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Honourable Kerri Irvin-Ross
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Manitoba Legislature
450 Broadway Avenue
Winnipeg, MB

Dear Kerri,

I am writing to you on behalf of Bike to the Future to request a meeting with you to discuss what the province can do to encourage communities and municipalities to develop more cycling infrastructure. As you know, Bike to the Future was formed in the summer to organize a forum, attended by more than 100 cyclists to discuss what is needed to improve cycling in Winnipeg. We prepared a report based on the forum and you were good enough to meet us at the Legislature and receive the report on behalf of the government on September 26th. I spoke to you briefly at that time. (I am also one of your constituents, living in Wildwood Park.)

Since September Bike to the Future has developed into an ongoing advocacy group focusing on cycling as everyday transportation in Winnipeg. We have made presentations at several meetings, most recently at the City's infrastructure committee meeting yesterday. Our emphasis in these presentations has been on implementation of the City's Active Transportation Report recommendations, on the development of cycling routes and facilities throughout the city, and on allocating funding for the development of cycling facilities that is commensurate with the proportion of the population who actively cycle.

However, as was noted in our report, we are also concerned with the development of provincial policies and programs that would support cycling. Support for a bicycle-friendly city fits well with the provincial government's emphasis on healthy living. We applaud the province's low cost helmet program. Participants in the forum agreed that helmets should be encouraged for all cyclists. We have also been researching the issue of bicycle traffic collisions and have found that there is an alarmingly high rate of injuries to cyclists. (See attached.)

Promotion of cycling also fits well with the government's emphasis on the environment and reduction of greenhouse gasses. Cycling is one of the most sustainable modes of transportation and supports Kyoto priorities: motorized vehicles and agriculture are the

two largest emitters of greenhouse gasses in Manitoba. To the extent that it is possible to promote cycling as the preferred means of transportation in Manitoba's communities, this will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The province has an important role to play in ensuring municipalities and provincial infrastructure is bicycle-friendly. We feel that there should be a provincial bicycle transportation policy. This policy could address several issues, such as allocating resources for highway improvements, ensuring that highways used by cyclists have adequate shoulders, requiring municipal governments to have their own bicycle plans, among other things. Manitoba can find good examples of provincial policies in British Columbia and Quebec, for example. For your information I am attaching a summary of the Québec provincial bicycle policy which we prepared. (We have a copy of the complete document if you would like to see it.) We also note that the development of provincial cycling routes can provide benefits for the tourism industry, as it has in Quebec where "la route verte" has been developed jointly by provincial, municipal, and non-governmental interests.

In general we are interested in working with the province to improve cycling infrastructure in order to encourage more people to take up this healthy mode of sustainable transportation. Indeed, it is one of the most tangible things we can do for our own health and the health of our planet.

We look forward to meeting with you and exchanging ideas on how to improve cycling infrastructure in Manitoba. Please note that we have also approached Minister Steve Ashton to request a similar meeting.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Hull

Bike to the Future Organizing Committee

Attachments:

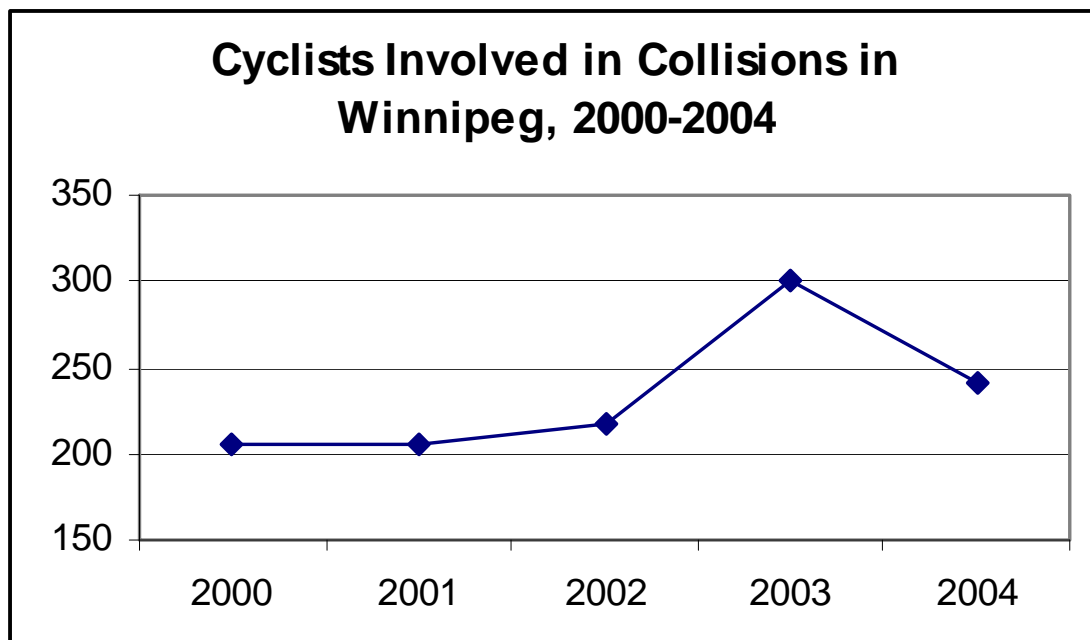
Collisions Involving Cyclists in Winnipeg, 2000-2004

Summary of Quebec's 1995 Bicycle Policy

Collisions Involving Cyclists in Winnipeg, 2000-2004 *(Draft, Jan 10/07)*

The City of Winnipeg Department of Public Works compiles statistics concerning traffic collisions in Winnipeg, including collisions involving bicycles. Tables describe the driving maneuvers (turning, going straight, etc.), the type of action (driving properly, failing to yield, disobeying a traffic control, etc.) and other characteristics of both motorists and cyclists. The following summary is based on these tables as posted on the City of Winnipeg web site.

The number of collisions involving cyclists varied between 200 and 300 over the five years from 2000-2004. The number of reported collisions has gone up and down but seems to be increasing. (See graph.) Over these five years the number of cyclists who died in collisions ranged from 0 to 2.



Source: City of Winnipeg, Public Works, Traffic Collisions Reports, 2000-2004

When these collisions occurred, the vast majority of the cyclists (89% on average) were going straight, rather than turning or changing lanes. A small number of cyclists were turning left (4%) or changing lanes (3%). However, only half of the motorists who were involved in these accidents (50%) were going straight, while another 26% were turning right and 11% were turning left.

The Public Works tables also indicate whether the motorists and cyclists were driving properly or were committing any improper traffic actions. While the majority (61%) of cyclists involved in collisions were driving properly, a substantial minority of them were not. The most common problems with cyclists' driving were failure to yield to traffic (9%), disobeying traffic controls or signals (9%), and improper lane changes (6%). Only a minority (44%) of motorists who were involved in accidents with bicycles were driving

properly. Many of them (24%) disobeyed traffic controls or signals or failed to yield to traffic (18%).

Actions of Cyclists and Motorists Involved in Collisions Average Percentage, 2000-2004		
Action	Cyclists	Motorists
Driving properly	61.1%	44.1%
Failed to yield	9.4%	18.1%
Disobeyed traffic control	9.0%	24.5%
Left stop sign before safe	3.0%	2.0%
Improper lane change or turn	6.0%	4.9%
Other improper action	11.5%	6.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: City of Winnipeg, Public Works, Traffic Collisions Reports, 2000-2004

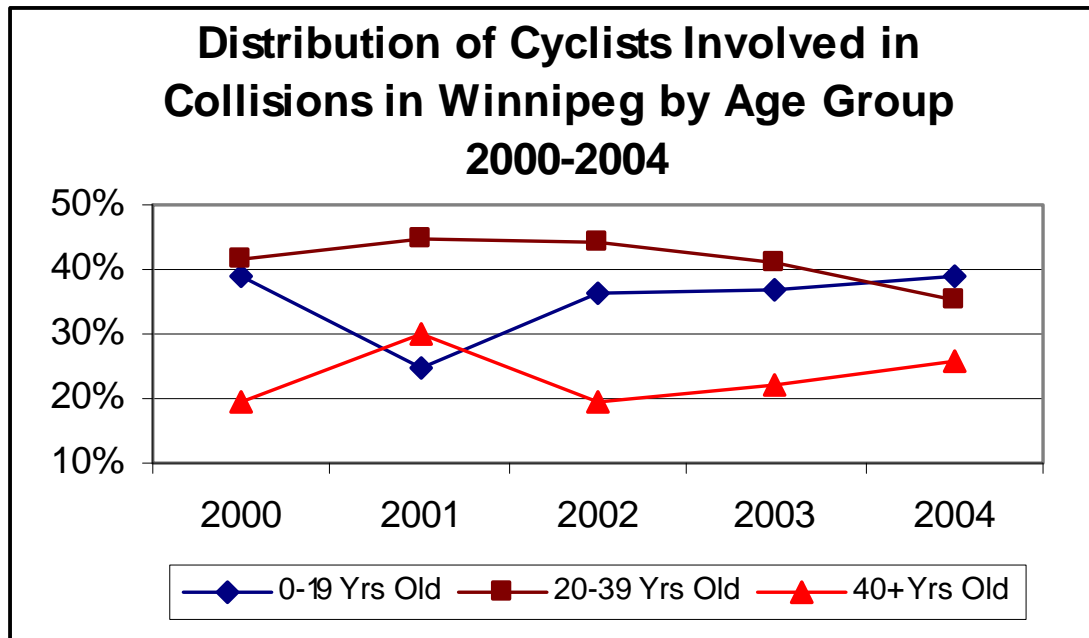
Over the five years there were 6 fatalities among cyclists and 1 fatality among motorists. Two of the six cyclists who died were driving properly according to the tables, while 2 had failed to yield, 1 had turned improperly, and 1 had lost control. The one motorist who died was driving properly. As shown in the table below, about 6% of traffic accidents in Winnipeg in 2004 that resulted in injuries involved bicycles, while 10% of fatal accidents involved bicycles.

**Bicycle Collisions in Winnipeg in 2004 as a Percentage of All Traffic Collisions
By type of Injury**

	All Collisions	Bicycle Collisions	Percent
Fatal Crashes	20	2	10.0%
Other Injuries	3,613	222	6.1%
Property	12,210	18	0.1%
Total	15,843	242	1.5%

Source: City of Winnipeg, Public Works, Traffic Collisions Report, 2004

Half (51%) of the cyclists involved in collisions are either older children or younger adults, within the 10-29 age range. The age distribution of cyclists has remained fairly consistent over time, although there has been a slight increase of older cyclists who are involved in collisions. As of 2004, about 25% of these cyclists were 40 or older.



Source: City of Winnipeg, Public Works, Traffic Collisions Reports, 2000-2004

Conclusions

Based on these statistics it appears that traffic accidents involving cyclists has been increasing over time and that many of these accidents could be prevented if both motorists and cyclists were better drivers and followed the rules of the road. It should be kept in mind that these are only the reported statistics, and that there may be many minor collisions that are not reported, particularly because such collisions might not result in serious injuries or any damage to the motor vehicles involved. However, even based on reported collisions, about 6% of traffic accidents that result in injuries and 10% of fatal accidents in Winnipeg involve bicycles. A Public Works survey in 2004 estimated that 2.8% of commuters use bicycles. This suggests that cyclists are roughly twice as likely as car drivers to be injured and three times as likely to die as the result of traffic collisions. On the other hand, 2.8% of Winnipeggers use bicycles to get to work according to a City of Winnipeg Public Works telephone survey done in 2004. (An accurate risk assessment comparison would require data on the relative amount of time spent on the road by cyclists and motorists, and this information is not currently available.)

In Winnipeg cyclists of all ages are at greater risk of being injured than motorists. This is a problem that can be corrected, but it will require better driver education for **both drivers & cyclists**. At the same time we need to keep in mind that better cycling infrastructure, in the form of improved cycling routes, bike lanes, pathways and signage can also reduce the risks for cyclists, allowing the us to reap the many benefits of increased use of bicycles as a means of transportation within our city.

Summary of Quebec's 1995 Bicycle Policy

Quebec's policy considered both the role of the ministry of transportation (ministère des Transports) and the provincial insurance corporation (Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec – SAAQ). The roles of the two bodies were identified as follows. The ministère is responsible for

- standardization of cycling infrastructure and signs;
- addition of cycling infrastructure to major roads;
- coordination of activities of all stakeholders regarding cycling infrastructure.

SAAQ is responsible for

- controlling access to roads;
- preventing accidents and injury;
- providing compensation to traffic accident victims.

The objectives of the policy are to:

1. Promote traffic safety among cyclists and others using the road;
2. Improve the transportation system for cyclists;
3. Gradually promote the bicycle as a means of transportation.

The policy consists of 13 components. These are summarized in the following table.

Summary of Quebec's 1995 Bicycle Policy

Issue	Orientation (policy statement)	Action
Helmets	<p>Head injuries are the chief cause of death among cyclists, and helmets see to be the most effective means of reducing the severity of head injuries and death. INTENSIVE PROMOTION OF CYCLING HELMETS is therefore appropriate</p>	<p>Provincial coalition established to promote cycling helmets;</p> <p>SAAQ to evaluate promotion campaigns;</p>
Highway Safety Code	<p>Non-compliance with the <i>Highway Safety Code</i> by cyclists and motorists are a significant cause of accidents. It is therefore important to INTENSIFY ENFORCEMENT OF THE HIGHWAY SAFETY CODE.</p>	<p>Study to determine causes of non-compliance with the Code;</p> <p>Awareness and road monitoring activities to promote greater respect for the Code by cyclists and others;</p>
Education	<p>Children and adolescents are the main victims of accidents involving bicycles. It is therefore important to INTENSIFY EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS.</p>	<p>Intensify education in schools regarding compliance with the Code and sharing the road;</p> <p>Intensify marketing of other existing education programs;</p> <p>Evaluation of these education programs;</p>
Standards for Bicycles	<p>30% of bicycle-motor vehicle accidents are due to lack of visibility. It is therefore appropriate to PROMOTE STANDARDS FOR BICYCLES AND EQUIPMENT.</p>	<p>Work through the Canadian Council of Motorized Transportation Administrators to standardize requirements;</p> <p>Highway Safety Code amendments to require bicycles to be sold with reflectors;</p>

Issue	Orientation (policy statement)	Action
Bicycle Theft	PROMOTE SYSTEMATIC ENGRAVING OF BICYCLES	Agreement to be reached with bicycle manufacturers to incorporate a plate for engraving.
Planning the Cycling System	Planning at the regional level is most effective in defining a functional, province-wide cycling system. Accordingly it is necessary to INCLUDE CYCLING SYSTEM PLANNING IN THE LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS.	Inclusion of cycling in the plan will be a primary condition in any new road project involving the major road system.
Standardizing infrastructure & signs	The ministère des Transports has primary responsibility for STANDARDIZING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND BICYCLE TRAFFIC SIGNS IN QUEBEC	Department to develop standards to be included in road works standards; Department to pass regulations on bicycle lane signs;
Cycling Infrastructure	The ministère des Transports will TAKE THE NEEDS OF CYCLISTS INTO ACCOUNT in regional development plans.	Include bicycle infrastructure in construction and road repairs; Plan to help cyclists overcome physical barriers such as rivers, freeways and railroad tracks; Allow paving of a portion of the shoulders along sections of major roads; Development of bicycle paths within provincially owned rights of way; Provide expertise in design and signage to the community;

Issue	Orientation (policy statement)	Action
		Integrate bicycle transportation with other means of transportation;

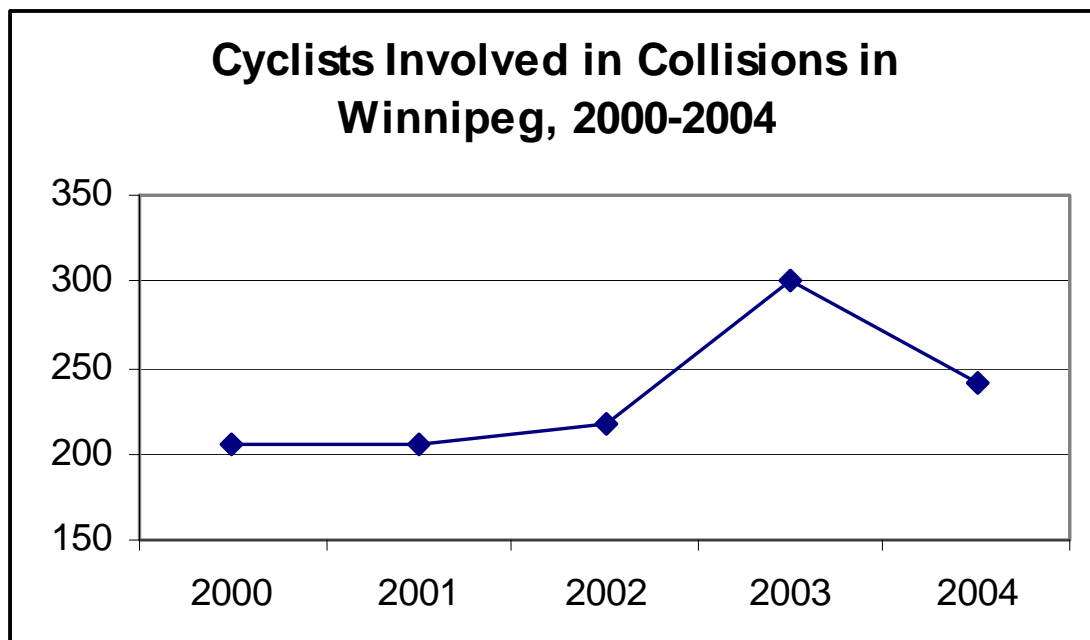
Issue	Orientation (policy statement)	Action
Financing	Because the provincial government cannot finance the cost of cycling infrastructure on its own, it proposes to PROMOTE A SHARING OF FINANCING WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS.	Department will fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to 50% of infrastructure on the provincial road system; - up to 100% of infrastructure when it is part of road construction, repair or improvement work; - contribute to cycling infrastructure on municipal roads;
Concerted Action	PROMOTE CONCERTED ACTION AMONG PROVINCIAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS	Set up regional action committees and <i>ad hoc</i> committees; Develop cooperation with other levels of government and other provinces;
Legislation	REVISE THE HIGHWAY SAFETY CODE to adapt it more to the situation of cyclists.	Ministère des Transports and SAAQ to form a task force to revise the <i>Highway Safety Code</i> .
Research & Training	INTENSIFY CYCLING RESEARCH AND TRAINING IN TERMS OF SAFETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Thorough survey of cycling in Québec; Cooperation with universities and colleges to develop safety training programs; Develop expertise within the ministère des Transports;

Issue	Orientation (policy statement)	Action
Evaluation	ACTIONS OF THE MINISTERE DES TRANSPORTS AND SAAQ HAVE TO BE EVALUATED REGULARLY	Evaluation policy to be developed;

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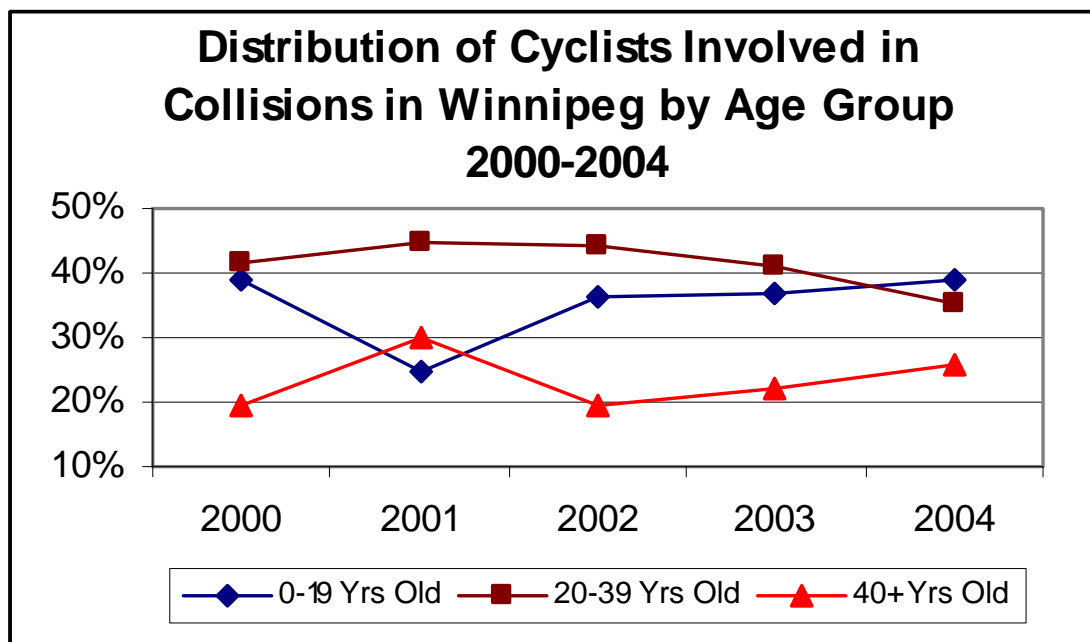
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In Winnipeg cyclists of all ages are at greater risk of being injured than motorists. This is a problem that can be corrected, but it will require better driver education for **both drivers & cyclists**. At the same time we need to keep in mind that better cycling infrastructure, in the form of improved cycling routes, bike lanes, pathways and signage can also reduce the risks for cyclists, allowing the us to reap the many benefits of increased use of bicycles as a means of transportation within our city.