

Pien, Janet

From: Don Thomson [dthomson@wisc.edu]
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2012 7:16 PM
To: Pien, Janet; Tolley, Sabrina
Subject: PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE/MOTOR VEHICLE COMMISSION Agenda Item

This is my commentary for attachment to the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission meeting on Southwest Path lighting:

> I'm a daily early morning pedestrian commuter on the Southwest Commuter Path, definitely in the dark in the winter, and also use the path for biking. I'm 61 and have never owned a car, so take both walking and biking VERY seriously. On my pre-dawn walking commute on the path I wear both front and back flashing lights and also a reflective triangle on my back. My bicycles are also well equipped with lights and reflectors.

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> I know from personal experience how hazardous careless bicycling can be. My right elbow is held together with steel plates and bolts, a "gift" I received as a pedestrian from a bicyclist on campus in the middle of the day who didn't understand that traffic signals applied to him. That one put me in the hospital for over a week and left me with permanent limited extension in my arm.

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> So needless to say, I am THRILLED that we have a quarter of a million dollars to spend on bicycle safety. But lighting the path is definitely not our first and foremost need. What we desperately need instead is to educate bicyclists on safety and responsible biking at ANY time of the day, and to enforce existing bicycle laws.

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> I was a passenger in a car a few days ago and watched as a Spandex-clad bicyclist in front of us sped through two stop signs without stopping or even slowing down. When we caught up with him I leaned out the window and shared with him, politely, the simple fact that bicycles have the same legal requirement to stop at stop signs as cars do. He replied with great disdain that "There wasn't anybody there." I see this kind of behavior by bicyclists just about every single day as I walk to and from work. As a serious cyclist myself, I think it's INCREDIBLY important to communicate to drivers that I do indeed know and respect the rules of the road so that cars take me seriously. It infuriates me to see that undermined by cyclists who don't seem to have a clue that simple traffic laws apply to them as well.

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> I TOTALLY support the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin's efforts to promote bicycle commuting as a serious form of transportation and a legitimate alternative to having more cars on the road. But from my daily observations it's clear that we've got a VERY long way to go before the majority of bicyclists behave in a way that will allow this to happen. Lighting this section of the bike path isn't going to remedy that. Spending money instead on education and enforcement will. Let's examine our priorities and put our money where it's most needed.

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