

Bike Edmonton Presidents Report October 2018

It's amazing how fast a year can pass since I took over as the incoming president. The past president had been in that role for 4 years and when he announced it was time to move on I was encouraged to step forward and take on that role. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the past president who has since retired from the board but continues to support Bike Edmonton as a volunteer on the administrative committee, in the shops and in other ways.

I have been a board member with Bike Edmonton for two years and on the executive as president for one year. During that time I have seen first hand the dedication and commitment of the volunteers on the board, the full time and part time staff and also all the volunteers in the Bike Works shops. One of my goals early on as a board member was to streamline processes and set some vision for the future for the organization. Changing the long standing familiar and perhaps endearing name of the organization from Edmonton Bicycle Commuters to Bike Edmonton while difficult for some, I hope points to the fact that change and evolution is inevitable. Rebranding under a new name is an opportunity that we have embraced to reenergize the Bike Edmonton organization and continue to evolve as an organization that serves not just the broader biking community but sees ourselves as partners with the City, business, communities and individuals in supporting a vibrant, inclusive, active, healthy and safe urban environment.

I would like to take a moment to highlight a few of the other accomplishments of the board and Bike Edmonton. Board members and staff engaged in a strategic planning meeting that was led by an Alberta Culture facilitator who guided us through a thoughtful process about our future directions and priority actions. This was well received by all in attendance. I would like to share one of the insights for me during that exercise. Although I have always know we are a volunteer run organization, I realized that we create opportunities for volunteering that goes beyond the needs of the organization and the biking community. Volunteering with Bike Edmonton not only gives back to the community but also provides self development in many different ways by enhancing and learning new skills, in exploring values, in social development and making friendships, in building self confidence and competencies that will be valuable in other community endeavors and workplaces. I would encourage any of our members and new members to consider volunteering for the many rewards it brings.

I am please to report that we have renewed our lease for Bike Works North for another 18 months. This provides an opportunity to continue to serve a diverse biking community including those north of the river and some of Edmonton's more vulnerable groups, while keeping the option for a new location open in the short term. I am quite excited along those lines to hear that we have a proposal in place for a EBC Community Membership with the Boyle Street Community Services. I would like to thank our past president Jonathon Woelber for following through with this initiative. The EBC Community Membership is a pilot program that will provide

access to shop services and some basic parts to a limited number of individuals at no cost to the individual.

We have also seen the introduction of new shop fees which we hope will address increasing operational costs. Shop fees had not increased in a number of years and we reluctantly agreed to increase shop costs in August, 2018. However, we continue to offer Bike Edmonton memberships which provide significant savings to shop users and continue to use our discretion where shop fees may appear a hardship.

At the Annual General Meeting we present the Budget for the upcoming year and seek nominations for new and ongoing board members. Again, for those who are interested in board governance, we are always looking for enthusiastic and energetic volunteers to sit as directors and to provide oversight, governance and direction to this exciting and unique community organization. In building the budget for 2018-2019 it became apparent that in order to maintain a financially viable and sustainable organization that meets its responsibilities to its members, its employees and the community it serves, will require a focus in several areas. One such area is that of fundraising through partnerships, corporate donations and other means. Another area is how we generate revenues, such as through our programming and services and sales activities. This is a balancing act as we strive to offer a range of affordable programming, education, bike maintenance, youth programming and inclusive services to a diverse population and community organizations. And finally, a key area in all our endeavors as a volunteer run not-for-profit organization, is our volunteers: recruiting, retaining and developing our volunteers is a critical area for our long term success.

Looking ahead, it will be an exciting few years as we implement our strategic planning goals, grow our membership and volunteer base and build a sustainable organization with a view to the future.

Thank you

Jeremy Shepherd
President, Bike Edmonton