



## ***Bike to the Future***

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## **Bike to the Future's response to the City's Transportation Master Plan**

The City's Transportation Master Plan includes many positive concepts and strategies to enhance and encourage cycling and active transportation. In particular, we welcome the plan's second strategic goal, "a transportation system that supports active, accessible and healthy lifestyle options". The attainment of this goal would represent a significant shift from the City of Winnipeg's historic transportation planning and a great benefit to the city. However, there are aspects of the City's new plan that cause us concern.

Chief among our concerns is the lack of a detailed plan that will guide the development of our city's cycling network. While the Road, Transit, and Goods Movement plans are accompanied by detailed descriptions and cost estimates, the plans for the cycling network amount to little more than shaded lines on a map. While the city's plan divides roads into "base" and "strategic" categories, there is no similar concept of "strategic" cycling routes.

Under current conditions, virtually every bridge, underpass and overpass, especially those leading into/out of downtown, creates hazards for cyclists and discourages potential cyclists from getting on their bikes. Recognizing that the maintenance and expansion of the roadway network offers some of the best opportunities to fill in gaps in the city's cycling and pedestrian networks, we recommend that the city's Transportation Master Plan be amended now to clearly state that active transportation is a mandatory planning element that must be carefully considered in every improvement or addition to the city's streets, roads, bridges, underpasses, rapid transit and new developments.

Further, we feel that if the city is sincere in its desire to improve active transportation, the budget requirement has been grossly underestimated. Let's compare. As stated in the city's Transportation Master Plan, the city currently spends \$152 million/year on road repair and construction and \$2.8 million/year on active transportation. Active transportation accounts for only 1.3% of the overall transportation capital budget (vs. 72.1% devoted to roads). Under the city's 20 year Transportation Master Plan, the proportion for active transportation barely changes: at the far end of the plan, the amount for active transportation capital spending is estimated to be between 1.4% and 1.6% of the transportation capital plan (vs. 67.8% to 76.4% for roads). In other words, the city has no plans to increase the proportion of funding for active transportation at all, despite a plan that calls for an increasing reliance on active transportation to take advantage of the numerous clear benefits of increasing active transportation, not least of which is reduced wear and tear on the streets.

The city's draft plan merely proposes to maintain the yearly current budget of \$500,000 for recreational walkways and bike paths, \$500,000 for new active transportation corridors, and \$250,000 for new regional sidewalks (the remaining capital budget goes towards renewal of existing sidewalks and pathways). This will only allow for approximately 1.25km of new multi-use pathways, 2km of new bike boulevards (quiet-traffic streets enhanced to encourage cycling) per year, and less than 1km of new sidewalks each year, with no budget for pedestrian/bicycle overpasses/underpasses whatsoever.

This level of funding will not allocate sufficient funding in future capital and operating budgets to complete the active transportation networks. It will not even allow the active transportation network to keep up with the city's growth. If Winnipeg is going to make cycling a viable option for its citizens (and tourists) then more than the status quo is required. We recommend that in the short term, the city's capital budget for active transportation be increased to at least \$8 million/year. Over the 20 years covered by the Transportation Master Plan, such a budget could allow for the construction/improvement of 20-25 pedestrian/bicycle bridges/underpasses, 133km of new sidewalk, 50km of new multi-use pathways, and 100km of bike boulevards, or any combination thereof. The benefits would be felt across the city. Our recommendation of a capital expenditures budget of \$8 million/year for active transportation is only a modest plan. Over the lifespan of this plan, the same \$8 million/year would only widen about 4km of regional roadway, including overpasses (based on the budget for the widening of Marion Street).

Finally, in order for cycling to become a viable transportation option in Winnipeg, then the City must develop and adopt a Cycling Master Plan.

A Cycling Master Plan would include the following:

- (1) state a goal of placing a low-stress bikeway within close proximity (400 to 500 metres) of all Winnipeggers;
  - (2) identify specific routes required to achieve this goal, including cost estimates that are flexible enough to allow for choices to be made between different kinds of cycling infrastructure options (currently, the city tends to apply an average, fixed cost per kilometre of cycling infrastructure and then tends to lock in that number preventing any meaningful consultation or consideration of options);
  - (3) identify strategic cycling routes and specific gaps that must be addressed to complete those routes;
  - (4) include annual budget estimates that will be required to complete the cycling network within given time frames;
  - (5) identify land acquisitions that would be desirable/necessary to implement the plan;
  - (6) set out specific requirements for bicycle parking, that will set out the quantity of bicycle parking required for each site, as well as qualitative requirements that will ensure that required bicycle parking actually meets the needs of cyclists;
  - (7) propose a plan for education and skills training for both cyclists and motorists on their respective rights and obligations;
  - (8) propose a communications plan to encourage citizens to opt for cycling as often as possible;
- and
- (9) propose a plan to market Winnipeg as a prime bike tourism destination.

Many cities across Canada and around the world have developed Cycling Master Plans. For Winnipeg to be thought of as a healthy, progressive, environmentally conscious, first-tier city, then a Cycling Master Plan is essential.

Bike to the Future, Board of Directors  
Kevin Miller & Curt Hull, Co-Chairs