi - Bicycle Bylaw Review - CK 5300-5-2

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Submitted by anonymous user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

Date Monday, May 25, 2020
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
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Subject Bicycle Bylaw review
Meeting (if known)
Comments
Hello Council and Committees,

I am writing with regards to the bylaws amendments in front of council for bicycles in the city. I have written in on this issue previously and I want to take this opportunity to underline that giving pedestrians 1m of space is almost never practicable leading to yet another opportunity for selective enforcement of bylaws targeting disadvantaged communities.

In more specific terms, I am a confident cyclist and (when not in a pandemic) I regularly bike throughout the city for transport and enjoyment. My partner, being without a license, relies on cycling even more than I do. When we were looking for a house to purchase last year, one of the main features we were looking for was easy and safe connection to the Meewasin so that we can enjoy our commutes in relative comfort and safety. This bylaw amendment threatens to make that impossible, or at least more stressful.

Cycling throughout the bike paths of Saskatoon, I regularly come across pedestrians with their headphones on walking down the middle of the path. Multiple times each ride, I come across groups walking 3 or 4 abreast taking up the entire path. No amount of bell ringing or gentle cajoling can encourage them to move or go single file. At best, I get mere centimetres to pass these pedestrians and go on my way. This bylaw amendment would make those interactions a fineable offense, or at least would place the responsibility on me to prove that it wasn't 'practicable' to give them 1m.

This could have the impact of emboldening select pedestrians, making it less likely that they would give adequate space to pass safely and could increase the number for verbal conflicts between cyclists and these pedestrians. Worse, it renders the entire Meewasin, and most other paths in the city, nearly impossible to use

without being in violation of this bylaw.

My understanding is that this gives enforcement officers discretion around when it is practicable and when it isn't, with no clear guidelines around what that actually means. As with all laws and bylaws that rely on officer discretion, this then becomes a tool and cover to start interactions with people for other concerns. After all, we can't ask to see what is in someone's backpack out of the blue, but we can stop them because they didn't give 1m space when passing a pedestrian. We can't stop card someone just because they are hanging around the trails, but we can if they don't give 1m when passing. This then becomes yet another tool for officers to target 'unsightly' behaviour and people, disproportionately impacting already marginalized communities living in our core neighbourhoods.

In sum, I feel like this amendment to bike laws is ill-considered. It (1) is not practicable across most of the bike network making it (2) an additional burden and stressor on good, considerate cyclists. It (3) ignores the actual problems that cause conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians, i.e. inattention and inconsiderate groups, and (4) could embolden select pedestrians, increasing verbal confrontations. Worst of all, it (5) offers officers another tool to disproportionately target 'unsightly' people and behaviours, further burdening our core communities.

Considering the above arguments, I urge council and committees to remove this amendment from the bike bylaws and make Saskatoon a friendly, less stressful, and safer place to bike.

Attachments

The results of this submission may be viewed at:

