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Developing new ideas

To encourage the formation of local groups to determine cycling route priorities/improvements and engage the community’s interest in the creation of them. In developing this type of map it is important to:

- Keep track of local developments that might have an effect (example given of the proposed new Stadium).
- Understand the travel needs of most residents (what are the popular destinations and routes, what new infrastructure would open new possibilities, etc.).
- Gather valuable “on-the-ground” knowledge: short-cuts, existing informal routes,
- Use a neighbourly approach to break the ice with private landowners)
- Consider the needs of all residents: seniors, children and adults
- Bring the map to the community as much as possible (community events, cycling events).
- Remember, photos are important.

Showing what’s already there.

Create an Official City of Winnipeg Bicycle Map (both on-line and print) that provides verified information, make that information continuously updated and relevant to cycling in Winnipeg. In other words, maps of current infrastructure. The group noted that the near absence of existing, cycling-friendly infrastructure in Winnipeg requires an adaptable approach to making the map. Key elements of a new Official City of Winnipeg Bicycle Map should include:

- Existing “Best” Routes
- All planned infrastructure (approx. start/end date of construction)
- Bicycle parking (indoor, outdoor, long term)
- Access to water.
- Surface quality (asphalt, dirt, flooded, shoulder, bike lane, 30km/h max., etc..).

Include Bike Facilities in All New Roads/Developments. Devote 2% of the Provincial Highways Budget to Active Transportation, with funding provided through the Federal Gas Tax Transfer. Ensure that planning for the needs of cyclists is incorporated into all new road and bridge construction or renovation projects.

Adopt Innovative Design Guidelines, Relax Standards. Other cities have found ways to add bicycle facilities on older narrow streets, why can't we? Copy innovative design guidelines from other cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Chicago and others. This may mean relaxing standards for lane width when necessary.

Develop a Bicycle Insurance Program (Especially as a protection against theft)

License Bicycles

Determining Route Priorities by Neighbourhood

Maps are a visceral and visual way of understanding the impact that infrastructure has on our ability to choose the bicycle as a form of transportation. Maps are particularly important to new cyclists, for up-to-date information, and for galvanizing community support around the need for infrastructure improvements.

The purpose of this session was to discuss the importance of neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood route identification and to establish the characteristics of useful bicycle maps. It became an attempt to answer this question: What kinds of bicycle maps can be created and what can they be used for? The resulting priorities reflected the group's consensus that maps are best used for two main reasons: developing new ideas and showing what's already there.



Maps of existing cycling infrastructure like the Northeast Pioneers Greenway were posted

Executive Summary

Bike to the Future (BTTF) is a voluntary, inclusive group of concerned cyclists 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.

Over the last year, since the first Bike to the Future forum in September 2006, we have pursued an ambitious agenda and have begun building relationships with the City of Winnipeg and Province of Manitoba. Special highlights include a number of presentations at the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure and Public Works and the Executive Policy Committee with a specific focus on implementation of the recommendations of the Active Transportation report adopted by the City, including lobbying for the formation of the proposed Active Transportation Advisory Committee and our seat on it.

We have lobbied City Council members with a focus on on-road cycling and on-street infrastructure along with active transportation trail developments. We participate in regular meetings and correspondence with City Planners to clarify our goals and objectives as commuter cyclists. We are using this interactive process to educate ourselves and others and we see the process as a way of building on best-practices from other countries and cities in Canada and around the world. To this end, we have completed a review of City By-Laws as they pertain to cyclists and we have made clear recommendations based on already existing By-Laws in Western Canadian Cities.



Bike to the Future's 2007 forum report

We have also had several meetings with Provincial representatives and are pushing at a Provincial level for a bike plan which will integrate cycling into Provincial policies and decisions. Our Education and Safety committee has begun working with MPI to improve the education that motorists and cyclists receive about best practices and several of our members have enrolled in the Can-Bike 2 training course with a view to promoting and expanding cyclist education for our members and others.

All of this work has been done by a very committed and energetic group of volunteers and without participation from a variety of people and a number of committees all of these accomplishments would not be possible. In addition to our 12 Board Members, we are supported by a network of other partners and individuals who are also working towards the same goal of better Active Transportation Infrastructure in Winnipeg. From Anders Swanson from One Green City, Janice Lukes from the Winnipeg Trails Association, and various neighbourhood trails groups and new Commuter-Cycling centred groups in the North End and West Central areas, we work together to ensure that the voice of cyclists wanting direct, safe and connected routes in Winnipeg is heard.

Since our incorporation as a non-profit member-based organization in May 2007, Bike to the Future has been signing up members to increase our lobbying voice and our ability to achieve the goals of the many cycling advocacy needs in Winnipeg. By September, we had 80 members, and with our membership drive leading up to the forum we now have over 250 members, greatly surpassing our original goal of 200 members by May 2008. Ultimately, our goal as a cycling advocacy organization is to promote and encourage cycling as transportation. An estimated 150 cyclists participated in our second annual forum on October 11. We are really excited about the number of people who shared their interest in realizing our vision of an interconnected bike route network connecting all areas of Winnipeg by coming out to the forum!

The following report is a summary of the proceedings of the second annual Bike to the Future Forum. Copies of this report are being delivered, by bicycle, to our political representatives at City Hall on November 21st, 2007. A limited number of hard copies are available, and electronic copies can be obtained online at <http://biketothefuture.org>.

Cyclist and Motorist Education

Funding for a Cycling Safety Initiative. The province should fund programs that encourage safe cycling and should also provide better education of all drivers concerning cyclists, their rights and responsibilities on the road.

Include Bike Training in School Curriculum. It was recommended that bike training be included in the provincial school curriculum and taught in grades 3, 6 and 9. The existing MPI curriculum is good but has not been systematically promoted and implemented by the provincial department of education and by individual school divisions.

Produce and Distribute a Cycling Handbook. Many cities and provinces produce and distribute a cycling handbook that give rules of the road, safety tips, and advice for locking bikes securely. It's about time that Manitoba offered a similar guide.

Provincial Policies and Programs

MLA "Ride Your Bike to Work" Week. As part of the annual Commuter Challenge week, ask MLAs to ride their bikes to work for one week to get a sense of the conditions cyclists are faced with on a daily basis.

Government as Model Employer. Provide Long Term Bicycle Parking for Employees, along with Showers, etc. Public sector unions could raise the issue of cycling facilities with government employers.

Tie Funding to Climate Change. Measures to encourage cycling will reduce greenhouse gases and should be funded as part of the province's climate change strategy.

Hold Province to its Active Transportation Commitments. The commitment made by Premier Doer to extend the Marconi Trail from the Forks to Birds Hill Park was mentioned as an example.

Use the 1% Federal Gas Tax Transfer for Active Transportation. One of the recommendations of the Active Transportation study was to use Federal gas tax transfer to fund needed cycling facilities.

While these actions are positive, they are piecemeal and do not represent a provincial bicycle policy. In addition the province has not focused on the use of bicycles as transportation and has instead emphasized funding for multi-user recreational trails.

The objective of the discussion was to come with a strategy and set of priorities to move the provincial government towards a provincial bicycling policy that help make Bike to the Future's vision a reality in Manitoba. The participants provided ideas and suggestions for Bike to the Future to use in lobbying the provincial government to improve cycling in Manitoba. These suggestions tended to fall into three areas: Benefits of Cycling, Education, and Provincial Policy and Funding.



New members of Bike to the Future

Benefits of Cycling

Economic Benefits. More cycling leads to improved health and reduced health care costs. Improved infrastructure and education leads to more safety and fewer accidents. Bicycles require less space than cars and less stress on the road, resulting in lower road construction and maintenance costs, less traffic congestion, and less demand for expanded roadways.

Benefits of paved shoulders on highways. Including paved shoulders on all highways would reduce accidents and deaths among both cyclists and motorists. Paved shoulders on designated tourist routes could encourage bicycle tourism in Manitoba. In comparison with overall highway construction costs, the additional cost of providing a paved shoulder rather than a gravel shoulder is quite low (estimated at \$12,000 additional cost per km, based on 2005 figures).

Benefits of supporting cycling tourism. Manitoba is losing tourism activity to other states and provinces. Examples of much better bicycle tourism facilities can be found in such places as Québec, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

The report offers the following recommendations based on the input of the participants at the forum:

The City of Winnipeg should:

- Use some funds provided under the Federal Gas Tax Agreement to support the development of cycling infrastructure in Winnipeg.
- Provide functional commuter trails: off-road trails designed to get commuter cyclists across the city year-round. They should be well-maintained throughout the year and plowed during the winter at a priority 1 level. They should connect the city's areas into downtown by improving Active Transportation infrastructure in the city's major transportation corridors, rather than in less frequently used areas. Focus on major problem areas and choke points (e.g., the Jubilee underpass on Pembina and the Railway underpass on Osborne).
- Focus on commuting routes by using major corridors to connect downtown to outlying neighbourhoods, and to integrate off-road paths with city streets. Pembina, between the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus and downtown, is the highest priority corridor.
- Integrate bike routes with existing infrastructure, including roads, trails, and paths, for cost-effective improvements rather than spending significant amounts of money on large but often less effective projects.
- Legislate new Active Transportation infrastructure for all new construction and renovation projects. Cycling infrastructure should be included in the capital works budget. Minimum standards should be set for Active Transportation implementation in all Public Works projects and in City of Winnipeg building codes and by-laws.
- Ensure that "destination institutions" along existing or potential bike routes, such as schools, hospitals, government offices, shopping malls, and others, are involved in the planning, funding and operation of bike routes that connect their facilities to the rest of the city.
- Create an incentive program to encourage major employers and destinations to improve cycling infrastructure.
- Create a City of Winnipeg Bicycle Map (on-line and print) that provides verified information, and establish a process to continuously update the map as bicycle routes and facilities change over time.

- Through public education, send a message to all residents that winter cycling is legal and desirable (for the same reasons that summer cycling is desirable).
- Provide bike racks on all major bus routes consistently and year-round, and provide better education for cyclists on how to use them.
- Provide bike lanes to send a message to drivers that cyclists also have a right to the road.

The Province of Manitoba should:

- Provide funds from the Federal Gas Tax Agreement to city governments for the development of Active Transportation infrastructure.
- Revise the Highway Traffic Act to update and clarify the rules as they apply to cyclists.
- Transportation Manitoba should put a map on their website that outlines the speed limits on highways throughout the province and which highways have paved shoulders to facilitate planning bike tours and safer travel between different communities.

Bike to the Future should:

Work with others to help build and support the cycling/Active Transportation coalition.

- Focus on organizing neighborhood stewardship groups. These groups can determine cycling route priorities/improvements, become experts in the cycling routes and needs within their neighbourhoods, educate others, and lobby for improvements. Reach out to cyclists who are not well connected to cycling organizations, bike shops, etc.
- Educate businesses about what constitutes appropriate and secure bike locking facilities. Involve local businesses by disseminating information and encouraging the creation of bicycle facilities and incentives for employees.
- Appoint a liaison person to represent cyclists and to liaise with police.
- Continue to work with MPI, the City, and the Province.

What more can we do for Provincial action on bikes?

The government of Manitoba has responsibility for a number of areas related to bicycles and cycling, including transportation, health and the environment. Through Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) the province is also responsible for driver education and safety. The province has direct responsibility for highways outside of Winnipeg and provides funding to the City of Winnipeg for road and bridge construction and rehabilitation, as it does to other cities and municipalities in Manitoba.

Over the past year Bike to the Future has met with the provincial Ministers of Healthy Living, Intergovernmental Affairs, and Transportation, and in these meetings we have advocated for a provincial bicycle policy similar to those in other provinces, such as

Estimates of Total Annual Benefits of Bicycling in Minnesota	
Type of Benefit	Value of Benefit
User non-monetary	\$240 million
Reduced medical costs	\$24 million
Productivity gains	\$8 – \$24 million
Economic impacts	Approx. 900 jobs \$30 million payroll
Minor benefits	Approx. \$3 million

<http://www.lrrb.org/pdf/200450.pdf>

Québec and British Columbia.

In recent years the provincial government has taken the following steps:

- MPI has developed curricula on bicycle safety and education that can be used in schools and has put on bicycle safety events geared mainly for children.
- The Minister of Healthy Living has provided free bicycle helmets for children.
- The province has put money into recreational trail development, including the recently announced \$2.5 million in funding for the Bishop Grandin and Harte trails in Winnipeg.

It was also suggested that Transportation Manitoba should put a map on their website that outlines the speed limits on highways throughout the province and which highways have paved shoulders. This would facilitate planning bike tours and safer travel between different communities.

Share the Road or “Please Don’t Hit Me!”

The discussion in this session focused on the rules of the road and how cyclists fit in. Some of the major points raised include:

- Cyclists are included in the same traffic laws as motorists and should obey the rules of road.
- Motorists and cyclist feel animosity to each other because each group is inconsistent in their upholding of the rules of the road.
- Cyclists on the road can make some claims through MPI if they have the license plate of the driver involved in the accident.
- Cyclists on the sidewalk or transferring from sidewalk to road present great danger and are not covered by MPI.
- Some cyclists are setting a bad example, which is coloring other cyclists’ reputations.

Participants agreed that cyclists should know more about their rights and rules of the road and suggested that BTTF have more resources on the web about legal rights and road safety (see safety and education), and that BTTF try to contact a lawyer who could be contacted regarding cycling related incidents.

They also suggested that increased visibility would be nice:

- a little paint for a bike lane or path would send a message to drivers that cyclists are welcome on the road
- increased visibility of the cyclists is important too. Safety vests or bright jersey’s, with lights and bells should be considered “armor” by cyclists as they increase a bike’s presence on the road.

Finally, the group agreed that motorists should be patient with cyclists and cyclists should set a good example and be consistent when cycling.

Provide more resources for cyclists:

- Create cyclist-generated maps showing where infrastructure is needed.
- Promote the expansion of the Bike Dump model to other communities and/or educational institutions as a means of assisting cyclists with bike maintenance and repair.
- Provide resources on the web about legal rights, road safety, and winter cycling.
- Identify one or more lawyers who could be contacted regarding cycling-related incidents.
- Develop consistent standards/safe practices for commuter cycling and educate both cyclists and motorists about cycling standards.

Lobby, lobby, lobby...

- Start campaigns around specific issues to which the general public can be rallied.
- Challenge councilors, MLAs, and people from the media to either ride a bike to work for a week (the Commuter Challenge) or go on a tour of the city organized by BTTF.
- Document the economic payback to the province of improved cycling infrastructure.
- Stress the role of active transportation as part of an overall climate change plan.

Work on Cyclist, Motorist, and Public Education

- Work with MPI, the provincial government, and the City of Winnipeg as well as through private and non-government groups like CAN-BIKE to provide cyclist education.
- Work with MPI to improve the driver education program with respect to cyclist’s rights and their place on the road.
- Promote the use of safety vests (or bright jerseys), lights, and bells.

Introduction

This past year has been an exciting time for cyclists in Winnipeg. Just over one year ago, a dark cloud hung over cyclists in the city – there was very little movement towards new cycling infrastructure in Winnipeg, there were confrontations with the police at Critical Mass bicycle rides, and no engagement with policymakers at city hall.

It was in this environment that the first Bike to the Future forum was organized, resulting in information sharing and discussions by about 100 participants, and a report with recommendations to city and provincial governments. The momentum generated by this event led to the creation of a new bicycling advocacy organization, Bike to the Future.



Forum attendees marking a map with the routes on which they ride

Over the past year we have become actively involved in dozens of cycling-related activities and issues in the city, lobbying city and provincial policymakers for better cycling infrastructure, improved and connected bike routes throughout Winnipeg, improved education and safety for both cyclists and drivers, and the development of policies that support and recognize cycling as a legitimate and valuable form of transportation.

We have also established relationships with others involved in Active Transportation and the related issues of health and climate change and we have fostered the development of neighbourhood cycling stewardship groups. In the process we have incorporated as a non-profit membership organization with an active board and committee structure powered by a dedicated cadre of volunteers.

Knowledge is Power!

What information and resources do we want on cycling?

The group determined that different cyclists will have different priorities in terms of the resources they require: people who are interested in or just starting to cycle as a means of transportation will find the Cyclist's Map and basic bike locking tips helpful, whereas everyday commuters and people who cycle more regularly would benefit from safety education and resources on bike maintenance and repair. Irrespective, there is a need to:

- Determine what already exists in terms of cycling resources and where the gaps are.
- Determine how to increase the visibility of cycling resources and how to reach cyclists who are not well connected to cycling organizations, bike shops, etc.
- Update the cyclist's map. Although it is out of date, it does provide ideas for safe routes. It should be updated by cyclists and reflect current developments in on-road and off-road infrastructure.
- Develop consistent standards/safe practices for commuter cycling and educate both cyclists and motorists about cycling standards.
- Develop more resources geared to adults; a lot exists for children

Expansion of the Bike Dump model to other communities &/or educational institutions was suggested as a means of assisting cyclists with bike maintenance and repair.

Greenhouse Gas Reductions from Bicycle Commuting

For each 1% increase in the proportion of bicycle commuters in Winnipeg, CO₂ emissions are reduced by 1,217 tonnes per year.

Currently bicycle commuters can be credited with lowering CO₂ emissions by 3,409 tonnes per year because of not driving cars.

If the proportion of bicycle commuters in Winnipeg doubled to 5.6%, CO₂ emissions would be reduced by a further 3,409 tonnes per year.

(Based on an average 6 km commuting distance and an average of 100 bicycle commuting days per cyclist per year.)

Embrace Winter Cycling

Half of the 25 participants of this session were winter cyclists, while the other half were potential winter cyclists. The winter cyclists were asked to tell the group about their biggest challenges, and how they have overcome these challenges. The potential winter cyclists were asked to explain what had prevented them from being winter cyclists, and/or what they needed in order to become winter cyclists.

Most of the discussion revolved around the winter cyclist's interaction with motorists and slippery streets, and different opinions about strategies and logistics. Many potential winter cyclists admitted to being scared of sharing slippery roads with potentially hostile motorists.

Many existing winter cyclists claimed they get less acceptance and respect while riding on the road than in the summer. Verbal abuse such as "Get the ___ off the road you idiot," for instance is much more common in the winter than in the summer, and CJOB had an "anti winter cyclist" campaign during a past winter. Incidences of antagonistic behavior increased during their campaign.

To address these issues, participants agreed that:

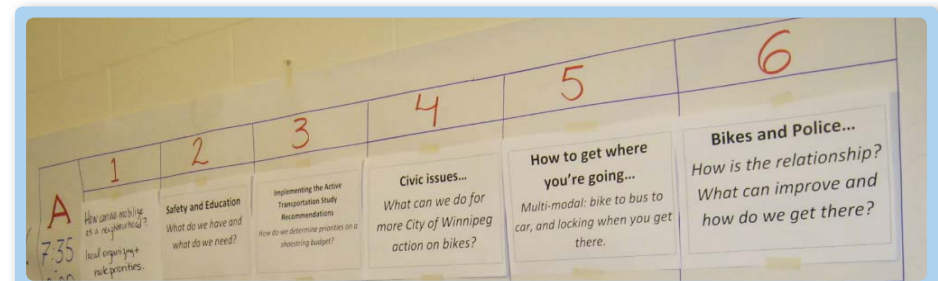
- Winnipeg needs a designated bicycle route system that must be endorsed for cycling all year round, and which must be plowed at a priority 1 level.
- Through public education, the City should send a message to all residents that winter cycling is legal and desirable (for the same reasons that summer cycling is desirable), and that in fact winter cycling is encouraged. Hopefully, this would counteract any motorists' negative views about winter cyclists.
- Education and resources about equipment, clothing, and logistics would help many winter cyclists become more successful, and also encourage some potential winter cyclists to become winter cyclists. (The very good news is that the desired info and resources are readily available on the internet, and at many bike shops. A key to that info and those resources is at <http://cycling.mb.ca/wintercycling.htm>)

Now there are more than a dozen new trails being planned, there are new neighbourhood cycling stewardship groups in the north end and the west end of Winnipeg, and the city has taken the first tentative steps towards implementing the recommendations of its own Active Transportation report by hiring a new Active Transportation Co-ordinator and establishing an Active Transportation Advisory Committee. In short, we have put cycling on the map in Winnipeg.

On Thursday, October 11th, 2007, Bike to the Future hosted our second annual forum about cycling in Winnipeg with the objective of getting input from the city's cycling community on the issues they are concerned with. It was a huge success. Over 150 people from all over the city, including two Winnipeg city councilors (Mike Pagtakhan and Harvey Smith), showed up to share concerns, ideas, and dreams about cycling in Winnipeg as well as to join participatory discussions and to map out ideal cycling routes for Winnipeg neighborhoods. There were 12 discussion group sessions, and the discussion was lively. The following sections present the outcome of these discussion groups.

Readers should remember that this report is a snapshot of the collective opinions of a group of active Winnipeg cyclists discussed over one evening. Many issues were raised which we could just begin to discuss in the time available. There were also differences of opinion about some of the issues. Reading through the details of what was discussed, however, will provide a strong sense of Winnipeg's cycling community, what we are concerned about, and some of what needs to be done.

The comments and recommendations provided by this event will provide valuable information for policy-makers, planners, and others and will be a guide the priorities and activities of Bike to the Future over the coming year.



Some of the discussion groups that were part of the forum

How Can We Mobilize as a Neighbourhood?

The session focused on the best ways to take action in the community and highlighted the unique ability of the neighbourhood organization to reach out to all members of the community, not just those already cycling. There was a discovery that not only could these groups bring an advocacy message to a larger audience, but that the message would be even more appreciated if it were combined with practical applications that would benefit cyclists immediately. The group suggested that in community mobilizing, BTTF should:

- Involve children and their parents by focusing on schools and community centres - building partnerships with the goal of bringing education, skills development and an awareness of bicycle issues to our neighbours.
- Involve local businesses by disseminating information and encouraging the creation of bicycle facilities and incentives for employees.
- Promote cycling issues at community events with an emphasis on offering bicycle-specific programming at existing events.

The session revealed that by creating partnerships, a local organization can help collect and disseminate valuable information, goods, and services needed by those who choose the bicycle. Ideas that might help local organizing discussed included:

- Offer bicycle valet parking at local concerts, market gardens, festivals and sports events
- Host bicycle rodeos and facilitate safety training
- Organize a neighbourhood bike sale/swap
- Increase opportunities for bicycle repair and maintenance, for instance, by using the Bike Dump model in community centres and schools
- Create a coupon book for cyclists
- Have employers encourage cycling (similar to EcoPass) and support or help create cycling groups at local employers

Cyclists and police: What is the relationship? How can it improve?

There were differences in opinion regarding what constituted responsible and sensible cycling, and different interpretations of the how the Highway Traffic Act applies to cyclists. Despite sometimes opposing viewpoints and stories of both negative and positive interactions with police, there was a general consensus that mutual understanding between cyclists and police is not always present. There was a call for greater education of police regarding cyclists and cycling issues. It was also suggested that bicycle police should police cyclists (as they presumably better understand the experience of cycling). Although time did not allow much discussion, the role the media has played, especially with regards to coverage of the Critical Mass events of 2006, was mentioned.



Bike to the Future co-chair
Jackie Avent

There were two main recommendations of the session: first, that the Province of Manitoba revise the Highway Traffic Act paying special attention to bicycles. Updating and clarifying the rules as they apply to cyclists could eliminate current ambiguity and the wide variation in interpretations of the Act, facilitate enforcement, and lessen the sense of injustice felt by cyclists who are ticketed for actions they perceive as sensible. Bicycle police, it was suggested, may be in a good position to inform changes to the Act.

The second main recommendation was that a liaison person should be appointed to represent cyclists and to liaise with police. This will foster better understanding between cyclists and police and create opportunities for education for both parties.

How to get where you're going...

Multi-modal: bike to bus to car, locking when you get there.

Discussion in this session revolved around two main issues: multi-modal transportation (e.g., bike to bus or car), and bicycle locking.

Multi-modal transportation

With respect to multi-modal transportation, participants agreed that there should be a focus on people outside the city centre (including people commuting from out of town) and improvements in the infrastructure and services available to them. This could include encouraging and enhancing Park & Ride options, including servicing Park & Ride locations with Express buses. Also, there is a need for more secure and flexible infrastructure, including bike lockers where out-of-town commuters may safely leave their bikes overnight.

Finally, there should be bike racks on all major bus routes consistently and year-round. Better education for cyclists about how to use them could be made available.

Bike Locking

More secure and appropriate bike locking facilities are clearly needed. Some suggested options include staffed indoor bike locking stations, bike lockers, and bike valets. Participants highlighted the need to educate businesses about what constitutes appropriate and secure bike locking facilities, since many businesses are unaware that cement slabs with metal rings, bike racks placed directly against a wall, and chain-link fences are ineffective.

Participants also stated that the city should implement a by-law requiring all employers with a specific (large) number of employees to provide appropriate bike locking facilities, and that appropriate bike locking facilities should be included in the designs for new buildings (e.g.: big box stores, educational institutions, etc.).

Safety and Education

It was clear that recent events in Winnipeg had an impact on the ideas generated relative to cyclist safety. There was a great deal of misunderstanding as well as misinformation as it relates to safety and rules governing cyclists. There appeared to be significant interest in cycle safety education and in particular the CAN-BIKE educational program that was introduced at the beginning of the session. In response to this interest, Howard Skrypnyk explained that CAN-BIKE is a program based on the Effective Cycling program in the US and that it provides training in both safety and cycling skills.

Ideas Generated

EDUCATION is required for cyclists, motorists, and decision makers. Of particular interest was the lack of cyclists' knowledge or their misunderstanding of the rules/laws as related to reflectors and lights. Howard Skrypnyk (CAN-BIKE) advised participants that a rear reflector and a light on the front of a bicycle are both mandatory under the law and a bell is also a requirement. This had not been understood by many of the participants and as a result it was recommended that a program of education/information on safety equipment requirements should be provided to make cyclists aware of this requirement. It was also felt that enforcement was needed to ensure that cyclists abide by this requirement. BTTF can and does provide this information.

Some of the other ways that participants felt effective bike education could be accomplished included:

Provincial level

Education in the schools. It was noted that some cycling safety education was being provided in schools however the teachers themselves were not always properly educated in this area. Providing these teachers with the appropriate education on cycle safety would be a big step in educating youth about the rules and behaviour needed to keep them safe on their bicycle.

High schools could include in their curriculum a credit course for cycle safety.

MPIC/Provincial level

Driver training should include cycling awareness so that new drivers are aware of their responsibilities as drivers and those of the cyclists that they will interact with. This training should extend to the testing of new drivers as well.

City level

Safety programs could be offered at community centers in conjunction with other cycling events.

VISIBLE CAMPAIGNS (ie. Share the Road) promoting cycling safety both for drivers and cyclists should be undertaken by all levels of government and MPIC. This could take the form of:

- ongoing series of safety messages on television
- advertisement billboards
- flyers/pamphlets
- bus advertising

It was suggested that proceeds from the yearly bicycle auction could be used to help fund some of these efforts.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES. Some participants felt that alternate routes, such as parallel side streets, could be used to get cyclists off the major routes and avoid the heavily trafficked roadways. It was commented that this would present problems in winter as secondary roads are not always plowed or cleared well enough to make them reasonable commuting routes. In addition, road conditions on these routes often are poor. It was also noted that appropriate bike safety and skills training makes it possible for cyclists to ride confidently in traffic.

PUBLIC WORKS. The City of Winnipeg Public Works Department needs to educate their operators to consider cyclists when undertaking street cleaning/plowing operations.

The issue of **MANDATORY HELMETS** was raised. There were some participants that felt that helmet legislation was needed.

A public education initiative is needed to inform all people including cyclists and drivers of appropriate laws and behaviour related to cycling.

An incentive program might also go a long way to improve the cycling environment in Winnipeg. Tax credits, for instance, could be offered to employers who offer showering facilities or indoor bike storage. This could also include tax rebates along streets with traffic calming.

What can the cycling community do to encourage the city to create a better environment for cycling in Winnipeg?

Participants stated that growing the cycling coalition should be a priority at this time. This can be done through

- partnerships with other organizations to strengthen our voice so we can have several organizations supporting our cause at the table when meeting with the city; and
- increased public participation, not just increased Bike to the Future membership, but also reaching out into the (non-member) community through, for instance, petitions.

Another priority for Winnipeg's cycling community should be to start more specific campaigns around which the general public can be rallied. Bike to the Future could play a campaign coordinator role.

One participant stated that in some cities, councilors and people from the media (e.g., television or radio hosts, newspaper columnists) are challenged take their bike to work for a week (the commuter challenge), or to go on a tour of the city organized by cycling advocates. Members agreed that Bike to the Future should do this in Winnipeg. Bike to the Future should be able to provide potential participants high-quality bikes so that there is no reason to refuse. This should result in councilors and the media being better educated about the problems cyclists have in the city, may make them see cycling as a viable transportation choice, and provides the opportunity for news coverage without bike accidents.

There was some discussion about the possibility of posting a form-letter or template for people to write to their councilors (or MLAs). One of the city councilors present in the session said that it is not a good idea to send mass emails because they will just get deleted, and that people should contact their own councilor.

Another suggestion was to give awards to cyclists who display good road behavior. Videos could be placed on youtube.com and other similar websites.

Role of Planners and Policy Makers

- Policy makers, such as city and provincial officials, need to recognize that on-road infrastructure is essential to making off-road trails work.
- Bike to the Future needs to lobby, lobby, lobby, using simple, tangible and cost-oriented presentations. We should leave the details to the engineers.

Cooperation among Stakeholders

- Following from the example of regional trail associations, Bike to the Future should focus on organizing neighborhood stewardship groups. These groups can become experts in the cycling routes and needs within their neighbourhoods and can educate others and lobby for improvements.
- Cyclist generated maps showing where infrastructure is needed are very valuable and should continue to be used as a means of lobbying government.
- “Destination institutions” along existing or potential bike routes, such as schools, hospitals, government offices, shopping malls, and others, should be involved in the planning, funding and operation of bike routes that connect their facilities to the rest of the city.

City Action Plan

Two main themes emerged: what the city can do to create a better environment for cycling in Winnipeg, and what the cycling community can do to encourage the City of Winnipeg to create a better environment for cyclists.

What should the city do to create a better environment for cycling in Winnipeg?

Participants agreed that new developments should have green-space cycling infrastructure connectivity, and that cycling infrastructure should be included in the capital works budget. Among the topics discussed in this session, participants considered this the most important.

This program could also be used to provide specific information such as the requirements for reflectors and lights on bicycles operating at night. This initiative could be taken on by MPI, the provincial government, the City of Winnipeg and BTTF.

Cycling safety and education appeared to be a very high priority amongst participants. It was clear that there was a great deal of misunderstanding and misinformation as related to safety and the rules governing cyclists. There was also significant interest indicated for cycling safety education programs like CAN-BIKE.

City of Winnipeg: Establishing Priorities on a Shoestring Budget

The City of Winnipeg completed an Active Transportation (AT) Study in 2005, and has since established a City AT Coordinator and an AT advisory committee to bring the vision of the study to fruition. The dilemma, however, is that the City has provided no dedicated funds for AT infrastructure thus limiting the potential of the Coordinator and Committee. The City has not implemented recommendations 25 and 31 of the AT Study Recommendations, which respectively state that a dedicated AT budget should be established and increased over time, and that a portion of the City’s revenues from federal gas taxes should be directed towards AT.

Objective

The objective of the discussion was to answer the following question: Given the currently limited funds and the abysmal state of the City’s AT infrastructure, how can money be spent most effectively to deliver the best possible solutions of direct benefit to the goals of Active Transportation?

Active Transportation as Part of an Overall Climate Change Plan

The province’s number one recommendation for reducing personal green house gas emissions is to drive your personal vehicle less.

Improvements to cycling facilities have been shown to lead to an increase in modal share for bicycles.

Bicycles produce no Green House Gas Emissions. If bicycle commuting doubled in Winnipeg CO2 emissions would be reduced by an estimated 3,409 tonnes per year.

Suggested Actions

Top priorities for Active Transportation expenditures were identified as follows: (Not in order of priority.)

Focus on Commuting Routes

- Focus on commuting routes, NOT on routes that offer little benefit other than for recreational purposes.
- Tangible commuting routes greatly enhance the health of citizens while reducing vehicular congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Use Major Corridors to Connect Downtown to Outlying Neighbourhoods

- Integrate and Connect the City's many areas into the Downtown Core by improving AT infrastructure in the City's major transportation Corridors, not in lesser important areas.
- Pembina, between the U of M and downtown, is the highest priority corridor at this point in time.

Focus on Major Problem Areas and Choke Points

- Fix major AT problem areas and choke points such as bridges, underpasses, and problem intersections to enhance user-friendliness of existing on-road transportation routes.
- Examples of choke points include the Jubilee underpass on Pembina and the Railway underpass on Osborne.

Integrate Bike Routes with Existing Infrastructure

- Integrate existing infrastructure, including roads, trails, and paths, for cost-effective improvements rather than spending significant amounts of money on large but often less effective projects.
- Legislate new AT infrastructure for all new construction and renovation projects.
- Establish minimum standards for AT implementation in all Public Works projects.
- Establish minimum AT provisions in City of Winnipeg building codes and by-laws, such as provisions for bike racks, showers, lockers.

Trails and Roads to Somewhere... How Should Trails and Roads Connect?

Our mission as Bike to the Future is in part to make cycling convenient and practical. While we recognize that multi-user trails can be a useful as part of a network of bike routes throughout the city, these trails lose their value if they are not connected to a larger network of bike routes. For example, the south end of the much-heralded Northeast Pioneers Pathway (also known as the Marconi Trail) ends in the St. Boniface industrial area, leaving bicycle commuters without a good route to downtown Winnipeg or other parts of the city. The objective of this discussion was to identify actions that need to be taken that will help connect on-road bike routes to trails.

The participants provided ideas and suggestions directed primarily towards Bike to the Future and the City of Winnipeg, but also to others such as organizations associated with major destinations within the city, traffic engineers, and policy-makers at all levels of government.

Planning Principles

- Cyclists need "functional commuter trails," that is, off-road trails designed to get commuter cyclists across the city.
- There is a need to incorporate both recreational and commuter trails and routes into an overall network.
- There is also a need to assess and take advantage of existing trails and routes and plan future trails and on-road infrastructure in light of these existing facilities.

Linking Trails and Roads

- There is a need for signage linking up on/off road routes.
- Selected secondary roads and alleys could be closed to motor traffic and incorporated into cycling routes. These routes would be perfect for use as part of an integrated bike route that includes off-road paths.
- Where bike routes involve both sidewalks and roads, curb-cuts are needed to accommodate cyclists, especially where off-road trails meet on-road infrastructure.