

## Transportation Planning for a Greener Winnipeg: Recommendations from Green Action Centre

January 17, 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the process to develop the City's new Transportation Master Plan.

### 1. Context

"All four Direction Strategies, together with **OurWinnipeg** itself, have been created with sustainability as their overarching framework" (**A Sustainable Winnipeg**, p. 2).

"The overarching objective of this Master Plan is to guide the planning, development and maintenance of a multimodal transportation system that will contribute to the sustainable development of the city and region" (**Sustainable Transportation**, p. 4).

Green Action Centre endorses the City's adoption of sustainability as the overarching framework for city and transportation planning. In the process, we believe it is particularly important to be mindful of Winnipeg's and Manitoba's climate change commitments, such as the following.

Winnipeg is a member of the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. PCP "is a network of Canadian municipal governments that have committed to reducing greenhouse gases and acting on climate change." As part of its commitment, Winnipeg in 2006 adopted a Climate Change Action Plan for reducing emissions from City assets and operations. Attention to reducing emissions from the wider community is not included in the 2006 plan and remains as unfinished business in the recent **OurWinnipeg** plan. For example, the discussion of Climate Change in **A Sustainable Winnipeg** (pp.15-16) mentions the PCP commitment and ratification of the Kyoto protocol by most national governments, but does not mention the provincial Climate Change legislation and commitment described below or build on them. It does indicate that Winnipeggers want leadership in sustainability from the City.

Manitoba has been a leader in developing broad sustainable development policies and legislation, with all-party support, including the 1997 *Sustainable Development Act* and the 2008 *Climate Change and Emissions Reduction Act*. The latter mandates an initial target "to reduce Manitoba's emissions by December 31, 2012, to an amount that is at least 6% less than Manitoba's total 1990 emissions" and makes provision for establishing subsequent targets.

In accordance with *The Climate Change and Emissions Reduction Act*, Manitoba created a Vehicle Standards Advisory Board (VSAB), which, in January 2009, issued its report *MOVING FORWARD – Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Passenger Vehicles in Manitoba* ([www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/climate/pdf/vsab\\_report.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/climate/pdf/vsab_report.pdf)). The report recommends new vehicle efficiency standards for Manitoba equivalent to the highest in North America, but acknowledges that these alone will not do the job. Thus VSAB recommends a suite of complementary measures to (1) reduce emissions from existing vehicles, (2) encourage consumers to purchase low-emission vehicles, (3) help Manitobans to drive less, and (4) develop and demonstrate vehicle and fuel advancements.

Winnipeg contains 55% of the provincial population (<http://winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/population.pdf>). This figure is significant in several ways. First, it means that elected representatives of Winnipeg citizens dominate the Provincial Legislature and so are in large part responsible for the laws enacted, in contrast, say, to the laws of the Canadian Parliament. The Transportation Master Plan should reflect this fact in addition to conclusions reached through the OurWinnipeg process. The 55% population figure is also significant because, without effective implementation of aggressive climate change policies by the City within its jurisdiction and sphere of influence, there is no way the province can meet its targets. It is imperative that the City and Province work together to implement priorities that Winnipeg citizens have identified and endorsed through their elected representatives.

To meet the mobility needs of Winnipeg residents, while addressing climate change challenges and initiatives, the Transportation Master Plan must adequately address all travel modes for individuals across the spectrum of age and ability, and work to create a denser, more liveable city. It should recognize that it is financially and environmentally unsustainable simply to continue to build and widen roads. Instead, the focus should shift to reducing the number of vehicles on the road at any one time. Reducing the number of vehicles, in particular single occupant vehicles, and vehicle kilometres travelled requires the development of transportation policies and options in such a way that Winnipeggers will not only be able to walk, bike, ride the bus, carpool, and carshare, but will *prefer* to use these modes for more trips.

Outlined below are strategies, guiding principles, policies and specific tools that Green Action Centre believes the Transportation Master Plan should include. We have restricted our comments to those areas in which Green Action Centre holds knowledge and experience.

## 2. Strategic goals and outputs

- Add a sixth strategic goal to the five indicated on pp. 6-7 of the Sustainable Transportation Direction Strategy: “**A transportation system that reduces its GHG emissions footprint and meets or surpasses climate change and emissions reduction goals set by the City and the Province.**” Transportation is responsible for more than one-third of Manitoba’s total emissions ([www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/beyond\\_kyoto/transportation.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/beyond_kyoto/transportation.pdf)) and Winnipeg has 55% of the provincial population (<http://winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/population.pdf>). Without a strategic goal and purposeful measures to address the climate change commitments identified in the previous section, we will lack the focus and direction needed to succeed in meeting our targets.
- Ensure that the transportation planning computer model, which is to support the Transportation Master Plan (**Sustainable Transportation**, p. 4), quantifies the GHGs produced under various

scenarios modelled. Some of the variable inputs that could separately and together affect GHG outputs are changes in levels of car ownership; changes in fleet efficiencies; changes in fuels and penetration of electric vehicles vs. standard cars; changes in trip generation, destinations and distances under various locational choices for residential, retail, schools, etc; various costing scenarios for parking; improvements in public transit; and so forth. This information should then become a standard part of the background information provided to Council and citizens about various proposals and alternatives, just as dollar costs are shown now. Furthermore, if the City of Winnipeg or the Province of Manitoba adopts a target of reducing GHGs in the transportation sector by xx% by 20yy, the model could show different combinations of changes that would get us there.

### 3. Guiding principles

- Adopt a plan that places pedestrians, cyclists and bus riders at the top of the transportation hierarchy, as outlined in the accompanying diagram (courtesy of Transportation Alternatives). Decisions would favour these modes over single occupant vehicles. This would ensure our transportation system safely and conveniently accommodates even the most vulnerable road users – seniors, children, persons with disabilities.
- Accommodate the variety of road users through reduced lane widths rather than road widening.
- Acknowledge the limited carrying capacity of acceptable road widths by working to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles. Employ a Community-Based Travel Marketing (CBTM) approach to help residents switch some trips from driving alone to transit, walking, cycling and carpooling (<http://greenactioncentre.ca/content/cbtm/>).
- Ensure integration of the various modes to make it easy to combine walking, cycling, transit or driving for a given trip. Examples include bike racks on all buses, safe and attractive pedestrian access to transit, park and ride lots that accommodate both cars and bicycles, and convenient and appropriate bicycle access and parking at major destinations (such as schools, community and recreation centres, shopping centres and shopping districts), major employers, stadiums, special events, etc.
- Recognize and celebrate Winnipeg as a winter city with facility design and maintenance plans that accommodate four season use.
- Embed education and communication in all transportation projects and plans.
- Aim to provide separated facilities for users, e.g. pedestrians and cyclists, buses and cyclists.



### 4. Policies

- Adopt the Child- and Youth-Friendly Land-Use and Transport Planning Guidelines for Manitoba ([www.kidsonthemove.ca/uploads/Guidelines%20Manitoba%206.pdf](http://www.kidsonthemove.ca/uploads/Guidelines%20Manitoba%206.pdf)).
- Sign on to become a Child Friendly City ([www.childfriendlycities.org](http://www.childfriendlycities.org)) in addition to being an Age-Friendly City for seniors.
- Recognize School Travel Planning as a municipal priority and commit staff from Planning, Property & Development, Public Works, Community Services and other appropriate departments

to participate and assist School Travel Planning facilitators at the neighbourhood level (<http://greenactioncentre.ca/program/asrts/school-travel-planning/>).

- Adopt a Complete Streets approach to ensure Winnipeg roadways are planned and designed to provide safe and convenient access for all road users ([www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org)).

## 5. Mode-specific comments

### a) Active Transportation

- Develop cycling and pedestrian master plans with accompanying design guidelines.
- Require cut-throughs in Winnipeg's many cul-de-sac neighbourhoods to make them permeable for pedestrians and cyclists, while restricting vehicle access.
- Provide separated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists whenever possible.
- Prioritize snow clearing of high-use sidewalks and a designated city-wide network of pathways and on-road bike infrastructure.
- Reduce crossing distances in major pedestrian areas, such as downtown Winnipeg, and increase the frequency of opportunities to cross safely on major thoroughfares.
- Renew discussions with the hearing and visually impaired communities to find acceptable pedestrian crossing countdown signals.
- Encourage walking by creating a pedestrian friendly environment with amenities such as benches, shade, wind protection and landscaping.
- Enforce existing legislation that gives pedestrians the right of way when cars are turning at intersections, turn lanes and roundabouts by regularly ticketing drivers who fail to yield.
- Address the lack of sidewalks on roadways where traffic volume, speed and/or composition calls for separated facilities for pedestrians.
- Work with large employers to provide safe pedestrian/cycling access to industrial parks.
- Recognize that both on-road and off-road bicycling infrastructure is required, as there are different types and confidence/skill levels of commuting and recreational cyclists.

### b) Transit

- Financially commit to future phases of Rapid Transit.
- Improve frequency of service and ensure clean bus shelters to increase the attractiveness of transit to new riders.
- Adopt a policy that expansion of service for new developments or for increases in population/density of existing developments must be accompanied by an appropriate increase in driver hours.
- Encourage and enable transit-oriented developments to further support increases in ridership.
- Pursue options for smaller feeder transit vehicles on a demand schedule in under-served areas to avoid the downward spiral created when a bus comes so infrequently that few residents use it, which leads to further reductions in service or elimination of the route.

**c) Carpooling / Vanpooling**

- Purchase a regional subscription to an online ridematching service, such as [www.carpool.ca](http://www.carpool.ca) or [www.rideshark.com](http://www.rideshark.com). A regional subscription would allow any resident of Winnipeg to search and find an appropriate carpool. Right now, only those employees of workplaces signed on to the service are able to access this mobility option. A regional subscription also creates a more robust site where users are far more likely to find a carpool match. Cities currently offering a regional online matching program include Calgary, Edmonton, Kamloops, Lethbridge, Regina, Toronto, and Vancouver (including the province of B.C.). Eight Winnipeg employers are already signed on to [www.carpool.ca](http://www.carpool.ca).
- Facilitate development of a vanpool service for major employment destinations such as industrial parks. One example is Jack Bell Ride-Share's vanpool service in B.C. (<https://online.ride-share.com>).

**d) Carsharing**

- Enact a policy that allows reductions in parking requirements in exchange for the provision of carsharing, such as the agreement reached with Stonebridge Development (511 River Ave) in Osborne Village.
- Partner with the newly formed Peg City Car Co-op to facilitate its growth and long-term viability (<http://pegcitycarcoop.ca/>). Members of carshares typically rely on walking, cycling and transit for the majority of their mobility needs. Their occasional need for a vehicle is met through access to the carshare's fleet of neighbourhood-based vehicles. This arrangement allows members to avoid owning a personal vehicle or requiring a second household vehicle.

**e) New vehicle technology**

- Support emergence of lower cost, lower speed vehicles for commuters, e.g. designate certain routes with lower speed limits.
- Require new multi-unit dwellings to include infrastructure that will facilitate the future addition of charging facilities for electric vehicles.

**f) Urban freight**

- Investigate more efficient, economic and integrated delivery systems for Winnipeg so customers are not reliant on personal vehicles for purchases.

**6. Parking**

- Unbundle parking from rental accommodations. This will allow separate pricing of residential parking and reduce costs for residents who choose travel options other than driving.
- Identify city-owned downtown surface parking lots for development into residential or mixed use buildings, or green space.
- Reduce minimum and maximum overall parking requirements to encourage more individuals to choose public transit and other options. It has been shown there is an inverse relationship between the amount of parking available and transit ridership levels ([www.london.ca/Transportation\\_Planning/pdfs/SmartMovesFact\\_PublicParking\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.london.ca/Transportation_Planning/pdfs/SmartMovesFact_PublicParking_FINAL.pdf)).

- Promote shared parking lots for private lot owners with complementary schedules, e.g. office building (weekday) and nearby restaurant or nightclub (evenings/weekends).
- Require parking lots to be located behind, rather than in front of, new commercial/retail buildings. For existing developments with parking lots located in front, require safe and protected access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Consider an alternate approach to parking in which developers contribute to a municipal fund and the City ensures appropriate parking in the area.
- Develop short-term and commuter bike parking guidelines for businesses and developers to aid in choosing style, placement, number, etc.
- Set bike parking requirements based on potential usage levels rather than current usage levels.
- Ensure quality bike parking is provided at all City-owned facilities, such as community centres, libraries, etc.

## 7. Speed limits

- Pilot a residential speed limit reduction from 50 to 30 km/h in a willing neighbourhood. This would discourage cut-through traffic and improve quality of life for adjacent residents by creating a calmer neighbourhood that is more conducive to outdoor play, social interaction and recreation. The pilot project would recognize the need for enforcement and possible road design improvements.

## 8. Behaviour change

- Adopt a community-based social marketing approach, as demonstrated by the WinSmart Community-Based Travel Marketing (CBTM) Pilot Project, to encourage and support Winnipeg residents to choose riding the bus, carpooling, walking and cycling over driving alone more frequently or for at least some trips. The pilot project demonstrated that this approach works in Winnipeg, even in the absence of new transportation infrastructure. Evidence from other municipalities shows that even higher mode switches and GHG emissions reductions are possible when combined with improvements to transit or AT infrastructure, thereby optimizing the value of overall investment. (To download the final report on the WinSmart CBTM Pilot Project, go to: <http://greenactioncentre.ca/content/cbtm/>)
- Require TDM (Transportation Demand Management) plans for major developments (stadiums, new employment locations, etc.) that go beyond a transportation plan to include targets for specific mode splits, with ongoing monitoring and reporting on the achievement of mode share targets.
- Recognize School Travel Planning as a priority and commit staff to assist School Travel Planning facilitators at the neighbourhood level (<http://greenactioncentre.ca/program/asrts/school-travel-planning/>).
- Continue to financially support, accommodate and encourage participation in events that celebrate and encourage walking, cycling, carpooling and transit, such as the annual Commuter Challenge and Campus Commuter Challenge, Car Free Day, Bike to Work Day, Ciclovía and International Trails Day.
- Partner with a community group, such as Bike to the Future, to develop and implement a “Bike Friendly Business” designation program.



- As a major employer, the City of Winnipeg should develop and implement a TDM (Transportation Demand Management) program to increase commuting mode shares for walking, cycling, transit and carpooling by City employees. This would demonstrate leadership in the City’s commitment to sustainable transportation and serve as a role model for other workplaces.
- Partner with community groups to deliver skills training for commuter cyclists, both adults and children/youth.
- Partner with others, such as MPI and community groups, to deliver educational campaigns on concepts like Share the Road/Path; Show Respect (for all road users); Don’t Cycle on Sidewalks; Watch the Door Zone; etc.

## 9. Targets, evaluation and monitoring

- Set targets and track metrics to gauge progress and effectiveness. Examples of metrics include GHG emissions; mode shares; vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT); reductions in collisions and injuries; demographics of users (gender and age); number of kilometres of AT Network completed; availability of end-of-trip facilities; application of standards (how many were achieved to desired standards rather than minimum); how infrastructure is being used vs. how it was intended to be used; etc.
- Establish baselines and protocols for collection of data on all transportation modes, including transit, walking and cycling in addition to driving.
- Develop Multi-Modal Level-of-Service Indicators to evaluate roadways and identify required improvements for all types of users, including transit riders, cyclists and pedestrians as well as drivers.
- Report publicly on progress made in reaching targets.

## 10. Economic sustainability / financing

- Finance roadway infrastructure from vehicles and fuel taxes. Recent discussions during the civic election pointed to the street infrastructure deficit and probed a variety of revenue sources to fund repairs, such as raising property taxes, lobbying the province for a point of the PST, or selling off City assets. These suggestions are forms of perverse subsidy to motor vehicles from general revenues. They do not differentiate whether an individual drives a lot, a little or not at all.

Green Action Centre recommends that the bills for streets and highways be sent to the owners of the vehicles they service, which also create the wear and tear. Manitoba Public Insurance maintains a database of registered vehicles and approximate values, which could provide a more appropriate property-tax base than homes in order to meet municipal street budgets.

Funding street repairs from fuel taxes puts the revenue focus on the vehicles that benefit in rough proportion to their use of the streets, while also incenting fuel efficiency. We note that it is provincial policy to “target gas tax dollars directly to fund road construction and improvements.” But those tax dollars are currently insufficient by themselves to fully fund provincial and municipal road infrastructure. Fuel taxes have been supplemented by general revenue at both the provincial and municipal levels. If motor vehicles are to pay their way, vehicle-related revenues should cover the full cost of road maintenance and upgrades.

We note, in this regard, that Manitoba's strategic directions report 2020 – *Manitoba Transportation Vision* ([www.gov.mb.ca/mit/2020/pdf/mbtransvisionmay05rpt.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/mit/2020/pdf/mbtransvisionmay05rpt.pdf)) includes this recommendation (p. 13):

In order to achieve sustainable funding for our transportation infrastructure, Manitobans suggested an increase to fuel tax, on the condition that such fuel taxes are directed into a fund specifically dedicated for transportation infrastructure renewal.

Of course motor vehicles and fuel, in addition to paying their own way to fund transportation infrastructure, should, like other sectors of the economy, also pay their share of general revenue requirements that sustain health, education, social programs and government services (e.g. through the PST on vehicles and fuel). Otherwise the burden is shifted unfairly to other sectors.

- Fund Winnipeg Transit to enable improvements that achieve the targets set, whether they are increased ridership levels, mode share or another metric, and tolerate a lower fare box recovery ratio while ridership levels ramp up in response to improvements in service. As noted in their review of the literature on the determinants of transit ridership, Taylor and Fink state, "Policies which support private vehicle use – such as extensive arterial and freeway systems, relatively low motor fuel taxes, policy which require parking to be provided to satisfy all demand at a price of zero – affect transit use more than policies such as substantial public transit subsidies which encourage transit use. . . . Thus, altering auto-supporting policies to encourage drivers to fully compensate society for the externalities of private vehicle use would likely cause people to become more judicious in their use of private vehicles and, in metropolitan areas, would make public transit service relatively more attractive to auto users." (Brian D. Taylor and Camille N.Y. Fink, *The Factors Influencing Transit Ridership: A Review and Analysis of the Ridership Literature*. UCLA Department of Urban Planning Working Paper. 2003. [www.uctc.net/papers/681.pdf](http://www.uctc.net/papers/681.pdf))
- Use pricing mechanisms for revenue and as disincentives to support desired travel behaviours. Examples include higher parking costs, congestion pricing and pay-as-you-drive insurance, although at this stage in Winnipeg, Green Action Centre does not see congestion pricing as an applicable tool.

## 11. Regional Transportation Authority

- Champion and initiate a regional transportation authority for the Winnipeg Capital Region. Similar to Metrolinx in the GTA (and TransLink in Metro Vancouver), the mandate of this regional transportation authority should be "...to improve the coordination and integration of all modes of transportation in the region."



## Conclusion: planning for a greener Winnipeg

The development of Winnipeg's Transportation Master Plan provides an opportunity to identify goals, principles, policies and measures that will position the City to meet the transportation needs of its citizens into the 21st century. The above recommendations aim to improve practical mobility options for residents and to make Winnipeg a greener, more inclusive and people-oriented place to live.

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## Summary of References

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- WinSmart Community-Based Travel Marketing Pilot Project, Green Action Centre <http://greenactioncentre.ca/content/cbtm/>