



THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2011

## VWYF is on hiatus - come join me at Grid Chicago



*Fellow green transportation journalist Steven Vance ([stevecanplan.com](http://stevecanplan.com)) and I recently launched Grid Chicago, a new blog about walking, biking and transit in the Windy City and beyond. Please visit us at [GridChicago.com](http://GridChicago.com), where I'll be posting new articles regularly.*

*For the time being Vote With Your Feet will be dormant, but feel free to browse the archives for older articles about my Chicago street walks, tips on car-free road trips, guides to bike friendly neighborhoods, interviews with leaders in the local sustainable transportation scene and much more. Thanks for reading!*

*- John Greenfield*

POSTED BY JOHN GREENFIELD AT 9:41 PM 47 COMMENTS:  
LABELS: GRID CHICAGO, VOTE WITH YOUR FEET

ABOUT ME



[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2011 (50)

▼ June (37)

[VWYF is on hiatus - come join me at Grid Chicago](#)

[Making strides: the Chicago Pedestrian Plan](#)

[The 2012 messenger championships in Chicago](#)

[A car-free Exodus to "Little Egypt"](#)

[Gabe Klein meets Chicago's bicycle community](#)

[Is Kinzie Street on the right \(cycle\) track?](#)

[The Spaces Between nighttime bike tour](#)

[A bike tour of Humboldt & Logan Square history](#)

[Chicago gets its first on-street bike corral](#)

[Forty: an epic walk from Logan Square to Aurora](#)

[Transit authorities discuss ways to fix the CTA](#)

[Walking Lawrence Avenue](#)

[Participatory budgeting in Rogers Park](#)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29, 2011

## Making strides: the Chicago Pedestrian Plan



By John Greenfield

[This piece also appears in [Newcity](#).]

This June evening is too pretty for the subway, so I bicycle south to the Pink Line's California station to meet up with the Active Transportation Alliance's Tony Giron. He's leading a march across the largely Mexican-American neighborhood of Little Village to Farragut High School for the first of seven public input <http://www.blogger.com/img/blank.gif> meetings on the Chicago Pedestrian Plan.

Similar to the Bike 2015 Plan, this Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) document will be a roadmap for making the city a safer and easier place to walk. The goal is to reduce pedestrian injuries by half and fatalities by one hundred percent. "Chicago is a great city for walking," says Giron. "But along with park paths and tree-lined streets, we still have roads that are difficult to cross, dangerous intersections and places that are inaccessible to people walking."

*Fellow green transportation journalist Steven Vance ([stevencanplan.com](http://stevencanplan.com)) and I recently launched *Grid Chicago*, a new blog about walking, biking and transit in Chicago and beyond. Read the rest of this story at [gridchicago.com](http://gridchicago.com).*

POSTED BY JOHN GREENFIELD AT 6:33 AM 15 COMMENTS:  
LABELS: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE, CDOT, CHICAGO PEDESTRIAN PLAN, GABE KLEIN, JOHN MACMANUS, TONY GIRON

THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2011

## The 2012 messenger championships in Chicago

Ron Burke, new director of  
[Active Trans](#)

[Start making sense: David Byrne talks bikes](#)

[Stalled on the Bloomingdale Line](#)

[The style council: Chicagoans talk bike fashion](#)

[Walking the length of Chicago's King Drive](#)

[Why is the Red Grand stop rehab taking so long?](#)

[A Brief Introduction to Bicycling in Chicago](#)

[Pulaski Daze: Walking Chicago's Pulaski Road](#)

[Wheel dreams: the Chicago Velo Campus proposal](#)

[A prime walk down 79th](#)

[Walking from Milwaukee to Chicago](#)

[Strolling 63rd Street](#)

[Walking Grand Avenue](#)

[Greg Borzo, author of "Where to Bike: Chicago"](#)

[Walking Halsted Street](#)

[Walking Kedzie Avenue](#)

[Walking Archer Avenue](#)

[Walking Belmont Avenue](#)

[The Bloomingdale: Oasis or Devil's Playground?](#)

[Bicycling in Tokyo](#)

[WalkForce gets Garfield Park residents moving](#)

[Interview with Jairo Naranjo, CTA bus driver](#)

[Leah Naderthal discusses the Chainlink](#)

[The Chicago Cruisers](#)

► [May](#) (4)

► [February](#) (5)

► [January](#) (4)

► [2010](#) (37)

► [2009](#) (20)



Augie Montes by [Christopher Dilts](#)

Interview by John Greenfield

[This piece also runs at [momentumplanet.com](http://momentumplanet.com).]

Every year hundreds of bike couriers from around the globe descend on a different city for the Cycle Messenger World Championships, with races, arts events and parties celebrating one of the toughest, most enjoyable jobs around. This

<http://www.blogger.com/img/blank.gif> fear the 19th annual worlds take place in Warsaw on July 27-31 ([www.warsawcarkillers.org](http://www.warsawcarkillers.org)); next year Chicago does the honors ([www.chicagocmwc.com](http://www.chicagocmwc.com)).

Augie Montes, an eleven-year veteran of the delivery biz who spearheaded the 2008 North American Cycle Courier Championships [NACCC] in Chicago, talked with me about the recent championships in Tokyo and Panajachel, Guatemala, and filled us in on the Windy City's plans for hosting the worlds in 2012.

*Fellow green transportation journalist Steven Vance ([stevencanplan.com](http://stevencanplan.com)) and I recently launched Grid, a new blog about walking, biking and transit in Chicago and beyond. Read the rest of this story at [gridchicago.com](http://gridchicago.com).*

POSTED BY [JOHN GREENFIELD](#) AT [7:21 AM](#) 14 COMMENTS:  
LABELS: [AUGIE MONTES](#), [CMWC](#), [GUATEMALA](#), [TOKYO](#)

TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2011

## A car-free Exodus to "Little Egypt"



"BARS ACROSS AMERICA" OUT NOW  
ON PINT SIZE PRESS

[Pint Size Press](#)





A loop around Southern Illinois via train and bike reveals the area's unique culture

by John Greenfield

Most people think of the Land of Lincoln as Chicago plus pancake-flat prairie, but Southern Illinois is completely different. The region, nicknamed “Little Egypt” because it’s located in the delta of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, is blanketed by the lush Shawnee National Forest and roller-coaster hills, which makes it a challenging, beautiful destination for bicycle travel.

Flooding along the Mississippi hit Southern Illinois hard this spring. My buddy Kevin was interested in checking out the aftermath, as well as the area’s unusual geography and historical landmarks. So on Memorial Day weekend we hauled our touring bikes onboard Amtrak’s Saluki Line from Chicago to Carbondale, home of Southern Illinois University, for a three-day cycling adventure.

*Fellow green transportation journalist Steven Vance ([stevenplan.com](http://stevenplan.com)) and I recently launched Grid, a new blog about walking, biking and transit in Chicago and beyond. Read the rest of this story at [gridchicago.com](http://gridchicago.com).*

POSTED BY JOHN GREENFIELD AT 10:50 AM 10 COMMENTS:  
LABELS: CAIRO, CAR-FREE ROAD TRIPS, CARBONDALE, GOLCONDA, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

---

SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2011

**Gabe Klein meets Chicago's bicycle community**



CDOT bike coordinator Ben Gomberg, CDOT commissioner Gabe Kline, CDOT deputy commissioner Luann Hamilton

By John Greenfield

Today's Bike to Work Week rally in Daley Plaza was inspiring, a far cry from last year's lackluster event, thanks to big plans for bicycling from new mayor Rahm Emanuel and forward-thinking transportation commissioner Gabe Klein.

In 2010 Chicago's efforts to become a world-class bike town had stagnated. The city had installed over 100 miles of bike lanes and over 10,000 parking racks, achieved bike access on transit and educated multitudes about safe cycling, but we seemed to be resting on our laurels. Meanwhile other U.S. cities were pioneering car-separated bike lanes, automated bike sharing systems, on-street parking corrals, traffic-calmed "bike boulevard" streets, car-free "ciclovía" events and more.

*This week fellow green transportation journalist Steven Vance ([stevencanplan.com](http://stevencanplan.com)) and I launched Grid Chicago, a new sustainable transportation blog. Read the rest of this story at [gridchicago.com](http://gridchicago.com).*

POSTED BY JOHN GREENFIELD AT 3:17 PM 8 COMMENTS:  
LABELS: BIKE TO WORK RALLY, CDOT, GABE KLEIN, RAHM EMANUEL

---

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2011

**Is Kinzie Street on the right (cycle) track?**



Chicagoans sound off about the city's first car-separated bike lanes

By John Greenfield

[This piece also appears on *Gapers Block*, [gapersblock.com](http://gapersblock.com).]

Richard M. Daley had a widespread, if somewhat undeserved, reputation as a bicycle-friendly mayor. But with Rahm Emanuel in power, along with progressive new transportation commissioner Gabe Klein, it looks like there's going to be a sea change in the way the city pushes pedaling.

Emmanuel's Chicago 2011 Transition Plan includes three bold, possibly unrealistic, bike goals. But it's refreshing that the city is finally making big plans that have, to paraphrase Daniel Burnham, magic to stir cyclists' blood.

The mayor's bike proposal, obviously influenced by transition team member Randy Neufeld, former director of the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, calls for expanding our anemic automated public bike sharing system from only 100 cycles to thousands of vehicles. The mayor also promises to build the Bloomingdale Trail, a 2.65-mile elevated rails-to-trails conversion on the Northwest Side within his first term, although it's taken two years just to get the design contract approved and the price tag for the trail is estimated at \$50-70 million.

The third goal may be the least realistic but most exciting, and there's already rubber, nay bike lane paint, on the road. Rahm has pledged to install 100 miles of European-style "cycle tracks," bike lanes that are physically separated from cars by medians, parked cars and/or posts, within his first four years in office. This would require a lot more money than is currently spent on striping eight miles of conventional bike lanes per year, and it would involve taking away travel lanes and parking spaces from automobiles.

Many bicycle advocates argue that separated bike lanes are the missing link for getting large numbers of people on bikes in North America. By removing some of the dangers of speeding motor traffic and opening car doors, cycle tracks take away the fear factor that prevents average Chicagoans from trying transportation cycling. Separated bike lanes have debuted with much fanfare in Portland, OR, New York and Washington, D.C.

However, cycle tracks can be problematic if they're not done right. European cities with successful separated bikeway networks like Amsterdam and Copenhagen generally use special bicycle traffic lights to prevent collisions between right-turning cars and bikes emerging from the cycle track to cross an intersection. There will be no such lights on Kinzie, only signs warning turning motorists to stop for bikes and pedestrians.



People love to walk in cycle tracks, and garbage, broken glass and snow will accumulate in the separated lanes unless the city is careful to maintain them. Faster bicyclists may prefer to ride in the regular travel lane, but local laws require cyclists to use separate bike paths when available. As a result, those pedaling outside of the cycle track may be unable to successfully sue if a reckless motorist hits them.

Nonetheless Chicago cyclists, including this one, are getting excited about the cycle track that the Chicago Department of Transportation is currently installing on Kinzie Street between Milwaukee Avenue and Wells Street, connecting two of the city's best-used bike lane streets. In general, the new separated lanes will be located next to the curb, to the



right of the parking lane, and separated from parked cars by a diagonally striped buffer zone and flexible posts.



Though recent rains have delayed the project, the cycle track should be finished by the end of next week. Emanuel is sure to boast about it during his first speech at the Bike to Work Week rally next Friday, June 17, 7:30 – 9:30 am at Daley Plaza.

Last Friday afternoon I stopped by Kinzie to check out the work in progress. The sky was leaden but the air was perfumed by the Blommer Chocolate factory at the five-way intersection of Kinzie, Milwaukee and Desplaines.

I was pleasantly surprised to see that the new lanes on Kinzie continue as dashed lines across every intersection between Milwaukee and Wells. Plus, at the five-way a new “bike box” waiting area and a curving, dashed lane across the intersection will make it much easier for southbound cyclists on Milwaukee to make a left turn onto Kinzie.





Right now cars are still parking next to the curbs in the cycle track instead of the new parking lane, but this will stop after the posts are installed and bike symbols are marked on the bike lanes.

I flagged down a few bike commuters to get their reactions to the new cycle track. Abigail Jasper, riding a Trek hybrid, says she's excited about the separated lanes. "They're going to protect bicyclists from drivers who may be too busy doing other things to pay attention to cyclists," she says. She notes that it may take a little while for motorists and bike riders to get used to the new lanes. "There's going to be a learning curve but we'll figure it out."



Scott Lambert, on a Masi single-speed road bike, is looking forward to protection from cars. “It’s great that the city is doing something for bikers,” he says. “I’ve been hit more than twelve times.” However he’s skeptical that the current cycle track layout is going to function well. “I’m not sure what’s going to happen at the intersections. This is a great idea in theory but they’re probably going to have to modify the design before it becomes sufficient.”

Newby bike commuter Patrick Crokin, pedaling a Giant mountain bike, is glad the new lanes will eliminate the risk of bicyclists getting hit by opening car doors. “This is really a great idea,” he says. “I’m just curious to see how they’re going to pay for all the new lanes.”

When I duck into the Blommer factory’s chocolate shop next to the five-way intersection, manager Kevin Schultz tells me the cycle track is pointless. “They should be spending money to improve the traffic and pedestrian flow here instead of wasting money on these bike lanes,” he says. “This is one of the worst intersections in the city. We stand here all day and watch people almost get hit when they cross Desplaines to the Jewel.” He says the city should instead be spending money for a turn signal to keep westbound vehicles turning left from Kinzie to Desplaines from hitting these pedestrians. “One of these days some lady with a kid or someone walking their dog is going to get killed.”



But Michael Bordenaro, waiting for the traffic light outside Blommer on his Raleigh mountain bike, thinks the city's plan for 25 miles of cycle tracks per year is too conservative. "Citizens should go out with white paint and stripe 25 miles of bike lanes themselves this weekend and say, 'Mayor Emanuel, thank you for your leadership. Now keep up with us.'"



POSTED BY [JOHN GREENFIELD](#) AT [7:33 AM](#) 19 COMMENTS:  
LABELS: [BLOMMER](#), [EMANUEL](#), [KINZIE STREET CYCLE TRACK](#)

---

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2011

**The Spaces Between nighttime bike tour**



Mary Bartelme Park in the West Loop

By John Greenfield

[This article also appears in *Time Out Chicago* magazine, [timeoutchicago.com](http://timeoutchicago.com).]

*Time Out recently invited me to test ride the following bike tour which you can ride in later this month:*

GUIDE Martin Hazard

LENGTH 12 miles, 2.5 hours

STARTS Billy Goat Tavern (430 N. Michigan Ave.)

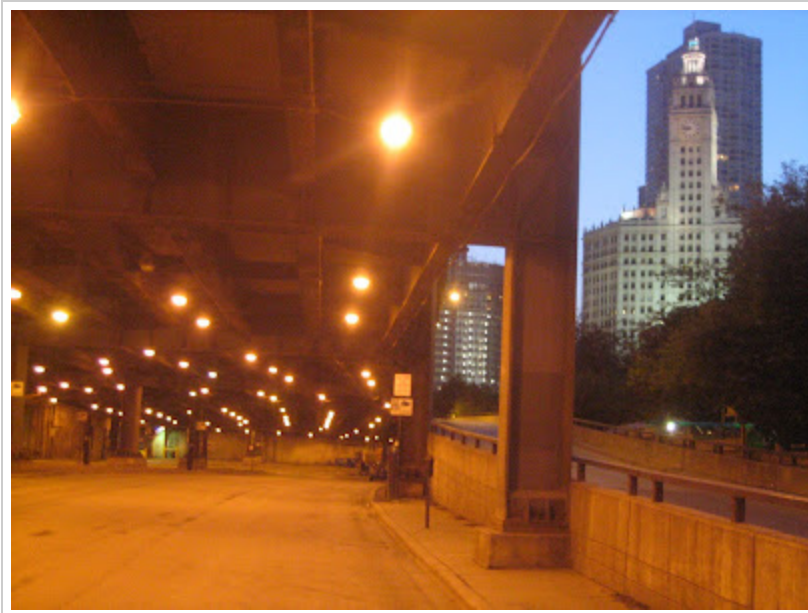
TOC EXCLUSIVE TOUR June 18 at 8:30 pm; free. Bring your own bicycle, helmet and lights. Future tours TBD. (Call Hazard at 773-885-0900 to sign up, or just show up.)

“We’re going on a tour of places that are all around us but are two steps off the beaten path,” says Martin Hazard with a Marlboro clenched in his teeth as we unlock our steeds outside the subterranean Billy Goat Tavern (430 N. Michigan) on a Tuesday night. He’s president of the Midnight Marauders, a nighttime cycling group that does saucy late-night excursions on the third Saturday of every month, including the notorious Porn Ride tour of strip clubs, sex shops and S & M dungeons.





Soon Hazard is leading me through the labyrinth of the Loop's multi-leveled streets including Michigan, Wacker and Randolph. We whiz up and down ramps, around steel pillars, past ragged homeless people and lonely security guards outside loading docks. After a brief jaunt on a path along the Chicago River, we're at a pretty little green space at the center of the new Lakeshore East development (430 E. Waterside Dr). "I love this park because you can't see it from most of the surface streets so nobody knows it's here," Hazard says.



Climbing a hill past the development's gateway, a pair of stainless-steel sails, we cruise across the eerily calm Central Business District to Mary Bartelme Park (115 S. Sangamon), opened last year in the West Loop. It boasts an undulating landscape and huge gateways that look like tilted silver picture frames. "They spray mist during the summer so it's a great place to cool off," says my guide.



Returning east, as we wait for a red among the neon signs of Greektown someone asks us for spare change. “I’ve never been panhandled on a bike before,” I note. We head down Wells street past Bertrand Goldberg’s curvy River City condo building (800 S. Wells) and peek through a fence underneath arching Roosevelt Road. Just beyond it is a large piece of barren earth bordering the river which Hazard calls the Brownlands – a popular spot for bonfires.



We make our way under the half-moon to Roosevelt and Michigan and the creepy 9' trunk-less legs of Magdalena Abakanowicz's "Agora" installation. We take the pedestrian bridge at 11th Street and a series of curving paths under Columbus and Lakeshore Drive to the Shedd Aquarium and then over to the Children's Garden (1330 S. Museum Campus Drive) in the shadow of Soldier Field, featuring a geodesic climbing net and a large stone sphere that you can spin slowly with your hands. "I like that this park is hidden by the surrounding dirt embankments," says Hazard.



As we roll down Solidarity Drive to Northerly Island Park, a coyote crosses our path(fear not: The animals roaming the city help control our rat population). We take a lap on the paved paths circling the former Meigs Field which will forever symbolize Richard M. Daley's love of parks and autocratic governing style. "There's no better place to check out the skyline at night," Hazard says.



Soon we're zooming back up the Lakefront Trail with a tailwind and cutting west on the riverside bike path back to the cozy confines of the tavern. With mugs of Billy Goat Dark we toast the end of an awesome urban assault.

POSTED BY [JOHN GREENFIELD](#) AT [3:35 PM](#) 19 COMMENTS:  
LABELS: [BILLY GOAT](#), [LOOP](#), [MARTIN HAZARD](#), [NORTHERLY ISLAND](#)

---

[Home](#)

[Older Posts](#)

Subscribe to: [Posts \(Atom\)](#)

00118723