

Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services – March 8, 2010

REPORTS

**Item No. 1 Idaho Stop Law
 eFile ST-1**

WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. An “Idaho stop law” not be pursued; and
2. The Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) is requested to provide the Public Works Department with a prioritized list of streets identified on the City’s Active Transportation network for review with respect to whether existing Stop signs along these streets meet the City’s Stop sign warrant criteria.

Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services – March 8, 2010

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 11, 2010, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services further laid over the matter for up to 60 days to provide more time for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with an analysis of the “Idaho Stop Law” and other similar regulations that may exist in other jurisdictions and recommendations regarding its potential implementation in Manitoba, as requested by Committee on October 9, 2009.

On November 30, 2009, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services laid the matter over to its meeting on January 11, 2010 to provide more time for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with an analysis of the “Idaho stop law” and other similar regulations that may exist in other jurisdictions and recommendations regarding its potential implementation in Manitoba, as requested by Committee on October 9, 2009.

On October 9, 2009, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services passed the following motion, namely:

WHEREAS cyclists are subject to certain provisions of The Highway Traffic Act (Manitoba);

AND WHEREAS cycling groups have encouraged the Manitoba Government to revise The Highway Traffic Act to update and clarify the rules as they apply to cyclists;

AND WHEREAS the state of Idaho has enacted legislation providing that cyclists must slow down and yield, but do not have to come to a complete stop at intersections with stop signs, providing no vehicles or pedestrians are at the intersection;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg Public Service report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services in 60 days with an analysis of the “Idaho stop law” and other similar regulations that may exist in other jurisdictions and recommendations regarding its potential implementation in Manitoba.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

ISSUE: IDAHO STOP LAW

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
Luis Escobar, P. Eng. PTOE Manager of Transportation	B.W. Sacher, P. Eng. Director of Public Works	N/A	M Ruta Acting CAO

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

1. An “Idaho stop law” not be pursued; and
2. The Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) is requested to provide the Public Works Department with a prioritized list of streets identified on the City’s Active Transportation network for review with respect to whether existing Stop signs along these streets meet the City’s Stop sign warrant criteria.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ultimately the decision to implement an Idaho Stop Law is the responsibility of the Province of Manitoba under the Highway Traffic Act.
- Not introducing an “Idaho stop law” will maintain a consistent understanding of the meaning of a Stop sign which will, in turn, promote traffic and pedestrian safety and result in less collision potential at Stop controlled intersections.
- Reducing the number of unwarranted Stop signs on streets identified by ATAC will improve the efficiency of these routes for cyclists as well as reduce unnecessary vehicle stops, reduce fuel consumption and emissions, reduce traffic noise levels, and may promote overall compliance at Stop signs in general.
- There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

HISTORY

At the October 9, 2009 meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services, the Winnipeg Public Service was instructed to report back with “(i) an analysis of the “Idaho stop law” and other similar regulations that may exist in other jurisdictions; and (ii) recommendations regarding its potential implementation in Manitoba.”

The attached Appendix provides the Winnipeg Public Service’s review and analysis.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: January 20, 2010

Project Name:

IDAHO STOP LAW

COMMENTS:

There is no financial impact related to the recommendations of this report.

"Original Signed by D. Stewart, CA"
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

In preparing this Report there was consultation with:

Winnipeg Police Service
Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation
Bike to the Future
Legal Services Division

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Public Works
Division: Transportation
Prepared by: Diana Emerson, P. Eng., MCIP, Traffic Management Engineer 986-5900
Processed by: Kathy Ryback, Transportation Clerk 986-5288
Date: January 14, 2010
File No. G-04

Attachment: Appendix - Winnipeg Public Service's Review and Analysis of the "Idaho Stop Law"

APPENDIX

Winnipeg Public Service's Review and Analysis of the "Idaho Stop Law"

The Winnipeg Public Service was instructed to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services with "(i) an analysis of the "Idaho stop law" and other similar regulations that may exist in other jurisdictions; and (ii) recommendations regarding its potential implementation in Manitoba."

(i) Analysis of the "Idaho Stop Law" and Other Similar Regulations That May Exist in Other Jurisdictions

The "Idaho stop law" refers to a law passed by the State of Idaho in 1982 which allows cyclists to treat Stop signs as a Yield. Under this law, cyclists approaching a Stop sign must yield to other traffic (vehicles, pedestrians and other cyclists) and otherwise, may proceed without stopping at the Stop sign. The following is an excerpt from Idaho Statute's Title 49 Chapter 7:

A person operating a bicycle or human-powered vehicle approaching a stop sign shall slow down and, if required for safety, stop before entering the intersection. After slowing to a reasonable speed or stopping, the person shall yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching on another highway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard during the time the person is moving across or within the intersection or junction of highways, except that a person after slowing to a reasonable speed and yielding the right-of-way if required, may cautiously make a turn or proceed through the intersection without stopping.

The Idaho Transportation Department reports that Idaho's bicycle collision statistics do not suggest any discernable increase in bicyclist injuries or fatalities since adopting the stop law. This, however, is not a large enough sample from which to conclude that a law allowing cyclists to yield rather than stop is safety neutral.

While a few other U.S. jurisdictions have introduced bills for debate concerning proposed laws similar to the "Idaho stop law", such as Minnesota, Oregon, Arizona and Montana, no other U.S. jurisdictions have passed such legislation to date. Also, there are no Canadian jurisdictions which have enacted an "Idaho stop law" to date. Based on an informal e-mail survey conducted by the Public Works Department of the Transportation Association of Canada's Traffic Operations and Management Committee members, it appears that no other Canadian jurisdiction has considered implementing the "Idaho stop law" at this time.

In Manitoba, the Province has jurisdiction to control traffic and does so pursuant to the Highway Traffic Act. That Act delegates some power to the traffic authority of a municipality to post some signage to control traffic, and to make certain by-laws regarding the control of traffic at intersections. To allow cyclists to ignore a Stop sign, however, would require amendments to the Highway Traffic Act. The City, of course, does not have jurisdiction to amend the Act.

(ii) Recommendations Regarding Potential Implementation of the "Idaho Stop Law" in Manitoba

As noted above, the authority for implementing an Idaho style stop law in Manitoba lies with the Province of Manitoba. A formal request from the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, being the City of Winnipeg's Traffic Authority, to the Deputy Minister

of Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation would be required to initiate the Province's review of this matter.

In considering whether to make a formal request to the Deputy Minister of Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation, it is necessary to consider both the reasons that cycling advocates have requested consideration of the "Idaho stop law" as well as potential implications.

Cycling advocates who support the implementation of an "Idaho stop law" have cited reasons such as:

- Many cyclists choose to ride on side streets as an alternative to busier arterial routes. However, the side streets often have multiple stop signs.
- Starting and stopping at Stop signs requires significant physical effort and reduces the efficiency of cycling.
- An "Idaho stop law" would make cycling faster and more convenient.
- Many cyclists already roll through Stop signs.
- Bicycles are not enclosed and as such, cyclists have a heightened awareness to the sound of approaching vehicles.

While an "Idaho stop law" may be beneficial to cyclists, as noted, it is important to consider potential implications of such a law.

- As prescribed in the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada*, to be effective, a traffic control device must convey a clear and simple meaning. As such, it is important that a particular type of traffic sign have one meaning to all road users and that meaning should reflect the message displayed on the sign.



- Having one definition of a Stop sign for motorists and a different definition for cyclists would introduce an element of uncertainty regarding the expectation of approaching cyclists and may reduce the compliance of Stop signs by all road users. New drivers who are accustomed to treating Stop signs as Yields may carry over this practice to their driving. Some motorists may take the view that if cyclists are not required to stop, then they shouldn't have to stop either. Reduced compliance of Stop signs would be expected to result in increased collision potential.
- Whether or not a cyclist stops or not at a Stop sign would be left to the judgment of individual cyclists as to whether they perceive an approaching motorist, cyclist or pedestrian to be close enough to require them to stop. Skill levels for perceiving this

varies with experience and individual capabilities. Upon approaching a Stop sign controlled intersection on their bicycle, children may not have the capabilities or experience to judge when it is safe to proceed without stopping.

- Conflicts and increased collision potential may arise as pedestrians, and particularly children, may expect a cyclist approaching the intersection to stop at a Stop sign but, as noted, whether the cyclist stops or not is based on the judgment of the cyclist and their individual ability to make such a judgment.
- Cyclists approaching a Stop sign alongside a vehicle and proceeding through without stopping may confuse motorists and/or distract motorists' attention away from pedestrians or other vehicles or cyclists. Collision potential would exist between the cyclist and a vehicle stopped at the Stop sign turning right.
- Some cyclists may assume that they may also proceed without stopping when approaching Red traffic signals.

Based on the importance of having traffic control devices that provide a clear and simple meaning and considering the safety concerns as described above and the potential for increased collisions, the Public Works Department does not recommend requesting that the Province of Manitoba consider amending the Highway Traffic Act to implement an "Idaho stop law" at this time.

(iii) A Possible Alternative to the "Idaho Stop Law"

There are actions that are within the City's authority that may also achieve the goal of improved convenience for cyclists using side streets. Routes identified on the City's Active Transportation network could be reviewed in terms of whether existing Stop signs are warranted. Removal of unwarranted Stop signs on these routes could then be considered.

The Public Works Department uses the following warrant criteria when recommending installation of new all-way Stop signs on collector streets:

- At least 4,000 vehicles approach the intersection in the highest 8-hour period of a typical weekday with at least 1,600 vehicles and pedestrians approaching from the minor leg of the intersection, or,
- There have been at least 9 right-angles or left turn with opposing through collisions in the last three years.

However, there are likely many Stop signs that were installed in the past that would not meet this warrant criterion. It is noted that Stop signs are intended to assign right-of-way at an intersection and are not effective as speed control or traffic calming devices. All-way Stop signs are most effective when applied to the intersection of two streets with approximately equal traffic volumes approaching the intersection. When one street has significantly more traffic volume than the other, all-way stop control compliance levels are often low because motorists become accustomed to not approaching another motorist on the intersecting street and tend to "roll through" the intersection without coming to a complete stop, similar to what the "Idaho stop law" would legalize for cyclists. However, such non-compliance compromises the safety of other motorists as well as pedestrians and cyclists at the intersection. Other concerns related to unwarranted Stop signs include increased traffic noise, vehicle emissions and fuel consumption.

It is recommended that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee be asked to provide the Public Works Department with a prioritized list of streets on the Active Transportation network which should be reviewed in terms of whether existing Stop signs along these streets are warranted or not. Unwarranted Stop signs that are identified for potential removal could be reported to the appropriate Community Committee for approval. It is noted that it is the practice of the Public Works Department to notify the community of a proposed Stop sign removal by erecting notification signs at the intersection in advance of the removal and placing a notice in the local community newspaper.