

Bike Winnipeg Education Committee Report

Oct 7, 2016

Education Committee Members: Bromley Basford, Mark Cohoe, Laura Donatelli, Dave Elmore, Jeremy Hull (chair).

The Education committee did not meet as a group this month, but we continued to work on the Bicycle Education and Skill Training pilot (BEST) project.

Bicycle Education and Skills Training the Schools

There has been a lot of activity as the actual teaching activity got started, including supporting Bob Lawrie, the instructor, and implementing evaluation data collection:

- Bob was hoping to schedule instruction for all the grade 4-8 classes in four elementary and one middle school, but once he and the principals had a closer look at scheduling it is clear it won't be possible to do them all this fall. However, it was always intended that there would also be a spring teaching session for some of the classes, assuming there is continued funding from MPI and/or others in the new fiscal year. Indications from MPI have been very positive so far.
- About 20 teachers from Seven Oaks School Division were given one day of bicycle education training through the MPI Cycling Champions program. (Mark and Pat Krawec were the instructors.) In addition Dave trained five people (employees of WRENCH and Green Action Centre) as CAN-BIKE instructors, increasing the number of qualified instructors in Manitoba.
- Issues arose concerning how to handle students who don't yet know how to ride a bike. Although this had been discussed no plan had been developed for this likelihood. As a result there was a need for volunteers to help out in the classrooms to work with these children, giving them basic lessons in how to ride a bike. Jamie Hilland and Mark were among the volunteer assistants. It had originally been thought that there would be enough trained teachers in the school system to provide the extra teachers required. (These are contributions in kind to the program.)
- It was also discovered that some of the grade 4 students needed smaller bicycles. As a result Seven Oaks agreed to buy 5 smaller (20 inch wheel) bicycles to add to their fleet.
- Jeremy met with the divisional Phys Ed specialist and worked out some details of survey implementation. Students and parents are being asked to complete online surveys in both the project schools and a set of control schools. Teachers are being asked to facilitate this. Jamie Hilland is organizing the Bike/Roll/Walk survey of how students get to school in these same schools and classrooms. Jeremy has drafted a questionnaire for the participation phys ed instructors to be done after the program is completed this fall. Nate Sawatzky has been coordinating the evaluation from the MPI end including getting the online surveys organized.
- There is to be a public announcement of the program (Oct 12?) possibly with the involvement of the minister responsible for MPI if it can be successfully scheduled.

To sum up, there have been a lot of implementation details to work out as the program is being delivered. Some of the big questions will be, is it feasible for school divisions to deliver the program on their own, once the basic program design is clarified, how much support do they

need to get it started, what is the true cost of implementation, including all the volunteer time that has gone into it, and how can the resources be provided in a sustainable way in the longer term? The program evaluation will need to look at these questions, as well as questions about whether the program achieved its educational goals.

Bicycle Counts

The draft 2016 bicycle counts report has been drafted and distributed to our board and to the volunteers for feedback. The analysis found that cycling numbers have declined over the past two years, at least at the locations where we did our counts, but at the locations with new infrastructure the counts have increased much more over the years than at other locations. There has been a steady decline in the percentages of cyclists riding on the sidewalks and an increase in the percentages wearing helmets. The overall conclusion is that cycling growth has stalled because of the lack of continued improvements to infrastructure.

Once finalized the question is how to distribute the report. I was contacted by several reporters during the summer who were interested in the findings once they are available.

-- Jeremy