Taking Your Lumps: Quick Lessons from Four Bike Projects from Around the Continent

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Boulder, Colorado, 2015: "right-sizing" Folsom Street as part of the city's "Living Lab"
Boulder 'right-sizing' bike-lane project moves forward on 3 of 4 streets

Pilot project will reduce vehicle lanes on Folsom, Iris, 63rd to allow wider bike lanes

By Erica Meltzer
Staff Writer

A controversial plan to remove vehicle lanes to allow for wider bike lanes on four major streets in Boulder will move forward on three of them: Folsom Street, Iris Avenue and 63rd Street.

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By Erica Meltzer
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POSTED: 06/25/2015 11:00:13 PM MDT
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A controversial plan to remove vehicle lanes to allow for wider bike lanes on four major streets in Boulder will move forward on three of them: Folsom Street, Iris Avenue and 63rd Street.

A few minutes before midnight Tuesday, after hearing hours of testimony from roughly 50 people, the City Council voted 5-0 to move forward on these three streets.

A majority of Boulder City Council members want to see through the "right-sizing" changes made to Folsom Street to make it safer for cyclists, with some modifications that they hope will improve traffic flow for cars.

"I've seen the backups, but I've also seen many times when it is not backed up," said Councilman Sam Weaver, who lives a few blocks west of Folsom. "As a daily user of that street, it's not carmageddon, but it is a change."

Boulder council supports continuing 'right-sizing' project

But city manager apologizes for lack of public process: 'We made some very serious mistakes'

By Erica Meltzer
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Jeff Schulz: A dystopian look at our 'right-sized' future

As the flammable liquid tanker car derails at Pearl and 30th Street and rolls through the lobby of the new, smart-growth tower, thankfully, all residents safely evacuate. Just as the last bearded hipster squeezes through the exit without spilling his latte, a fire erupts.

The Boulder Fire Department is ready to roll, but, unfortunately, it’s rush hour and the recent lane reductions combined with all the flashing crosswalks have caused perfect gridlock everywhere. Knowing that they can access water once on the scene, the can-do firemen commandeer several B-Cycles and pedal over to the calamity.

They quickly discover that the electric water pumps won’t turn on because the muni hasn’t installed those backup power circuits yet. The east county fire squads are called in, but, bummer drag, large potholes on the unmaintained county roads are causing unanticipated delays. Smoke can now be seen from the downtown treehouse where council members are playing rock-paper-scissors to decide on whom to train their high-powered bureaucracy cannon at next. Will it be insensitive trailer-park owners or hapless Boulder Creek rock stackers?

Over in Central Planning, the disaster has everyone reconsidering the wisdom of locating high-rise apartments on rail curves. During the press conference, the mayor states that the real disaster here is that the fire has thrown off Boulder’s global warming calculations for the year, but, thankfully, the muni can easily compensate for it by shutting down residents’ air conditioners for only a few weeks.
“As the flammable liquid tanker car derails at Pearl and 30th Street and rolls through the lobby of the new, smart-growth tower … a fire erupts. The Boulder Fire Department is ready to roll, but, unfortunately, it's rush hour and the recent lane reductions combined with all the flashing crosswalks have caused perfect gridlock everywhere.”
Boulder staff recommends scaling back much of Folsom 'right-sizing' project

Councilwoman Mary Young: 'It was a failure to respect people's lives.'

By Alex Burness
Staff Writer

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The summer of 'right-sizing'

June 1: City transportation planners say right-sizing will take place on Folsom

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story originally misidentified Michael Sweeney, Boulder's
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3. Some experiments fail
Portland, Oregon, 2013: Parking vs. bike lanes in the 28th Avenue business district
City’s top idea for 28th Ave: Shared lane in one direction, buffer in the other

Posted by Michael Andersen (Contributor) on February 14th, 2014 at 11:06 am

One shared lane and one buffered bike lane is probably the most bike-friendly option the city will accept between I-84 and Stark, Project Manager Rich Newlands said Tuesday.

An “optimal” facility with buffered bike lanes in both directions, but no auto parking on 28th Avenue through its busiest commercial district, probably isn’t in the cards for the 20s Bikeway, a city project manager said this week.
The letter and 60 business owners that changed PBOT’s mind on 28th Ave – UPDATED

Posted by Jonathan Maus (Publisher/Editor) on April 28th, 2014 at 3:02 pm

On Friday we reported that the Bureau of Transportation — under sharp pressure from business owners — decided to scrap a proposal that would have created a buffered bike lane on one side of 28th Avenue between Stark and Sandy. PBOT was poised to consider a bike lane in the space currently occupied by 100 curbside auto parking spaces; but they showed up to the meeting of their 20s Bikeway Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee with a new plan (a.k.a. a “draft recommendation”).

The new recommendation would maintain 28th as an “enhanced shared roadway” (where auto and bike traffic...

“The removal of substantial amounts of parking puts our area at a competitive disadvantage…” — from a letter to PBOT signed by 60 businesses
Possible lessons:

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3. Early outreach can inoculate against fearmongering
Los Angeles, 2014: Battle for space on south Figueroa
Calgary, Alberta, 2015: A protected bike lane network plan gets accelerated
CALGARY'S QUICK-BUILD PROTECTED BIKE LANE NETWORK DOUBLED BIKE COUNTS IN THREE MONTHS

April 04, 2016

Michael Andersen, Green Lane Project staff writer

388,000 bike trips

27% of riders using the cycle tracks are women

64% ofCalgarians support the cycle tracks over the city's usual downtown parking lots.

Cycle Track Pilot Fast Facts

95% support for bike lanes in the city of Calgary

Council approved budget $7.1M

Pilot cost $5.75M

Graphic: City of Calgary. Click to enlarge.

Last week, we shared a new report about the best practices for cities that want to make faster, cheaper changes to their streets.

Today, let's take a moment to recognize the North American city that has used these tools better than any other to rapidly improve local bicycling.

The city is Calgary, Alberta. The secret is that it piloted a connected downtown network of low-stress bike routes all at once.
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1. Ambitious public staff and citizen advocates need each other badly

2. "There is always a better messenger than you": don't make it about the bike

3. Sometimes it's better to rip the whole bandage off at once
Now let's hear from folks

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