BMTS Article Digest
November - December 2011

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed in the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page of www.bmtsonline.com.

Scott

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR BICYCLING & WALKING
bikewalk.org
BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Take a look at the National Center for Bicycling & Walking's newsletter, **CenterLines**. You can also arrange to have it emailed directly to you.

See http://www.bikewalk.org/newsletterarchives.php

CenterLines is the bi-weekly electronic news bulletin of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking. ***CenterLines*** is our way of quickly delivering news and information you can use to create more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities.

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pressconnects.com

Ride share program updated

8:24 AM, Nov. 15, 2011

Broome-Tioga Greenride, an Internet-based ride sharing program that began July 2009, has recently been upgraded.

The program, sponsored by the Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study, now includes ride share matching for one-time events; matching multiple trips for different times and purposes such as commuting to work, going out to shop and traveling to places of worship; and ride matching for those who wish to walk or bike; an improved commute and travel calendar tool.

Visit www.BroomeTioga.Greenride.com for more information, or contact Scott Reigle, BMTS Greenride Administrator, at (607) 778-2443 or sreigle@co.broome.ny.us.

— Jennifer Micale

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pressconnects.com

Binghamton to plan Main Street redevelopment

Grant to address zoning overhaul, safety issues

7:05 PM, Nov. 21, 2011

Written by
Nancy Dooling

BINGHAMTON -- The city will use a $485,058 federal grant to pay for a plan to develop 1.7 miles along Main Street, including a complete zoning overhaul, city officials said.

The money will also be used to fund initiatives led by residents to improve neighborhood safety and update the city's 2003 comprehensive plan, said Mayor Matthew T. Ryan. The initiatives will take place over two years.

City officials said Monday they will release additional information Tuesday detailing how the grant will be used, said Andrew Block, executive assistant to Ryan.

The awarding of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs Sustainable Housing and Communities grant was announced Monday by U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Hurley, and U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.

"Community based planning has already done a great deal to improve the aesthetics of the downtown corridor and other parts of the city," Hinchey said. "By integrating a Main Street revitalization plan, we can take another step in the right direction, making the area more attractive to businesses so that we can create jobs and ensure that Binghamton remains a great place to live and raise a family."

The plan will focus on beautifying the city's Main Street corridor through renovations and rehabilitations of existing buildings. It will also allow for planned use of existing lots where buildings have been torn down, Hinchey said.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's $28 million Community Challenge Planning Grant Program efforts include amending or replacing local master plans, zoning and building codes to promote mixed-use development, affordable housing, the reuse of older buildings and structures for new purposes.

The program also supports the development of affordable housing through the development and adoption of inclusionary zoning ordinances and other activities to support planning implementation, Hinchey said.

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pressconnects.com

City in New York uncovering buried river for new park

Officials hope to spark business, jobs

09:52 PM, Nov. 13, 2011

Written by
Jim Fitzgerald
Associated Press

YONKERS -- A struggling city is trying to transform a featureless downtown parking lot into a garden spot, principally by uncovering and rechanneling part of a river that had been paved over for nearly a century.

The "daylighting" of the Saw Mill River in Yonkers involves diverting part of its underground flow into a newly dug riverbed carefully designed to teem with fish and vegetation.

Around it will be a tree- and flower-filled park that officials say will pulse with poetry readings, jazz concerts and sculptures that children can climb.

It will be dotted with kiosks offering interactive lessons on the environment and will be brightly lit to encourage nighttime use.

"Instead of a parking lot, we'll have this beautiful four acres of greenery, complete with a real river that will suddenly reappear," said Jim Pinto, the city's director of downtown and waterfront development. "Basically, it's a buried treasure."

Yonkers is hoping the park and river walk, just yards from where the Saw Mill meets the Hudson River, will be a magnet for development, as has been the case for similar though grander projects in Providence, R.I., and San Antonio.

In San Antonio, the bustling, miles-long River Walk, which was built in the 1940s along the San Antonio River, is one of Texas' biggest tourist attractions.

"We're not hoping to be San Antonio, really, but we'll be happy if we can capture some of what San Antonio has," Pinto said.

"This will help make Yonkers a destination. We're hoping for retail and residential investment and tourism."

In Providence, a three-river junction that had been mostly paved over was unearthed, creating a Waterplace Park that opened in the 1990s.

The park has sparked more than a billion dollars in retail, residential and tourist development, said Dan Bodewin of the Providence Foundation.

Yonkers can use that kind of help.

The city of 200,000 just north of the Bronx struggles annually with budget deficits and school standards and last month saw its credit rating cut two notches by Moody's.

But some residents think the $19 million spent on the Saw Mill project could have been better used.

Saunta Williams, 52, who has custody of four grandchildren, looked at a rendering of the park-to-be last week.

"It's beautiful," she said, "but it won't help the poor."

She said the money is needed in schools.

But Spark Meriwether, 22, said he's hoping for a business boom around the park and some job opportunities.

"They say there'll be restaurants with extra tables outside and new stores, so maybe people can find some work," he said.

Mayor Philip Amicone says the project "was an investment in the future and I think it was well worth it. ... It will pay us back many times, I'm sure."

The river was channeled into its concrete flume in 1920 to fight flooding, make space above -- and hide a smelly, polluted waterway, Pinto said.

"At the time, it was an open sewer," he said.

The river, which originates 20 miles north near Chappaqua, had contributed heavily to industrialization, starting with a saw mill in about 1650, according to the Saw Mill River Coalition, which works to revitalize the river.

The river's health has improved since it went underground, but the park project includes funding to keep monitoring it for evidence of sewage leaks, metals and other pollutants, said the coalition's Andrew Boyd.

At one point in the diverted river, a submerged screen will block and collect trash that would otherwise drift into the Hudson.

Pinto estimated it would stop 175 tons of water bottles, plastic foam and other floatables each year.

The park is expected to be finished next year. But on Dec. 6, a sluice gate will be used to divert some of the river's flow from its underground culvert into the man-made riverbed, which currently holds shallow groundwater.

The riverbed has been lined with river stones and boulders and features a fish ladder and a rocky area that will produce "riffles, not rapids," Pinto said.

Where the greenery will be is still mostly bare soil, packed hard by earth movers.

But the view from the park -- in certain directions -- emphasizes its potential.

The cliffs of the Palisades rise sharply from the opposite bank of the Hudson.

On the Yonkers side, new apartment buildings herald gentrification.

Among the structures surrounding the park are the century-old, but recently restored, beaux arts Yonkers train station; a library branch, in a transformed building that once housed the Otis elevator company; and Philipse Manor Hall, parts of which date to the 17th century.

Until that sluice gate is opened, the Saw Mill will continue flowing only below street level. But it's no longer completely out of view.

During a recent visit, a crane began lifting off the top section of the concrete culvert, allowing daylight to hit that stretch of water for the first time in 91 years.

As the first arch-shaped slice was lifted away, it revealed a rushing torrent, perhaps fed by the previous week's freak snowstorm.

"Look at it sparkle!" exclaimed Ann-Marie Mitroff, river project director for Groundwork Hudson Valley, an affiliate in the project. "This is a jewel."

Once the waters from the Saw Mill rush into the manmade riverbed, plants will go in, insects will appear and fish including the herring, alewife and American eel are expected to take up residence.

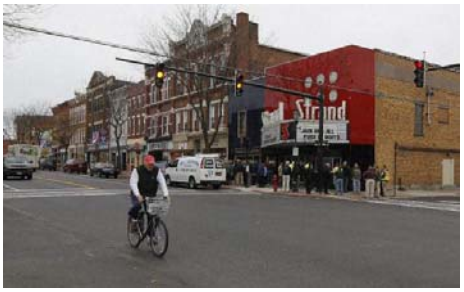
They can feel safe in the new river, Pinto said.

Fishing won't be permitted.

Merchants rejoice at reopened Route 19

12:54 AM, Nov. 15, 2011

Written by
Meaghan M. McDermott
Staff writer



Business owners on Brockport's Main Street are relieved to have construction work on Route 19 finally finished. Officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday. / Jamie Germano/staff photographer

Road construction in Brockport has been completed and this round-about at Lake Road and East Avenue was part of the project. / Jamie Germano/staff photographer

BROCKPORT — After nearly three years of construction, Route 19 (Main Street) through the village of Brockport is open for business.

State Department of Transportation and village officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday near the intersection of Main and State streets.

"This community has waited a long time for this improvement project and showed a lot of patience during the construction phase," said Bob Traver, DOT regional director. "We are proud of the finished product and think all those who drive, bike and walk along Main Street will, too, be pleased for many years to come." Business owners rejoiced at the reopening.

"The construction has definitely had an effect on business, and is still having an effect," said Archie Kutz, owner of Lift Bridge Book Shop at 45 Main St. "When drivers come through and are disturbed by the detours and the construction, they find another way to go places. Now the challenge we have is to re-reroute our customers' thinking so they know we're still here and waiting for them to come back."

The $5.6 million project to upgrade 1.3 miles of Route 19 from Brockport's north boundary to its south boundary began last September, although it was preceded by a water and sewer project that began in 2009. The most recent work included replacing the pavement, curbs, storm drainage system, sidewalks and culverts.

Mast-arm traffic signal poles replaced traditional signals at Adams Street, Park Avenue and Fair Street, and Erie and State streets. Curb extensions were added at Water, Market and Clinton streets. More than 140 new trees and other landscaping features will be incorporated into the project.

"The new road welcomes visitors to the downtown area and encourages patrons to walk along Main Street looking for special treasures and gifts," said Jo Matela, president of the Brockport Merchants Association. "We want people to know the detours are gone, there is plenty of parking and the downtown merchants are open for the holiday shopping season."

NY Times
November 25, 2011

The Death of the Fringe Suburb

By CHRISTOPHER B. LEINBERGER

Washington

DRIVE through any number of outer-ring suburbs in America, and you'll see boarded-up and vacant strip malls, surrounded by vast seas of empty parking spaces. These forlorn monuments to the real estate crash are not going to come back to life, even when the economy recovers. And that's because the demand for the housing that once supported commercial activity in many exurbs isn't coming back, either.

By now, nearly five years after the housing crash, most Americans understand that a mortgage meltdown was the catalyst for the Great Recession, facilitated by underregulation of finance and reckless risk-taking. Less understood is the divergence between center cities and inner-ring suburbs on one hand, and the suburban fringe on the other.

It was predominantly the collapse of the car-dependent suburban fringe that caused the mortgage collapse.

In the late 1990s, high-end outer suburbs contained most of the expensive housing in the United States, as measured by price per square foot, according to data I analyzed from the Zillow real estate database. Today, the most expensive housing is in the high-density, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods of the center city and inner suburbs. Some of the most expensive neighborhoods in their metropolitan areas are Capitol Hill in Seattle; Virginia Highland in Atlanta; German Village in Columbus, Ohio, and Logan Circle in Washington. Considered slums as recently as 30 years ago, they have been transformed by gentrification.

Simply put, there has been a profound structural shift — a reversal of what took place in the 1950s, when drivable suburbs boomed and flourished as center cities emptied and withered.

The shift is durable and lasting because of a major demographic event: the convergence of the two largest generations in American history, the baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and the millennials (born between 1979 and 1996), which today represent half of the total population.

Many boomers are now empty nesters and approaching retirement. Generally this means that they will downsize their housing in the near future. Boomers want to live in a walkable urban downtown, a suburban town center or a small town, according to a recent survey by the National Association of Realtors.

The millennials are just now beginning to emerge from the nest — at least those who can afford to live on their own. This coming-of-age cohort also favors urban downtowns and suburban town centers — for lifestyle reasons and the convenience of not having to own cars.

Over all, only 12 percent of future homebuyers want the drivable suburban-fringe houses that are in such oversupply, according to the Realtors survey. This lack of demand all but guarantees continued price declines. Boomers selling their fringe housing will only add to the glut. Nothing the federal government can do will reverse this.

Many drivable-fringe house prices are now below replacement value, meaning the land under the house has no value and the sticks and bricks are worth less than they would cost to replace. This means there is no financial incentive to maintain the house; the next dollar invested will not be recouped upon resale. Many of these houses will be converted to rentals, which are rarely as well maintained as owner-occupied housing. Add the fact that the houses were built with cheap materials and methods to begin with, and you see why many fringe suburbs are turning into slums, with abandoned housing and rising crime.

The good news is that there is great pent-up demand for walkable, centrally located neighborhoods in cities like Portland, Denver, Philadelphia and Chattanooga, Tenn. The transformation of suburbia can be seen in places like Arlington County, Va., Bellevue, Wash., and Pasadena, Calif., where strip malls have been bulldozed and replaced by higher-density mixed-use developments with good transit connections.

Reinvesting in America's built environment — which makes up a third of the country's assets — and reviving the construction trades are vital for lifting our economic growth rate. (Disclosure: I am the president of Locus, a coalition of real estate developers and investors and a project of Smart Growth America, which supports walkable neighborhoods and transit-oriented development.)

Some critics will say that investment in the built environment risks repeating the mistake that caused the recession in the first place. That reasoning is as faulty as saying that technology should have been neglected after the dot-com bust, which precipitated the 2001 recession.

The cities and inner-ring suburbs that will be the foundation of the recovery require significant investment at a time of government retrenchment. Bus and light-rail systems, bike lanes and pedestrian improvements — what traffic engineers dismissively call "alternative transportation" — are vital. So is the repair of infrastructure like roads and bridges. Places as diverse as Los Angeles, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Dallas, Charlotte, Denver and Washington have recently voted to pay for "alternative transportation," mindful of the dividends to be reaped. As Congress works to reauthorize highway and transit legislation, it must give metropolitan areas greater flexibility for financing transportation, rather than mandating that the vast bulk of the money can be used only for roads.

For too long, we over-invested in the wrong places. Those retail centers and subdivisions will never be worth what they cost to build. We have to stop throwing good money after bad. It is time to instead build what the market wants: mixed-income, walkable cities and suburbs that will support the knowledge economy, promote environmental sustainability and create jobs.

Christopher B. Leinberger is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and professor of practice in urban and regional planning at the University of Michigan.

November 17th, 2011 | Go to Placemaking Blog Home

Are Complete Streets Incomplete?

Posted by: Gary Toth

"The desire to go 'through' a place must be balanced with the desire to go 'to' a place." *— Pennsylvania and New Jersey DOTs' 2007 "Smart Transportation Guide."*

The "complete streets" movement has taken the United States by storm, and has even taken root in countries such as Canada and Australia. Few movements have done so much to influence needed policy change in the transportation world. As of today, almost 300 jurisdictions around the U.S. have adopted complete streets policies or have committed to do so. This is an amazing accomplishment that sets the stage for communities to reframe their future around people instead of cars.

But communities cannot stop there. Complete streets is largely an engineering policy that, according to the National Complete Streets Coalition website, "ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind — including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities."

Getting transportation professionals to think about including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users is a key first step in creating great places and livable communities. But that is not enough to make places that truly work for people — “streets as places.” The planning process itself needs to be turned upside-down.

We at PPS like to say that engineers can ruin a good street, but they cannot create a good street — a street that is truly complete — through engineering alone. A small but growing group of communities have recognized that to really “complete their streets,” they need genuinely place-based and community-based transportation policies that go beyond routine accommodation.

“The design of a street is only one aspect of its effectiveness. How the street fits within the surrounding transportation network and supports adjacent land uses will also be important to its effectiveness.” — *Charlotte “Urban Street Design Guidelines”*

This illustration from Indianapolis's "Multimodal Corridor and Public Space Design Guidelines" reflects how the new wave of street policies specifies Placemaking guidance as well as how to accommodate all modes.

Communities such as Indianapolis, Charlotte, Savannah, San Francisco, and Denver have created community-based street policies that turn the transportation planning and design process upside-down, acknowledging that the role of streets is to build communities, not the other way around. The example from the Indianapolis “Multimodal Corridor and Public Space Design Guidelines” illustrates how this new genre of street policies specifies Placemaking guidance as well as how to accommodate all modes.

PPS is helping communities realize a different vision of what transportation can be. We've worked in small communities in rural areas, such as Brunswick, Me.; Newport, Vt.; and Tupelo, Miss. We've gone to larger communities such as San Antonio, Tex., Los Angeles, and San Francisco. On our travels, we've conducted capacity-building workshops, helped develop street typologies, created visions for right-sized streets, and worked on community-based transportation policies.

Place-based plans, policies, and programs allow downtown and village streets to become destinations worth visiting, not just throughways to and from the workplace or the regional mall. Transit stops and stations can make commuting by rail or bus a pleasure. Neighborhood streets can be places where parents feel safe letting their children play, and commercial strips can be designed as grand boulevards, safe for walking and cycling, allowing for both through and local traffic.

Countries outside the U.S. are not immune from focusing on street design as an isolated discipline. After World War II, many countries around the world became enamored of a planning approach that was driven by traffic engineering. Some, like the Netherlands, reversed course relatively quickly and returned to community-based, livable street design. Ultimately, the Dutch went even further in the right direction, in part thanks to the influence of the legendary Hans Monderman (himself a traffic engineer), who developed and promoted the concept of "Shared Space." Monderman's designs emphasized human interaction over mechanical traffic devices. By taking away conventional regulatory traffic controls, he proved that human interaction and caution would naturally yield a safer, more pleasant environment for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.

We are poised to create a future where priority is given to the appropriate mode, whether it be pedestrian, bicycle, transit, or automobile. Cars have their place, but the rediscovered importance of walking and "alternative transportation modes" will bring more people out onto the streets — allowing these spaces to serve as public forums where neighbors and friends can connect with one another.

In order to truly complete our streets, they need to be planned and designed appropriately, using the following guidelines.

Rule One: Think of Streets as Public Spaces

Not so long ago, this idea was considered preposterous in many communities. "Public space" meant parks and little else. Transit stops were simply places to wait. Streets had been surrendered to traffic for so long that we forgot they could be public spaces. Now we are slowly getting away from this narrow perception of streets as conduits for cars and beginning to think of streets as places.

A street in Amsterdam.

Streets and parking can take up as much as a third of a community's land, and designing them solely for the comfort of people in cars, and then only for the most congested hour of the day, has significant ramifications for the livability and economics of a community. Under the planning and engineering principles of the past 70 years, people have for all intents and purposes given up their rights to this public property. Streets were once a place where we stopped for conversation and children played, but now they are the exclusive domain of cars. Even when sidewalks are present along high-speed streets, they feel inhospitable and out of place.

The road, the parking lot, the transit terminal — these places can serve more than one mode (cars) and more than one purpose (movement). Sidewalks are the urban arterials of cities. Make them wide, well lit, stylish, and accommodating. Give them benches, outdoor cafés, and public art. Roads can be shared spaces, with pedestrian refuges, bike lanes, and on-street parking. Parking lots can become public markets on weekends. Even major urban arterials can be designed to provide for dedicated bus lanes, well-designed bus stops that serve as gathering places, and multimodal facilities for bus rapid transit or other forms of travel. Roads are places too!

Rule Two: Plan for Community Outcomes

Communities need to first envision what kinds of places and interactions they want to support, then plan a transportation system consistent with this collective community vision. Transportation is a means for accomplishing important goals — like economic productivity and social engagement — not an end in itself.

Great transportation facilities truly improve the public realm. They add value to adjacent properties and to the community as a whole. Streets that fit community contexts help increase developable land, create open space, and reconnect communities to their neighbors, a waterfront, or a park. They can reduce household dependency on the automobile, allowing children to walk to school, and helping build healthier lifestyles by increasing the potential to walk or cycle. Think public benefit, not just private convenience.

Due to peak-hour design, Speer Boulevard in Denver limits the northward expansion of downtown Denver while remaining empty at midday. Instead of adding value to the community, it actually limits the city economically, socially, and in every other way. It doesn't even do what it was designed to do: solve congestion during peak hour. I-25, just to the north at the top of the photo, is bumper to bumper during peak hours. The 10-lane cross-sections become a mere parking lot.

Designing street networks around places benefits the overall transportation system. Great places — popular spots with a good mix of people and activities, which can be comfortably reached by foot, bike, and transit — put little strain on the transportation system. Poor land use planning, by contrast, generates thousands of unnecessary vehicle trips, clogging up roads and further degrading the quality of adjacent places.

Transportation professionals can no longer pretend that land use is not their business. Transportation projects that were not integrated with land use planning have created too many negative impacts to ignore.

Transportation — the process of going to a place — can be wonderful if we rethink the idea of transportation itself. We must remember that transportation is the journey; enhancing the community is the goal.

Rule Three: Design for Appropriate Speeds

Streets need to be designed in a way that induces traffic speeds appropriate for that particular context. Whereas freeways — which must not drive through the hearts of cities — should accommodate regional mobility, speeds on other roads need to reflect that these are places for people, not just conduits for cars. Desired speeds can be attained with a number of design tools, including changes in roadway widths and intersection design. Placemaking can also be a strategy for controlling speeds,. Minimal building setbacks, trees, and sidewalks with lots of activity can affect the speed at which motorists comfortably drive.

Speed kills the sense of place. Cities and town centers are destinations, not raceways, and commerce needs traffic — foot traffic. You cannot buy a dress from the driver’s seat of a car. Access, not automobiles, should be the priority in city centers. Don’t ban cars, but remove the presumption in their favor. People first!

Moving Beyond Complete Streets to Build Communities

Complete streets policies support these three rules. More importantly, they open the door for new ways of thinking about how the transportation profession should approach streets. But communities cannot get complacent and

expect transportation planners to carry the whole load of creating great places. Instead, community leaders and advocates need to collaborate with the profession to tap their engineering skills to help build streets that are places.

Using an “upside-down planning approach,” this new collaboration can help the United State achieve success in tackling public health problems, climate change, energy consumption, and a failing economy. We can once again foster streets that are the cornerstone of great places.

To see the palette of PPS tools that are available to help you create streets that are places and foster “Building Communities Through Transportation,” visit our transportation services page.

☆ *This article provides some ideas for potential volunteer involvement in similar data collection projects within the Binghamton Urban Area.*

The Salt Lake Tribune

Count on cyclists: Number of bikers in Salt Lake City is growing

By the count • According to a survey, 27 percent more cyclists are hitting the streets in capital this year than last.

By heather may

The Salt Lake Tribune

Published: November 30, 2011 11:24AM

Updated: November 30, 2011 05:14PM

Trent Nelson | The Salt Lake Tribune Salt Lake City is counting the number of bicyclists on the streets and found a 27 percent increase from 2010 to 2011. The location with the most bicycle traffic is the intersection of Sunnyside and Arapeen in Salt Lake City, Utah, Wednesday, November 23, 2011

More cyclists are taking to Salt Lake City streets.

Volunteer counters logged nearly 5,500 cyclists at 12 intersections around the city during September — a 27 percent increase over the same time period and locations last year.

“We want to get a sense of how many bicyclists there are in the city and how bicycle use is changing,” said Becka Roolf, the city’s bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, who was “pleasantly surprised” by the growth. Salt Lake City’s increase was higher than New York City’s, she said.

The increase doesn’t bring money, though it could be used to justify adding or improving facilities.

The count, the city’s second, is part of a national effort to estimate existing and future demand for bicycle services, according to the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project, which helps agencies such as Salt Lake City conduct counts.

Without hard numbers, it’s difficult to justify funding and setting aside rights-of-way for cyclists, the organization notes. The project is sponsored by Alta Planning and Design, which focuses on building infrastructure for cycling and walking and the Institute of Transportation Engineers’ Pedestrian and Bicycle Council.

Salt Lake City is committed to cycling: About 50 miles of new on-road bikeways and “green shared lanes” have recently been added. That helped the city gain “silver-level” status as a Bicycle Friendly Community in 2010 by the League of American Bicyclists. Roolf said the city wants to reach gold, and one way to get there is to increase the number of cyclists on the street.

“It’s the ultimate vote with your feet,” she said.

Sixty volunteers spent 160 hours counting cyclists at 16 locations — 12 of which were the same spots as last year. During the second week of September, they tracked bikers from 5-7 p.m. on weekdays and from noon to 2 p.m. on weekends.

The intersection with the highest number of cyclists was Sunnyside Avenue at Arapeen Drive — probably because both commuters and recreational cyclists use that route.

The lowest volume was at North Temple and Redwood Road; cyclists were likely avoiding the TRAX line construction.

The biggest jump in cyclists was seen at 900 West and 1700 South. Roolf attributes the bump to bike lane improvements on 1700 South.

Counters also logged whether cyclists wore helmets — encouraged, but not required by law — or rode on the sidewalk. The city forbids riding on sidewalks downtown.

The survey found 54 percent of riders wore helmets — rates were higher on roadways with high speed limits, such as Beck Street. About 30 percent rode on sidewalks, with high rates in Sugar House and on North Temple.

Places like Sunnyside had low rates of sidewalk riders. Roolf speculates cyclists may feel safer on roads because there are so many of them.

The count was coordinated by University of Utah student Andrew Coffey, an intern from the Hinckley Institute of Politics. Cyclists at the U. were also counted this year as the school finalizes a bicycle and pedestrian master plan.

He attributes the increase to the efficiency — and coolness — of cycling.

“It just seem like it’s the in thing,” he said. “The vintage throw back bikes are in style.”

hmay@sltrib.com

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Volunteer next year

Salt Lake City plans to count cyclists next September. To get involved, email bikecount@slcgov.com or call 801-535-6112.

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Learn to bike safely in SLC

O Get a map of city bikeways and tips on riding safely.

> slcgov.com/bike