

POLITICS AS USUAL: Integrated multi-modal transportation

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

As it's rowing season and I am back on the water every morning, I am once again acutely aware of how hard it is to get to where one needs to go, without use of a car.

Yes, I choose to row in Toronto every day.

And yes, I am aware that it's quite the journey by GO transit every day at an ungodly hour. However, that being said, getting from Aurora to the lake without a car should not involve a journey akin to the likes of Homer's Odyssey. And it shouldn't be such a royal pain in the you know what either?

So, I begin this week then with yet another rant about public transportation planning and lack thereof. Specifically, the lack of consideration for integrated multi-modal transportation.

And what do I mean by that? Well, I mean adequate facilities for folks to get around the GTA by both human-powered and engine-powered means.

Facilities should be in place for you to use a bike wherever you are going. There are wonderful facilities for you to park your bike ? even a fancy bike locker room at Union Station.

But, that means the assumption is you ride your bike to a station, then leave it there while you take the train or bus to wherever you are going, but that is not convenient or even practical for everyone.

Many folks ? myself included ? want or need to use their bike again once they've gotten off the train, bus or streetcar. You cannot do that right now unless you have a folding bike.

At the risk of repeating myself, GO transit ? and the TTC ? should afford riders the ability to bring their bikes by transit. Requiring folks to have a folding bike ? which can be upwards of 27 pounds when folded up ? is not ideal. (My folding bike has a steel frame, so it's heavy. But it was inexpensive. The pricier folding bikes are titanium frames and are around 18 ? 20 pounds). It's awkward and heavy to lug around on a subway or streetcar.

We should be more bike-friendly. Encourage people to use their bikes to get around rather than their cars. Aurora is a small town, geographically. If one is reasonably fit, one can easily get around Aurora solely by bike. I do (if not by foot?I walk everywhere as well?I like walking through our trail system as much as possible).

Toronto has bike lanes all over the place. They are making considerable progress towards improving the bike-ability of the city.

But, the missing piece is integrating that bike infrastructure with transit infrastructure.

Some folks don't want to bike for an hour in Toronto traffic to get to where they're going; they'd much rather ride to a station, hop on the train, then ride the rest of the way once they get off. Easy, convenient and very eco-friendly.

So, how about it? Demarcate part of at least one subway car or GO transit car just for bikes? At least for a couple trips a day? It would be a giant leap towards integrated multi-modal transportation?And it would make my life easier?