

# REPORT ON DOWNTOWN BICYCLE RACKS

The 2006 Work Plan for the Transportation Commission includes a work item to recommend locations for additional “user-friendly” bike racks in the downtown.

The work item was evaluated on two fronts: What constitutes a “user-friendly” bike rack, and what locations are appropriate for new racks. We used input from the Centre Region Bike Coalition and several sources from around the country to answer the first question. The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals has produced a document (attached) designed to assist with the selection and placement of bicycle racks for short-term parking. The recommendations included in this document are reflected in bicycle parking ordinances in cities around the county.

There are currently 61 racks located in the rights-of-way in the downtown. Of those, 56 are the “hitching post” racks we have been installing for the last few years. The others are inverted U-shaped racks. <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikepark.pdf> There has been some local criticism of the hitching post racks but they are recognized internationally as a good alternative for narrow spaces and, as such, are included among the recommended racks. That their design elements reflect the benches selected for the downtown streetscape is another plus. The extensive bike parking information available from Madison, WI, points out that, because of their size, the “post and ring” racks tend to be single bike racks rather than accommodating two bikes. Off-street racks located on Borough-owned property include some of the recommended racks, specifically the Cora Expo Rack at the Municipal Building. Schlow Library installed two identical racks in front of their new building. We also provide racks that reflect the “worst” of bike parking facilities because they support only the wheels when used as designed, such as the “comb” style bike rack seen at the Pugh Street Garage and elsewhere. The jury is still out on the “wave” racks at the Fraser Plaza Garage.

The second question, where to locate additional racks, is one that must reflect need and available space for the appropriate rack. While available space is an important criteria, need must be the determining factor for a rack to be installed. The limited resources we have are wasted when bike racks are installed where they will not be used. Nearly half of the current on-street racks are located along College Avenue. Allen and Pugh Streets also have significant concentrations of racks. These numbers, though, reflect demand for bicycle parking in the busiest retail areas of downtown. One other caveat: my review of current facilities and usage and that conducted by members of the CRBC were conducted in winter when fewer bicyclists mount up. Peak bicycling times are in fairer weather, so follow up is required after spring (weather) arrives.

CRBC members commented that additional on-street racks are needed in the area of The Waffle Shop on East College Avenue, between Locust Lane and Fraser Street on College Avenue, and in front of Webster’s on Allen Street. My review of street fixtures indicated that there are a number of additional locations on College from Garner to Fraser that could accommodate hitching post racks. Pedestrian nodes in various locations and any wide sidewalks should be evaluated for possible installation of multi-bike racks or multiple hitching post racks. Even on a cold winter day, the three racks within 50 feet of Webster’s on South Allen were full and bikes were locked to trash and recycling containers as well. There is no room, however, for additional racks without removing existing fixtures. Other specific on-street rack locations I identified are:

- In front of Green Bowl on Beaver Avenue
- In front of Cold Stone Creamery on Beaver Avenue
- In front of Baby’s on Garner Street

Off-street locations present opportunities for placing larger racks that would accommodate more bicycles. Existing comb-style racks must be replaced with "coat-hanger" style racks such as the Cora EXPO® rack. McAllister Deck is the only downtown parking structure that contains no bicycle parking. There are a several locations in and around the deck where racks could be installed. Existing racks in parking structures could benefit from improved signage, calling attention to the available covered bicycle parking. While exposed to the elements, municipal parking lots could also be reviewed for possible rack installations.

Finally, future installation of pedestrian nodes may present opportunities to install multi-bike parking areas incorporated into pedestrian node design. A 20-foot extension of a pedestrian node could accommodate a rack of sufficient size to park 10 or more bicycles outside the typical pedestrian pathways. This option should be engineered and evaluated thoroughly before future pedestrian nodes are built.

In summary, additional on-street racks can be installed in several locations now and reviewing bicycle parking patterns in fairer weather may reveal other desirable locations. Off-street racks should be standardized and McAllister Deck should be evaluated for installation of multi-bike racks. Finally, where sidewalks are sufficiently wide or could be made wider (pedestrian nodes) installing multi-bike racks should receive strong consideration.

Attached with the memo was "Bicycle Parking Guidelines" as recommended by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, which can be found at the following website:

<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikepark.pdf>

The Centre Region Bicycle Coalition also recommended bike racks by DERO, Inc. Examples can be found at the following websites:

[http://www.dero.com/brochures/bike\\_bike\\_rack.pdf](http://www.dero.com/brochures/bike_bike_rack.pdf)

<http://www.dero.com/custom.html>