

Janzen, Heather

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Laurence Thompson - Councillor C Block - Cycling Safety - CK 6000-5
Attachments: June 26 - bike safety.docx

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, June 26, 2023 4:55 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Laurence Thompson - Councillor C Block - Cycling Safety - CK 6000-5

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, June 26, 2023 - 16:54

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.: No

Date: Monday, June 26, 2023

To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: He/him/his

First Name: Laurence

Last Name: Thompson

Phonetic spelling of first and/or last name: Tom sun

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED] Elm St. [REDACTED]

Neighbourhood: [Exhibition](#)

City: Saskatoon

Province: Saskatchewan

Postal Code: [REDACTED]

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: City Council

What agenda item do you wish to comment on ?: Item 14.1 Motions notice previously given

Comments:

No comments

Attachments:

- [June 26 - bike safety.docx](#)16.36 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

June 26, 2023

City Council:

I am writing to state my support for motions put forward to Council by Councillor Cynthia Block to address cycling safety concerns at College Dr. and Wiggins Ave. and in Saskatoon in general. The steps proposed are the bare minimum to start addressing cycling safety in our city. I support these and any future motions that address safety for people riding bikes of all ages and abilities.

I used to watch Natasha Fox on the wrestling mats when my daughter also wrestled. I was horrified at her death, but, sadly, not surprised. I hope this city uses this terrible incident as a wake-up call to seriously address safe cycling infrastructure.

I am 70 years old. I have been cycling in Saskatoon for over four decades and continue to cycle. Nowadays, given my age and traffic, I cycle much less, mainly out of safety concerns. When I do cycle now, it is on quiet side streets and off-road pathways. I would never try to cycle downtown or on arterial streets. I would cycle more and leave my car at home if there were more safe pathways.

I have also travelled to many cities in Canada, the US, and Europe, cycling in some, and observing cycling in many. Saskatoon is not only far behind Europe in providing safe infrastructure for cycling, but also behind many Canadian cities, such as Victoria, Vancouver and Edmonton.

The ideal cycling infrastructure for all – cars, bicycles, and pedestrians – is separated pathways for each, with pathways that go to and from places that cyclists and pedestrians – not only cars – want to go. Biking along busy streets, or streets with parked cars, is not safe. I have been doored in my lifetime of cycling. I have hit the side of a van that pull out of a back lane in front of me, either not seeing me or underestimating my speed. I have scrambled out of the way of a truck, that, when I was stopped behind it at a light, suddenly and inexplicably began to back up.

The best examples I have seen of this in Europe were Helsinki and Copenhagen, where there is huge commuter bicycle use (in two northern countries, too!) In Saskatoon, the route I have used that meets this model is the Victoria Ave. pathway from Eighth St. north to the bridge. I enjoy cycling this route, which then connects me to the Meewasin trail and allows me to travel north around downtown. I feel safe on this route. The one drawback is that the Meewasin trail is mixed use, so there, pedestrians and cyclists must watch out for each other. Yes, I have and use a bell. Still, I have had pedestrians walk on the wrong side of the path, or panic and step out to the left in front of me as I pass, or with dogs that will suddenly dart in front of me. Pedestrians and cyclists also should be separated on busy routes such as the Meewasin trail for the safety of both.

I did live in the Varsity View neighbourhood for a dozen years, where I both cycled through the neighbourhood and observed daily the heavy north south bike and pedestrian traffic to and from the university on narrow streets, some with no sidewalks and lined with parked cars. I have also worked at the university and biked to and from home in Caswell Hill over the University Bridge, carefully avoiding other bikers coming in the opposite direction and the many pedestrians on the bridge. These are busy bike and walking routes to a major destination that deserve an overall infrastructure approach to improve safety and access for all. In 2014 I was part of the Varsity View local planning process that identified the intersection of Wiggins and College as a priority for safer cycling. It is now nine years later, with no action on this recommendation.

There are many people in Saskatoon who would take to bikes more often if it were safer with clear, separated routes. These are then bicyclists that motorists no longer have to swear at as they use streets set up for cars (high speed, much parking).

It is unfortunate that it has taken a tragedy of the death a young parent, cycling with her children, to draw attention to cycling-safe infrastructure. It is time for the City to act now to move into the 21st century and support cycling. (I and we pay city taxes too.) Please take at least these small steps now!

Laurence Thompson