

AGENDA / MINUTES

Herkimer / Charlton Bike Lane Design Neighbourhood Meeting

November 11, 2014 (meeting)

November 13, 2014 (minutes, prepared by Kyle Slote)

November 17, 2014 (minutes revised based on attendee comments)

Attendees: Janice Brown (DNA Chair), Sean Burak (Owner, Downtown Bike Hounds), John Dalton (DNA Board Member), Jason Farr (Ward 2 Councillor), Robert Iszkula (Owner, Bike Locke, Durand resident), Kevin Love (Durand resident), Sara Mayo (Durand resident), Kyle Slote (Durand resident)

Regrets: Nicholas Kevlahan (DNA Board Member), Ryan McGreal (editor Raise the Hammer)

Executive Summary:

In general, the group has taken the approach of finding a way to implement bike lanes on Herkimer and Charlton that will be safe for all road users with minimal cost implications. The general approach is to locate the bike lanes at the north curb lanes of each street, where they will typically be buffered from auto traffic with parked cars. For this to be successful, a 0.75m buffer zone between parked cars and the cycle lane is needed to prevent 'dooring'. The most significant change being asked for is the removal of a morning rush hour lane on Herkimer between Queen and James. Attendee Sara Mayo is documenting traffic volumes when this lane is active to demonstrate that there is not enough demand to justify it. The following is a summary of our discussions:

1. Introductions, Background Info/Context

Sara obtained a copy of the bike lane plans from City of Hamilton staffer Daryl Bender. Copies of this were used throughout the meeting to understand the context of the bike lanes.

2. Issues with current design to be addressed:

- a. Continuity of bike lanes

In general, continuity of the bike lanes is seen as vital, particularly connection to the existing lanes on Dundurn St. S.

- Herkimer b/t Dundurn and Locke → currently sharrows due to width (approx. 10.8m with 1 lane auto traffic, parking both sides, significantly more than other stretches of the proposed routes, Charlton is 7.45m at HAAA grounds)
Recommendation: Provide bike lane (1.75m + 0.75m painted buffer from 'dooring') at north curb lane buffered by parked cars (2.6m). Maintain 1 auto lane (3.1m) and parking at south curb (2.6m)

- Herkimer b/t MacNab and James → due to complexities of Herkimer/James intersection
Recommendation: With bike lane at north curb lane (see 2d. For details), bike lane can continue to James with simplified left-hand turns. Provide bike box for right-hand turns at James.

It was noted that a shield/lens on the traffic lights at James to prevent seeing the colour of the lights from long distances would prevent drivers from racing to 'beat the light'. This behaviour has been widely observed and poses a significant danger, particularly as this speeding occurs adjacent to Durand Park. This type of lens has been observed elsewhere in Hamilton.

- Charlton b/t Dundurn and Locke → reasons unknown, width approx. 8.6m, currently 1 lane auto traffic, auto parking S side (on N side 2nd Tuesday of each month Apr-Nov).
Recommendation: Delete parking from North curb lane on 2nd Tuesday of each month Apr-Nov. When maintenance required at South parking lane, place pylons in parking spots or post signs stating no parking 1 day/month during Apr-Nov. Approx street section: from N-S: 1.75m bike lane, 0.75m painted buffer (ideally with knockdown bollards), 3.5m auto lane, 2.6m parking.

b. Physical Separation of bike lanes

Recommendation: Where possible, position bike lanes between north curb lane and parked cars. Provide a 0.75m painted buffer between bike lane and cars to prevent dooring. Where no parking lane exists (such as Charlton west of Queen), knockdown bollards could be utilized within the 0.75m buffer, though low and slow traffic volumes on this stretch of Charlton likely do not make bollards an absolute requirement

c. Provisions for turning (bike boxes)

Recommendation: Provide painted bike boxes to allow left-hand turns from Charlton and right-hand turns from Herkimer at all signalized intersections. It was noted that a bike box on Dundurn at Herkimer would simplify left-hand turning to the new Herkimer bike lane.

d. Position of lanes (particularly on Herkimer between Queen and MacNab/James)

Recommendation: As noted above, the consensus reached is that the north curb lane is the best place for the bike lanes on both Herkimer and Charlton.

On Herkimer this will facilitate simpler and safer left-hand turns to head north and reach downtown. This will also provide a buffer for Durand Park from auto lanes, improving safety. It was noted that the north curb lane is where the majority of cyclists have been observed on Herkimer, particularly east of Queen. This lane position reinforces and makes safer

this existing traffic pattern.

On Herkimer between Queen and James, it was noted that, anecdotally at least, traffic volumes do not support the current morning rush hour (7-9am) lane at the north curb lane. Allowing parking in this lane at all times would ensure that a bike lane positioned at the north curb lane would always be buffered from auto traffic by parked cars (in addition to the 0.75m painted buffer from 'dooring'). The ideal street section for this stretch from N-S is: 1.55m bike lane, 0.75m painted buffer, 2.5m parking lane, 3.2m auto lane, 2.7m parking lane (total width, 10.7m). The 2.7m South parking lane accommodates existing curb 'bumpouts' at Caroline. This positioning also simplifies and makes safer the complex intersection of Queen and Herkimer (see 3a.).

The consensus is that removing the North rush hour is by far the best solution. An alternative street section was discussed in the case that the rush hour lane remains; however, upon reviewing the width of Herkimer the above arrangement is the only way to achieve a bike lane at the North curb lane with a 0.75m buffer unless 2 narrow auto lanes (approx. 2.9m each) are deemed acceptable by the city to maintain the rush hour lane while still providing a 1.5m bike lane +0.75m buffer at the north curb lane. In this arrangement, knockdown bollards are recommended.

Another benefit of moving the bike lane to the north curb on Herkimer is that it will avoid conflict with school buses at St. Joseph's school and HSR buses east of Queen.

On Charlton the north curb lane positioning will buffer the HAAA grounds and facilitate safe right-hand turns to get downtown. A 'bumpout' at the northeast corner of Charlton and Caroline is in the path of the proposed bike lane. It is recommended that instead of costly removal of the 'bumpout' that curb cuts be provided to allow the bike lane to pass through the 'bumpout'. It was noted that this situation exists in other cities such as in Toronto on Roncevalles Ave.

3. Broader traffic calming initiatives

a. Queen and Herkimer

As mentioned, this dangerous intersection becomes simplified and made safer from the perspective of cyclists with the provision of a bike lane at the north curb. The current design requires cyclists to 'weave' through auto traffic at 2 points. The recommended arrangement would eliminate this scenario, greatly improving safety for drivers and cyclists. It is recommended that green paint be carried across Queen through the entire intersection to demarcate the bike lane.

That said, by far the preferred solution to improve the safety of this

intersection for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians is 2 way conversion of Queen. This will allow northbound traffic on Queen to continue northbound on Queen instead of being forced eastbound on Herkimer. It should be noted that the reduced traffic volumes of this change would certainly make the deletion of the morning rush hour lane from Herkimer appropriate (though it likely already is given currently observed traffic volumes).

Regardless of a 2 way conversion, it is felt that the current 'on-ramp style' configuration of this intersection is dangerous for all modes of transportation as it facilitates and encourages high speed vehicular traffic. Attendees noted witnessing several accidents in the vicinity of this intersection.

b. Queen and Charlton

All in attendance are in favour of the removal of 1 left-hand turn from Charlton to Queen (as the current design calls for). This will make east-west pedestrian crossings much safer at this intersection.

It is recommended that the curb radius at the southeast corner of the intersection be increased with paint markings to create a pedestrian buffer. Currently there is a paint line buffer shown between the auto turn and through lanes that could be transferred to the pedestrian zone.

c. 2 way conversions

As discussed, the 2 way conversion of Queen is viewed as a vital change to our neighbourhood. It will:

- simplify routes for drivers as they will be able to continue northbound on Queen past Herkimer to Main or King for east-west travel,
- reduce traffic volumes on Herkimer to only vehicles who desire to be on that route (such as those heading to St. Joseph's hospital or the James St Hill & Jolly Cut mountain access).
- and make pedestrian crossing much safer at this intersection, especially with the addition of signalization.

The 2 way conversion of Bay at the same time as Queen likely makes sense as these two roads are currently 'paired' one ways.

The group is generally indifferent / lacked consensus on the need to convert east-west routes to 2 way such as Charlton and Herkimer. This could be assessed based on traffic patterns and volumes following the conversions of Queen and Bay.

d. Limiting cut through traffic

Limiting cut through traffic is seen as important, though to varying degrees by attendees. The consensus is that the 2 way conversion of Queen will greatly reduce cut through traffic on Herkimer and in Durand in general.