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Bid for change to cycling speed limit shot down

By **RENATO GANDIA**, CALGARY SUN

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Ald. Ric McIver failed to introduce speed changes to multi-use city pathways as the majority of his colleagues shot down his bid to allow cyclists to accelerate when it's clear.

His motion was also seeking to slow riders when they're passing pedestrians, but that took a backseat in the debate which zeroed in on the dangers of increasing the speed limit.

McIver's motion was defeated in a 12-2 vote, with only Ald. Andre Chabot siding with him while Ald. Jim Stevenson was absent.

He was looking to increase the bike speed limit from 20 km/h when the path is not obstructed by pedestrians or other users.

He accused other council members of ignoring the safety measures of his motion that called for a slower speed limit when cyclists are passing other pathway users.

"It was there in black and white and only Ald. Chabot and I voted for lower speeds when cyclists pass pedestrians," said McIver.

Ald. Brian Pincott, who bikes to work, attempted to limit the speed review to paths that are dedicated to bikes, but council members didn't buy that as well.

Ald. Gord Lowe pointed out that the issue at hand is about dedicated bike paths on city streets that will give a defined commuter route for cyclists.

Both Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart and Pincott argued that the city's pathways are not designed for commuter bikes which makes it difficult for cyclists pedalling to work.

Gary Beaton with Calgary Tour de Nuit Society, said he's disappointed that council shot down the motion but he's optimistic it was discussed.

"I think it's the first step in terms of getting commuter cycling into the agenda at city hall," said Beaton.

He said what the city needs is a dedicated commuting infrastructure for cyclist, a feature that Calgary has been behind any major Canadian city.

"Calgary is the worst in Canada for cycling infrastructure," he said.

McIver said he's working on a different motion that will ask for the possibility of putting dedicated bikes lanes on city streets.

"It does deal with making roadways user-friendly for cyclists," he said.

"Several members of council today said they're in favour of that type of thing, so we'll see what happens when the motion comes in," said McIver.

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