

Bike to the Future
2009 Provincial Land Use Policy Review
Written Submission
May 8, 2009

Executive Summary:

Manitoba has a legacy of land use that establishes automobiles as the priority means of transportation for individuals. Confronted with the reality of global warming, peak oil, and the adverse health impacts of automobiles, continuing to promote cars as the top priority transportation choice is no longer a suitable choice for the future.

In directing the future of land use, we recommend that the Province apply policies that enhance transit and active transportation, as opposed to enhancing the speed and convenience of automobile transportation.

Urban sprawl and automobile transportation route 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 these issues, but we specifically recommend that the Government make the following amendments in the final version of the Land Use Regulation:

1. These regulations must be established as requirements, not aspirations. Regulations relating to transportation planning must use legal language strong enough to avert the risk being over ridden to meet the short term needs of developers and traffic engineers, and the Government must evaluate compliance.
2. Routes for active transportation have different requirements from recreational paths and trails and must be planned with these requirements in mind. These are two separate types of needs.
3. New developments must not create barriers to active transportation without adequate mitigative measures.

Our Point of View

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

- Reduce greenhouse gases
- Improve air quality
- Enhance community livability and social cohesion
- Improve our health and fitness
- Reduce traffic and parking congestion
- Reduce personal transportation costs
- Reduce road and parking facility costs
- Reduce provincial health care costs

Some of these benefits accrue to bicycle users, some to non-users, such as motorists who face less congestion, and residents who experience less air and noise pollution. Financial benefits accrue to individuals who pay less for transportation and taxes, businesses who pay less for parking, land and taxes, municipal, provincial and federal governments who pay less for road construction and maintenance, and for health care.

In North America, not everyone shares our view. Some people stigmatize nonmotorized travel. Some see walking or cycling as a symbol of low status, or of poverty and failure. They are a minority in Canada, where there is a latent demand for improved bicycle commuting facilities:

Active Transportation Survey Findings (Environics, 1998)		
	Cycle	Walk
Currently use this mode for leisure and recreation.	48%	85%
Currently use this mode for transportation.	24%	58%
Would like to use this mode more frequently.	66%	80%
Would cycle to work if there "were a dedicated bike lane which would take me to my workplace in less than 30 minutes at a comfortable pace."	70%	NA
Support for additional government spending on bicycling facilities.	82%	NA

Even relatively cold and hilly countries, such as Sweden, Switzerland and Germany achieve high levels of nonmotorized travel. Similarly, North American cities, such as Eugene, Oregon, Boulder, Colorado, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota and Missoula, Montana have high rates of nonmotorized travel as a result of supportive public policies, despite geographic and climate challenges.

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 land use planning and active transportation policies at all levels of government.

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

- Safe dedicated bikeways 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 enjoyable 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

The Land Use Policy Regulations

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 through land use policies.

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 believe that nonmotorized travel supports smart growth. 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 prevent being set aside under pressure from developers and traffic engineers.

To date, the active transportation 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, the potential financial benefits, and the progress achieved by other jurisdictions. In addition, most of the Manitoba initiatives have focused on multi-use paths which do not satisfy the needs of transportation cyclists.

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

- Land use policies should treat active transportation as integrated into transportation planning requirements, rather than present it as something to be "promoted".
- Policies must be sufficiently directive to drive change from the habit of planning for automobile traffic as the first priority.
- 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. Therefore:
 - Within Section 7 on Transportation, section 7.1 (p. 53) **we request** that "should" be replaced by "shall", thus requiring local authorities to create transportation plans that cover the items in the list from (a) to (h), including 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.
 - In Section 7.6 **we request** that "should" be replaced by "shall" to read: "To ensure compatibility between development and the transportation network and minimize potential conflicts, transportation and development decisions shall be coordinated..."
 - In Section 7.7 **we request** that "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 7.8 **we request** that "should" be replaced by "shall" to read: "Development plan policies shall support increased densities and mixed land uses in appropriate locations to reduce the number and length of vehicle trips, increase opportunity to use public transportation, and encourage pedestrian and bicycle trips."
 - In Section 7.9 **we request** that "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.
- The regulations should emphasize safely interconnected networks of bikeways which support the use of bikes as daily transportation to high traffic destinations, and distinguish them from bicycle paths designed for recreational use. The definition of "bikeway" established by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD) Bicycle Technical Committee is:

***"Bikeway** - a generic term for any road, street, path, or way that in some manner is specifically designated for bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes."*

- **We request** that references to "bike trails," "bike lanes," "bike paths" or "pathways" be changed to "bikeways" which is more inclusive. A definition of bikeways could be added to the definitions section.
- **We request** that 7.1.b include reference to "bikeways".
- **We request** that, in section 7.6, an additional sub-section be added to require that developments shall be constructed to enhance existing active transportation networks, and not create barriers to bicycling, with wording such as: "restrict developments that create barriers to existing or planned pedestrian and bicycle transportation and public transit routes."
- **We request** that 7.9.h include reference to bikeways, per: "adjacent to transit stops and bikeways to enhance the viability of transit and bicycle transportation"
- In Section 9, regarding the Capital Region, **we request** a new bullet in section 9.3 stating: "a comprehensive bikeway network to priority destinations, including schools, libraries, universities, business centers, public buildings and transit stations,"
- Active transportation should be integrated into the general framework of planning roads and forecasting traffic.
 - **We request** that section 7.1.b. be amended to read: "functional classification – identify a road hierarchy for local roads, transit routes and active transportation routes and their place within the regional and provincial transportation system; determine the functions and significance of these roads and ensure they are integrated into the overall network;"
 - **We request** that In section 7.1.g. be amended to read: "traffic management - forecast and evaluate plausible traffic scenarios over a defined planning timeframe, based on possible transportation and development strategies, including transportation demand management, development of public transit, development of active transportation options, and other land use strategies; compare with projected land use to ensure consistency; develop an access management plan based on the functional classifications identified;"