



Background:

Bike to the Future was incorporated as a non-profit organization in Manitoba in February 2007. We have 780 members, and 1,600 Manitobans have signed up to receive our newsletter.

We have become the “go to” organization for issues relating to commuter cycling in Winnipeg. We focus on Winnipeg, because that is where most of our members live, but we are very much aware of the many opportunities to improve cycling elsewhere in Manitoba as well.

A 2012 survey by Bike to the Future volunteers found that nearly 13,000 persons were commuting to work by bicycle in the summer. That figure is up 64 per cent since we began bicycle counts in 2007.

We have learned that many people will not consider cycling in Winnipeg because they don't feel safe riding their bicycle on the road.

We look enviously at cities – and countries -- with well designed bicycle routes that are separated from traffic and suitable for commuting and running errands. The Danes and the Dutch are leaders at the international level, and Minneapolis & Montreal are leaders in North America. Calgary has busy bicycle routes in some parts of the city. Data from jurisdictions such as those shows that people of all ages choose to ride bikes when they feel safe going about their business on a bicycle.

Separate facilities for bicycles are the best and the safest way to move people out of their cars onto bicycles. We envision a city where cycling is integrated into urban design and planning, and where motor vehicle drivers are trained to give cyclists a wide berth. Funds invested now to create a safe environment for people to use their bicycles for day to day transportation will result in a healthier population, more vibrant neighbourhoods, safer streets, and lower infrastructure costs in the future. There is significant pay-back just from reduced health costs and lost time for the province and employers.

In June 2011 the Government published “Greater Strides: Taking Action on Active Transportation” a report [www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/pdf/atag_report6.pdf] by an Active Transportation Advisory Group which they had commissioned. This study recommended, inter alia:

Assign a dedicated percentage of the annual roads and bridges capital and operating budgets to fund a cost-share program with municipalities to encourage the development and maintenance of active transportation infrastructure in and between Manitoba communities.

In June 2012, the Government announced internal initiatives to promote AT, and a couple of infrastructure projects, but no commitment to allocate an ongoing portion of transportation infrastructure expenditures to AT [<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=&item=146721>].



Recommended Questions for Estimates

Has the government dedicated a percentage of the annual roads and bridges capital and operating budgets to fund a cost-share program with municipalities to encourage the development and maintenance of active transportation infrastructure in and between Manitoba communities?

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation published Manitoba's Highway Renewal Plan 2011-2015. When will Active Transportation needs be integrated into that Plan?

To create a safer environment on our roads that will encourage adults and children to use their bicycles for short trips, how much funding has the government dedicated to:

- Public outreach informing drivers of the proper ways to share the road, and
- Cyclist education programs for students and adults?

Legislative issues

Cyclists are very vulnerable on our roads; several are killed each year in Manitoba by motor vehicles. 23 jurisdictions in North America, including Nova Scotia, have enacted amendments to their highway traffic legislation to require cars to allow a minimum of three feet (or one metre) when passing a cyclist. Will the Government introduce legislation to define at least one metre as the safe passing distance?