

Provincial Land Use Policy Review Meetings

The Province of Manitoba has redrafted the Provincial Land Use Policies and is now seeking feedback on them from interested stakeholders and individuals. There are workshops for this purpose taking place in various parts of Manitoba, including one in **Winnipeg on Monday, April 27 at the Norwood Hotel, 112 Marion from 7:00-9:30 pm**. If you would like to reserve a seat at the workshop please contact Sherry Nelson at 204-945-2150.

The Land Use Policies have important implications for active transportation, and the new policies include a number of references to cycling, walking and other related issues. One section deals specifically with active transportation. A summary of the new draft policies is available from www.manitoba.ca/ia/plups.

We would encourage any interested individuals or groups to participate in the workshops and/or make written submissions to the review. We have developed a few talking points that people may wish to consider when making their presentations. Bike to the Future will have a representative at the Winnipeg workshop and will also be preparing a written submission in the following weeks. For more information or if you have any comments please contact province@biketothefuture.org.

Key Messages

We believe that increased use of bicycles as everyday transportation can:

- Reduce greenhouse gases
- Improve air quality
- Enhance our urban environment
- Improve our health and fitness
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Save money for individuals and governments

There is a clear relationship between investment in improved cycling routes and increased cycling. The key to achieving these results is providing a connected network of routes, rather than isolated improvements. This approach requires appropriate active transportation policies at the provincial and municipal levels.

To date, the commitments and initiatives of the City of Winnipeg and the Province are minimal when considered in light of the threat of global warming, the historic lack of attention to cycling, and in comparison with other jurisdictions. In addition, most of these initiatives have focused on multi-use paths which do not satisfy the needs of transportation cyclists. The draft land use policies are a welcome development in that they represent the Province's first attempt to encourage municipalities and other local authorities to develop active transportation policies.

We want recognition of cycling as a legitimate and beneficial form of transportation, and consideration of cycling needs in transportation planning to achieve:

- safe dedicated bike lanes on major routes, more direct commuter routes, and better-connected bike routes throughout the city that are safe for the young or inexperienced, convenient for the commuter, and fun for everyone,
- respect for cyclists on city streets,
- improved driver education for both cyclists and motorists,
- improved safety for cyclists,
- secure bicycle parking facilities, and
- interconnection with other modes of transportation.

Urban sprawl and unconstrained development in urban and rural areas throughout Manitoba undermine efforts to achieve an efficient and sustainable transportation system, including the development of transit, cycling and walking options. We applaud the aspects of the draft land use policies that address this issue, but feel that they are not as strong as they need to be and may be ignored by local authorities under pressure from developers.

The Draft Provincial Land Use Policies

The draft policies offer big improvements for active transportation and energy conservation. Nonetheless, there are some ways in which the policies could do more to encourage active transportation:

- The policies should treat active transportation as totally integrated into transportation planning decisions, rather than present them as something to be "promoted".
- In some sections, the policies are not sufficiently directive. When provincial policy uses words such as "should" and "encourage" to guide local authorities and developers, it fails to provide the leadership which is necessary to reliably drive change.
- Within Section 7 on Transportation, section 7.1 (p. 53) should be reworded from "should" to "shall", thus requiring local authorities to create transportation plans that include identification of safe and convenient transportation facilities for biking, walking, and for use by the mobility challenged, encouraging appropriate enhancement of those facilities, and addressing safety concerns around intersections and major transfer nodes, among other things.
- Bicyclists' needs should be considered in the planning of developments. In section 7.6, an additional sub-section should be added to require that developments shall be constructed to enhance existing active transportation networks, and not create barriers to bicycling.
- In Section 7.7 "should" should be replaced by "shall" to read: "All modes of transportation, particularly more active and environmentally sustainable forms such as walking, cycling, and public transit, shall be facilitated through development plans.
- In Section 7.9 "should" should be replaced by "shall" to read: To reduce reliance on the automobile, development plans shall include policies to promote walkable and transit-supportive communities.
- In Section 7.10, transit supporting measures should include: establishing bikeways to busy bus transfer stations; and providing bike parking inside and outside at major bus stops.
- In Section 9, regarding the Capital Region, bicycles are mentioned with respect of the interconnectivity of pathways and trails within and between parks. A new bullet should be added to section 9.3 stating: "a comprehensive bikeway network to priority destinations, including schools, libraries, universities, business centers, public buildings, and transit stations,"