

Taking Steps . . .

towards a more



Number 9 October 2005

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If you build it (a parking lot, that is), they will drive

Preliminary research by San Francisco State University appears to show that fewer people in San Francisco would drive if they didn't have parking available. "Fewer parking spaces also means fewer car trips," explained researcher Elmer Tosta to a forum at the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association in July.


The study, admittedly limited in scale, looked at driving habits of residents in eight residential buildings in different



areas of the city. The results showed that people living in more "suburban" areas were more likely to drive to nonwork events. Their commuting patterns were split evenly between driving and other methods, however.

The researchers recommended that San Francisco impose parking *maximums*, instead of minimums, at new residential developments, especially in

areas with good transit services. San Francisco's present planning code generally requires one parking space for every unit of housing. New parking should be underground, to leave more space on the streets for other modes of transportation.

"It's not a matter of . . . cars versus other transportation" said an association spokesman. "San Francisco is not getting any bigger. "If we want our city to grow and prosper, we need to figure out ways to get more people here, not cars." 

Trails and Pathways National Symposium

October 12-15, 2005
Shaw Conference Centre
Edmonton

Edmonton is hosting a national symposium on recreation corridors — greenways, trails, and pathways. Discussions and presentations will also guide us towards better integration of active transportation into our various communities. Perspectives relevant to recreation corridors will be explored from local to national levels.

Dan Burden will give a pre-conference session on Walkable Communities on Wednesday, October 12th. Dan is a nationally recognized authority on bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs, street corridor and intersection design,



Meet Ed . . .
Click on him and he'll walk you to the particular article or website.

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traffic flow and calming, and other design and planning elements that affect roadway environments. He has had 25 years of experience in developing, promoting and evaluating alternative transportation facilities, traffic calming practices and sustainable community design. He served for 16 years as Florida's State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, and he presently works as Executive Director of Walkable Communities, Inc., a non-profit corporation helping North America develop walkable communities. He recently worked with the Highlands/Bellevue communities and the 118th Avenue project here in Edmonton to identify issues and solutions relating to traffic, safety and community ambience — *see elsewhere in this issue for an update on the Highlands Neighbourhood Charrette.*


Other Featured Speakers

Todd Litman is founder and executive director of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, an independent research organization dedicated to developing innovative solutions to transport problems. His work helps to expand the range of impacts and options considered in transportation decision-making, improve evaluation techniques, and make specialized technical concepts accessible to a larger audience.

Brad Stelfox, Adjunct Professor, Department of Environmental Design, University of Calgary.

Jeffrey Ciabotti, VP of Trail Development, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, USA.

You can download the Trails and Pathways National Symposium Brochure now at .

More detailed information is available at , or by contacting the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association:


Steve Allan
 Alberta Recreation and Parks Association
 11759 Groat Road
 Edmonton AB
 T5M 3K6
 Phone: (780) 415-1745
 Fax: (780) 422-2663



Alberta Centre for Active Living

The Alberta Centre for Active Living website allows you to access some of the most up-to-date Alberta research and information on fitness and benefits of a healthy active lifestyle. Services and resources include:

- Research reports on physical activity;
- Resources on older adult physical activity;
- Resources on workplace active living in Alberta,

- including a needs assessment report and a program standard and audit tool;
 - Access to current, credible, and reliable information, resources, and research on physical activity, active living, and health promotion, via their resource library, their publications WellSpring and Research Update, current reports, and links to related web sites;
 - Opportunities for knowledge and skill development through conferences, committee work, and projects.
- The Centre also offers an E-Bulletin that will keep you current on what the Centre is doing, e.g., advocating for physical activity with decision-makers, and provides information about their research and practitioner educational activities. 

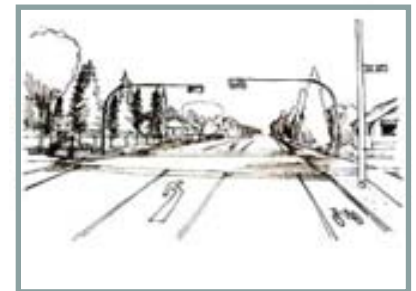
Highlands Neighbourhood Charrette

Update

As a follow-up to the Highlands/Bellevue neighbourhood design charrette held in April, a Steering Committee has been hard at work on fleshing out priorities and plans to make some of the neighbourhood ideas happen.

The number one priority identified during the charrette weekend was to address traffic concerns on 112th Avenue.

Transportation and Streets planning staff are currently gathering information and doing preliminary design



work for a pilot test of road diet ideas along 112th Avenue, between 50th Street and Wayne Gretzky Drive. They hope to get the funding to undertake the project on a trial basis in 2006, but costs are expected to be substantial.

Because 112th is an arterial road it serves a wide community of interest — many commuters from the east side of the city use 112th to get to and from downtown every weekday. What is needed, therefore, is a design that improves the behaviour of traffic, but does not limit the capacity of the roadway.

The Highlands/Bellevue community and the public at large will have an opportunity to provide input before the finalized plans go to Council. Transportation planning staff are careful to point out that the implications of the road diet may not be all positive from the broad public perspective. The Department and the community must

be prepared to address any questions or concerns that may arise during the review and approval phase.

The second priority identified during the charrette was to construct mini circles at selected intersections in the




interior of the community. The Steering Committee has finalized a list of seven intersections for consideration. Since these projects involve modifications to the road right of way, the City will have to approve any changes in terms of safety, maintenance and aesthetics. Because these are being undertaken at the request of the community, area residents will be responsible for all costs and have expressed willingness to assume responsibility for having the construction done. City authorities will have final approval on designs, and will inspect the work during and after construction to ensure it meets all necessary standards. Plans and documents prepared by the Highlands community group will be passed on to the Transportation & Streets Department for review and further action over the coming months.

The third priority — redevelopment of the intersection and adjacent former Safeway site at 118th Avenue and 66th Street — is seen as a longer-term undertaking.




Community residents would like to see this area revived as a destination shopping/gathering centre but there are numerous stakeholders who must be involved. A Neighbourhood Planning Study was done in the 1980s, but needs to be updated. The Steering Committee has

recognized the value in involving the adjacent Montrose community in any planning for the 118th Avenue corridor. Additional considerations are the proposed redevelopment of the Northlands site and the review of the Area Redevelopment Plan. The Steering Committee will be approaching City Council about the need for a planning study to look at this group of issues.

If you would like to consult the complete reports produced during the Highlands/Bellevue Charrette, click on Ed. 


Bike rentals on a grand scale

A new organization called Velo GrandLyon, in Lyon, France has set up a system whereby people rent bikes from public racks at low cost. The scheme is open to anyone with a credit card. It costs 1 euro (\$CDN1.40) an hour, but the first half hour is free. Since the vast majority of trips take less than half an hour, most subscribers pay nothing. In just three months, the program has signed up 15,000 subscribers who take 4,000 trips a day and travel over 24,800 miles a week on 2,000 public bikes at 150 bike stations.

This sort of system has been tried before, but results haven't always been great. The Yellow Bike project in Portland, Oregon ran out of money, and stolen bikes plagued Amsterdam's White Bike system. The Lyon system appears to be working — here's hoping the success continues. 

Don't own a car?

Someone wants to talk to you


Chris Balish, a reporter with Gannett Co, Inc. (www.Gannett.com), is doing research for a new book about transportation alternatives to the private automobile. "I'm looking for real-life success stories from people who do not own/lease a car in the United States or Canada," writes Chris. If you fit this description, Chris' questions are posted as a small .pdf file at this link: 

Please take a few minutes to explain for Chris how you manage without a car.


International Walk to School Week


October 3 - 7

Walk to School Week 2004 attracted 3 million participants from 36 countries around the globe.


Get involved, roll up your sleeves and make things happen for and with the kids. 

Getting things moving in your community


If you found the example of Highlands/Bellevue  inspiring, or would like to try to generate interest in walkability in your own community, the following website may be a good starting point.


The Active Living Resource Center (ALRC) is introducing the new Get Started Studio. This interactive process gets you and your local organization directly involved with their staff as you start making your neighborhood or community more walkable and bicycle friendly. Rather than giving you off-the-shelf resources, the ALRC will offer guidance on solving your local problems with regard to creating or improving pedestrian and bicycle access and transportation. The ALRC is particularly interested in helping create active living opportunities for underprivileged youth. 

A note of caution: the site and programs are fundamentally American. Many of the suggestions made are not employed locally and may in fact go against some of the policy and direction under which local municipalities operate.

Much, much closer to home, the ActivEdmonton website  has loads of great active living ideas, and will be focusing on active communities in upcoming months.

More on road diets

Walkable Edmonton has produced a one-page brochure giving a thumbnail sketch of the ideas behind road diets. You can download a copy; follow Ed → 

If you want to find out more on the effectiveness of road diets, Ed can take you to a recent but rather lengthy and academic study of the effect of four-lane to three-lane conversion on the number of crashes and crash rates in Iowa roads. 

The study found that conversion from four to three-lane roads, while effective year-round, is particularly effective in reducing the expected number of crashes in nice weather.

If you would like to have your name added to our electronic mailing list, please click on the following icon:



If you do not have an email connection we can send you copies by mail. Please drop us a line at:
Walkable Edmonton, c/o Kate Gunn
Edmonton Community Services
P.O. Box 2359
Edmonton, AB
T5J 2R7

"We have pretty much come to assume that the motor vehicle's destructive dominance of public space is the natural order of things, just as New Yorkers a century ago assumed cholera epidemics, tenement fires and child labor were inevitable and unavoidable products of big-city life."

Aaron Naparstek
Columnist, New York Press

"[The baby boomer] generation is retiring differently, such as retiring in stages. Now that their children are out of the house, they are opening small businesses that they always wanted to have. Downtowns need to tap into that interest. They want walkable downtowns, eclectic food and entertainment choices, same as the creative class."

Valecia Crisafulli
National Trust for Historic Preservation

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