

Cycling and the Future of Manitoba

How infrastructure funding and policy changes increase our likelihood of choosing cycling as a form of transportation



RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented by Bike to the Future on behalf of the people of Manitoba

Introduction

Bike to the Future is an incorporated, non-profit organization of concerned cyclists working to make cycling in Winnipeg a safe, enjoyable, accessible and convenient transportation choice year-round. We envision a city where cycling is embraced as the preferred mode of transportation, where cycling is integrated into urban design and planning, and where Winnipeg is recognized as a leader in cycling infrastructure and programs.

To date, cycling in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba has received very little support and encouragement from the provincial and city governments. The availability of cycling infrastructure and educational programs in Winnipeg does not reflect the roughly 10,000 active cyclists in the city, let alone the great potential for increasing the number of cyclists in the future. The level of support and funding has largely ignored the enormous value of Active Transportation in improving our health and environment and in reducing transportation costs for both individuals and governments.

On behalf of the Bike to the Future membership and the citizens of Manitoba, we ask that the Government of Manitoba take all necessary steps to:

- Recognize that trips made by bicycle have the potential to replace a significant number of trips currently being made by private automobile.
- Recognize that most Manitobans who currently drive have demonstrated that they are willing, able and excited to make the transition to cycling.
- Recognize that the current and historic lack of investment in safe cycling infrastructure is a key deterrent keeping people from cycling.
- Recognize that support for cycling pays for itself through cost savings to governments and individuals while also providing substantial GHG reductions.
- Recognize that cycling provides multiple benefits to our health, to community development, to economic growth, to tourism, and to the environment.
- Recognize that increased investment in cycling is an effective strategy for the reduction of GHG emissions.
- Recognize that the value of the Province's investments in trail infrastructure can be vastly improved if these trails are integrated into a network of bicycle routes through strategic infrastructure projects.

2008 Budget-Specific Recommendations

Priority Solutions – Recommendations for the 2008 Provincial Budget:

- A. Review all planned 2008 projects to ensure that roads & bridges projects receiving provincial funding plan for the needs of pedestrians and cyclists;
- B. Fund the creation of a comprehensive network of improved cycling infrastructure for the city of Winnipeg. We suggest demonstrating the Province's commitment by dedicating at least 5% of the provincial highway / roadway budget to this fund, to be invested only in new Active Transportation infrastructure or in "retrofit" projects in urban areas. The planning of this network is currently underway at the City of Winnipeg and is expected to be finalized before the deadline of March 2008;

Other Key Recommendations:

- C. Require all future provincially funded roadway projects to plan for the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. This will eliminate the need for the case-by-case review called for in Recommendation 'A';
- D. Establish short, medium and long term transportation modal share targets for public transit, walking and cycling;
- E. Require all cities and municipalities in Manitoba to include an Active Transportation component in their Municipal Plans;
- F. Revise the Highway Traffic Act to update and clarify the rules as they apply to cyclists;
- G. Direct Manitoba Public Insurance to revise insurance rates to help year-round car drivers become seasonal cyclists;
- H. Direct Manitoba Public Insurance to focus on increasing motorists' awareness and acceptance of cyclists on roadways through driver training programs and the creation of targeted media campaigns;
- I. Fund the development and delivery of educational programs for both children and adults to improve cyclists skills;
- J. Promote the benefits of choosing cycling as an alternative to the automobile by directing the appropriate departments, sub-departments and agencies (i.e. Healthy Living; Conservation; Health; Infrastructure and Transportation; Energy: Climate and Green Initiatives; Green Manitoba; Manitoba Public Insurance) to cooperatively develop a communications strategy aimed at encouraging Manitobans to choose Active Transportation;

K. Develop a capital cost sharing program to fund Active Transportation infrastructure projects;

L. Work with local cycle touring organizations, trails organizations and the Manitoba Cycling Association to prioritize 2-3 exciting pilot projects to create first-rate bicycle linkages between urban communities and popular tourist destinations. (eg. The Forks to Birds Hill Park to Grand Beach; Winnipeg to Whiteshell Provincial Park; Brandon to Turtle Mountain Provincial Park.);

M. Direct Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation to create a continuously updating on-line highway map specifically for cyclists showing highways with paved shoulders to facilitate bike tour planning and bicycle travel between different rural communities;

N. Direct Travel Manitoba to create a Bicycle Tourism website to help tourists integrate cycling into their travel plans (i.e. bike rental in urban areas, links to bicycle route maps, suggested bicycle touring routes);

O. Support all of the above goals with appropriate data collection, reporting and research to identify the need for, and use of, Active Transportation facilities and the benefits that they provide.

We recognize the importance of gaining stakeholder, public and inter-departmental input in all policy changes, and would like to indicate, in advance, our willingness to participate in the initiative outlined by the following recommendation:

P. Foster dialogue and find solutions into the future - We recommend the immediate formation of a stakeholder task-force comprised of interested MLAs, representatives of key departments and interested community organizations so that, together, we may consider other policy changes, funding initiatives and programs aimed at encouraging the use of the bicycle as a form of transportation.

