

Cycling in Manitoba – Fact Sheet

Bike to the Future – Background

Bike to the Future is an incorporated, non-profit organization of concerned citizens 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.

In the 10 months since our incorporation, we have gained more than 300 individual and family members and we also have organizational memberships that include the Manitoba Cycling Association, the Winnipeg Trails Association, the Manitoba Medical Association, bike shops, and others. We work cooperatively with these groups and others to promote cycling and active transportation generally. Our focus is on Winnipeg, but many of the issues have a provincial dimension and would benefit greatly from provincial support.

What Cyclists and Would-be Cyclists Need

There are many challenges facing anyone who wants to use a bicycle to get around in Winnipeg and in Manitoba generally. As cyclists and advocates for those who would like to cycle more, we want to see:

- 🚲 Safe cycling routes that take people where they need to go
- 🚲 Secure bicycle parking facilities
- 🚲 Interconnection with other modes of transportation
- 🚲 Education about how to cycle safely
- 🚲 Recognition of cycling as a legitimate and beneficial form of transportation

Benefits of Increased Cycling

Cycling provides many benefits to individuals and governments.

- 🚲 Cycling improves health and fitness, saves money and saves lives.
- 🚲 Cycling reduces air pollution and illness due to air pollution.
- 🚲 Cycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions. It is estimated that for each increase of 1% in the cyclists' share of traffic, emissions are reduced by about 4 kilotonnes per year.
- 🚲 Cycling reduces transportation costs for individuals.
- 🚲 Cycling reduces traffic congestion, and road construction costs.
- 🚲 Cycling infrastructure is one of the keys to creating a liveable, prosperous city, and to providing citizens with the healthy lifestyle choices they want.
- 🚲 Cycling infrastructure can be especially beneficial in core area neighbourhoods and the downtown, helping to make the downtown attractive to the middle class and to provide affordable transportation options for those with low incomes.
- 🚲 Cycling is a pleasant and eco-friendly way of traveling. In a bicycle-friendly province, the cyclist becomes a tremendous stimulant to the economy.

Positive Developments

Over the past year things have started to change, and it is clear that governments and communities are starting to take action, including the following:

Federal Government

- 🚲 The federal government has made major announcements regarding increased funding for “green” transportation, such as bike lanes and rapid transit

Provincial Government

- 🚲 The province has provided support and funding for trail developments in Winnipeg and throughout the province
- 🚲 Manitoba has made bold commitments to fight climate change and reduce greenhouse gases

City of Winnipeg

- 🚲 The City of Winnipeg has appointed an Active Transportation Coordinator and Committee, and is nearing completion of an Active Transportation Action Plan.
- 🚲 A new line item has been added to the Winnipeg’s Capital Budget for “Active Transportation Corridors”, with an initial 2008 budget of \$600,000, a 600% increase over last year.
- 🚲 Work is advancing in Winnipeg on major projects such as the North East Pioneer’s Greenway, the Bishop Grandin Greenway Trail and WINSMART.
- 🚲 Changes were made to the Winnipeg zoning bylaw to include short-term bike parking as 10% of all parking stalls on new projects.

Community Initiatives

- 🚲 Community bike repair shops have opened or are planned at the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, Canadian Mennonite University, downtown and the North End.
- 🚲 The Downtown BIZ is advocating in support of alternative transportation modes like cycling, in an effort to encourage people to live, work and play downtown.
- 🚲 Bike to the Future is working with Manitoba Public Insurance to develop a made-in-Manitoba cycling safety education program for adults.
- 🚲 A network of neighbourhood cycling stewardship groups has formed throughout Winnipeg, and these groups have provided practical, on-the-ground input into the planning of a comprehensive network of cycling routes.

Inadequacy of Current Efforts

In spite of these developments, the commitments of the City and the Province remain very small when considered in light of the historic lack of attention to cycling, and in comparison with other jurisdictions. Total Winnipeg and Manitoba commitments for cycling-related infrastructure over the next five years amount to \$9.3 million. This represents only **0.47% of the total provincial highways budget** of \$2 billion over this same period. In addition, much of this funding is for recreational, multi-user trails. Little is allocated for the improvement of practical bike routes for everyday transportation.

Other cities devote much more of their budgets to cycling than does the City of Winnipeg:

City	Budget for Cycling Infrastructure as % of Total Roads & Bridges Spending	Time Period
Minneapolis	14%	2007-2011
Vancouver	7%	2006-2008
Seattle	6%	2008-2012
Portland	5%	2007-2012
Montreal	3%	2005-2007
<i>Winnipeg</i>	<i>1.3%</i>	<i>2008-2013</i>

It is not only the lack of funding for cycling infrastructure that is an issue. Manitoba has no provincial policy on cycling or active transportation, no funding programs designed to cost-share cycling improvements with cities, municipalities, and others, no development of cyclist education programs, no support for the development of cycle tourism, and no research into cycling levels and needs. Other jurisdictions have done better. Jurisdictions such as Québec, British Columbia, Washington and Oregon have cycling policies addressing these issues and providing a variety of programs to support cycling.

Effectiveness of Improved Infrastructure

Spending on cycling is effective and will pay dividends in the long run. There is a clear relationship between investment in improved cycling routes and facilities and increased cycling. The key to achieving these results is providing a connected network of routes, rather than isolated improvements. Here are two examples among many others:

- 🚲 In Toronto, the average increase in cycling, two years after installation of a bike lane, was found to be 23%.
- 🚲 Portland has had a policy of aggressive expansion of their cycling infrastructure since 1991, a bicycle use has increased in tandem with the development of the bike routes. Bicycles now represent 11% to 18% of traffic on their four bicycle-friendly bridges.

A Snapshot of Commuter Cycling in Winnipeg

In spite of the challenges, many people are cycling in Manitoba. In Manitoba the 2006 Census found that 1.6% of workers usually travel to work by bicycle, and the same percentage was found in Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, with a slightly higher rate in Brandon (1.8%). We have conducted our own surveys of bicycle commuters and bicycle traffic counts and have learned the following:

- 🚲 Last year, based on actual counts, we estimated that 5,000 bicycle commuters travel in and out of downtown Winnipeg daily in good weather.
- 🚲 Cyclists travel throughout the city, not just in and out of the downtown area, and not only for work, but also for school, shopping and other reasons.
- 🚲 In total about 9,000 cyclists travel to work mainly by bicycle in Winnipeg during the snow-free part of the year (based on responses to a 2004 Public Works Survey).
- 🚲 Winnipeg has flat topography and a median commuting distance of only 6 km (2001 Census).
- 🚲 In our 2006 commuter survey, we found that the average commuting distance of bicycle commuters in Winnipeg was about 9 km and took them 25 minutes, one way.
- 🚲 On average, commuter cyclists get to work or school 16 minutes faster than they would by public transit and only 8 minutes slower than by car.
- 🚲 Some cyclists (23%) get to work as fast, or faster than they would by car.
- 🚲 Commuter cyclists' major recommendations are to provide dedicated bike lanes on major routes, more direct commuter routes, and a better-connected set of trails and bike routes throughout the city.
- 🚲 Commuter cyclists also want more education of both motorists and cyclists so that they can safely share the road.
- 🚲 Commuter cyclists' major concerns are motorists' driving habits and attitudes, poor road conditions, heavy traffic and lack of safe, direct commuting routes.

For additional information contact us at the following address.

Bike to the Future
c/o 3rd Floor, 303 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2B4
web: biketothefuture.org
email: contact@biketothefuture.org
fax: 942-4207