

Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Council, June 2009

Breakout Session: Bikes and Transit

Led by Dan Thomas (CTA) and Barb Nelson (Metra)

Wednesday, June 17, 2009 at Daley Bicentennial Plaza Fieldhouse

Prepared by Jack Ringness

Session 1

Metra

Barb began by asking how do cyclist know about Metra's bikes on trains program and can it be made better?

Steve – Metra did a good job of informing riders about the program, people know from taking the trains and seeing signs posted in the train cars as well as the picture and literature in the train schedules.

Lowell – Metra could make more “on-car” announcements about the program and informing riders of the designated spot for bikes.

Rob – Problems with bikes on trains: Black-out dates, only bungee cords allowed to secure bikes, conductor attitude to bikes. Suggests “conductor discretion” at all times, would allow bikes on rush hour trains that are not full (after a few stops and people have gotten off). Also would like a pilot program with one car per train designated as a “bike car” would allow as many bikes as could be fit reasonably and safely. CMAQ money?

Barb – 31,000 bikes on Metra in 2007, 126,000 bikes on Metra in 2008. Conductor counts, so could be more.

Main points:

- 1) Increase ridership – inform more people, make it easier
- 2) Blackout dates – relax or remove and use conductor discretion
- 3) Designated bike car – could this happen?

CTA

Dan's first comment was on the CTA website, he would like to improve it so that it is more convenient for cyclists to use.

Rob – Integrate CTA website/trip planner with google maps to plan multi-modal trips.

Dan – How to make bikes safer at stations and reduce theft (cameras are not feasible; every station is designed differently and not enough employees to watch cameras).

Put stickers in stations informing people how to lock most effectively.

(888) YOUR – CTA call to report abandoned bikes at stations (311 is only for bikes in right-of-way).

Rob – Heard the new bus bike holders do not accommodate bikes with front racks, needs to be fixed as more people ride commuter-style.

Dan – Buses are supposed to be inspected when they arrive at the garage every night, look for damage, including bike racks. Call (888) YOUR – CTA to report broken rack; make sure to record the bus number (4 digits). Bike racks are use at your own risk.

Steve – Put notice on bus for how to put your bike on the rack.

Chicago Department of Transportation

Rob – Would like to see CTA’s “no bikes on trains if under 14” policy relaxed for bike the drive if children with parents.

Dan – Likes this, wants to try and accommodate this idea.

Main points:

- 1) Stickers in stations – how to protect your bike
- 2) 1(888) YOUR – CTA – call for abandoned bikes or any other bike related issues and it will go to Dan’s desk.
- 3) Relax age policy – possibly allow children with bikes if they are with their parents for bike the drive.

Session 2

Metra

Greg – Blackout dates are much better than when the program started thinks dates blacked out all make sense

Chris – Wants a designated “bike car.”

Barb – Train platforms would need to be made longer, accommodate more cars, put in the “bike car,” would have a high cost.

Dan – Suggested a study to find the feasibility of adding a “bike car” to trains.

Greg – Wants more advertisement for “bikes on trains,” maybe a billboard on the expressway. Suggested a study for: people turned away with bikes, which train lines have the most bikes, what time are the trains full of bikes. Take this data and maybe have a pilot program on one line with a “bike car”

Barb – Would promoting “Bike to Metra” instead of drive to Metra and get on a train be a good idea? Do this during bike to work week or all year long? 230 bike parking spots have been added to the Naperville train station, BNSF line is the busiest for all commuters, not sure about bikes.

CTA

Greg – Train bus drivers how to instruct cyclist on using the bike racks, they shouldn’t help put the bike on but they should be able to tell you how to use the rack.

Dan – How to make bike parking safer at stations?

Chris – More lighting around bike racks would help, have CTA attendant include bike racks in walk of station.

Greg – Partnership with Active Trans to educate more riders. Partnership with bike companies/lock companies, donate abandoned bikes or locks (locks can be re-keyed by company), community outreach.

Chris – More partnership between Metra, CTA and Pace to better serve cyclists.