



Bike to the Future
c/o 3 – 330 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 2B2
Fax: 989-8476
biketothefuture@gmail.com
www.biketothefuture.org

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Submission to the Standing Committee on Infrastructure Renewal & Public Works

Presented on behalf of Bike to the Future by Molly McCracken

Bike to the Future is a voluntary, inclusive group of concerned cyclists working to make cycling in Winnipeg a safe, enjoyable, accessible and convenient transportation choice. We are interested in working with the city to improve infrastructure and safety for cyclists. Thank you for inviting us to speak to you today.

Almost a year to this day, on January 12, 2006, the Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Public Works recommended the approval and implementation of the City of Winnipeg Active Transportation Study, completed February 2005. While projects such as Marconi rail to trail and Winsmart are moving forward, the Active Transportation recommendations have not been acted on. We still do not have bicycle plan, or a commitment of resources, or integration of cycling infrastructure in capital works projects. Moreover, implementing this study requires special expertise and capacity that could be gained by having an Active Transportation Coordinator to move cycling forward strategically in Winnipeg.

Many Winnipeggers want to see action on the Active Transportation study.

In an effort to engage with cyclists on our vision of cycling in the city, Bike to the Future organized a public participatory forum on September 20th, 2006. More than one hundred cyclists attended the forum, and shared their ideas about what they think is needed to make cycling better and safer in our city. The proceedings of this forum were cycled to City Hall and the Legislature, and are documented in report of proceedings available on our website www.biketothefuture.org. **Based on the input of the participants at this forum, the report strongly urges the city to:**

Adopt the recommendations of the Active Transportation Study, specifically:

- **Hire an Active Transportation Program Coordinator**
- **Form an Active Transportation Advisory Committee**
- **Develop a detailed action plan for a citywide Active Transportation network that includes:**

- **Public Consultations**
- **Priorizations**
- **Time Frames**
- **Dedicated funding, at least 2.8% of Public Works –Streets capital budget for roadways, reflecting the number of cyclists using roads. Keeping in mind that infrastructure spending on roadways has been largely neglected.**
- **Integrate cycling needs into all road construction**

We know from a 2005 Winnipeg Public Works Survey, 2.8% of Winnipeggers use cycling as their main mode of transportation. The city of Winnipeg's Civic Environmental Committee 2002 survey found that 74% of citizens polled are willing to reduce their motorized transportation by walking or cycling more. For these reasons we are focusing on cycling as a method of transportation which will in turn have a significant impact on reducing traffic congestion, greenhouse gases and improve the health of all Winnipeggers.

We feel that it is both imperative and practical to have cyclists involved in the planning process to ensure that the implemented facilities reflect the needs of Winnipeg cyclists. The knowledge and experience gained by travelling across the city by bike on a daily basis cannot be under estimated, it will serve as a compliment to the skills and experience of city staff. For this reason we strongly support the formation of an Active Transportation Advisory Committee to work with city planners and engineers and report directly to the Infrastructure Committee.

There is one issue of particular concern that has come to light from our involvement with the Marconi Line and Waverley West consultations. We have noted that the cycling facilities being proposed are geared towards the recreational cyclist, but there is little consideration of the bicycle as an integrated component of the transportation system. Paths, Pathways and Trails must be built to a sufficient width and surface treatment and provide proper linkages to goods and services available throughout the city. These "Pathways" are for recreational use primarily, and should not to be confused with providing cyclists with appropriate connective linkages within the city.

Bike to the Future is interested in working with the City to improve cycling in Winnipeg, and make this a quality transportation mode of choice. We look forward to making this a reality – for our health, and the health of our planet.