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April 25, 2014

**Scott Suderman**, Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies Project Manager

**Kevin Nixon**, Active Transportation Coordinator

City of Winnipeg, Public Works

**City of Winnipeg – Draft Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies**

Dear Mr. Suderman and Mr. Nixon:

Please find attached Green Action Centre's comments regarding the City of Winnipeg's draft Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies. We are pleased to see the City moving forward with development of these strategies, which will set the framework for planning and implementation of walking and cycling infrastructure for the next 20 years. It presents a tremendous opportunity for Winnipeg to shift from an auto-centric approach in transportation planning to one that is inclusive of all modes, ages and abilities.

As long-term guiding documents, it is essential that these strategies include the necessary policies and tools that will not only support Winnipeg residents who currently choose to get around on foot and by bike, but actually enable the thousands who have expressed interest to do so given attractive, quality infrastructure.

Green Action Centre is a non-profit, non-governmental hub for greener living based in Winnipeg and serving Manitoba. We are a registered charity, governed by an elected community board. We promote greener living through environmental education and encourage practical green solutions for homeowners, workplaces, schools and communities, including extensive activities to promote more sustainable transportation. Details on our programs, activities and policies can be found at [greenactioncentre.ca](http://greenactioncentre.ca).

Best regards,

Peter Miller  
Chair, Policy Committee  
Green Action Centre

cc: William Dowie, President, Green Action Centre  
Tracy Hucul, Executive Director, Green Action Centre

## Draft Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies: Green Action Centre Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the City's draft Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies.

There are many items included in the draft strategies that we welcome, in particular the recognition of the important role of the Active and Safe Routes to School program (School Travel Planning) delivered by Green Action Centre, and other specific items such as the sidewalk infill and improvement program, development of a winter cycling network, requiring large events to provide bicycle parking, and developing a separate sidewalk snow clearing priority system.

**However, we believe the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies require a stronger foundation to underpin the recommended actions.**

The most critical items are to:

**1) State a clear commitment to prioritizing walking and cycling in Winnipeg.**

The language used and recommendations presented in the draft strategies continue to perpetuate the status quo in Winnipeg that walking and cycling will be “accommodated” as long as it does not impinge on motorists.

A clear commitment to making walking and cycling a priority will help provide the necessary support for administration and elected officials to make and defend decisions such as the removal of parking and reduced vehicle lanes or lane widths. Meeting demand for cycling and walking with the quality infrastructure that Winnipeggers will find comfortable and safe, such as protected bike lanes and separated facilities, requires a strong and clear commitment from the City.

**2) Add a seventh step to the Strategic Framework: *Evaluation*.**

Measurable targets need to be set and tracked to help evaluate progress and effectiveness of the measures implemented. It is essential to know if the approaches taken actually result in an increase in the number of Winnipeggers walking and cycling.

Targets should include: 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 design standards (how many were achieved to desired standards rather than minimum); and how infrastructure is being used vs. how it was intended to be used. This information should be shared publicly.

Evaluating Multi-Modal Level of Service is critical when selecting among possible road treatments for new facilities or prioritizing where retrofits are required. While the development of LOS for pedestrians and cyclists is a burgeoning field, there is significant progress being made. For reference, please see [Boston's Complete Streets Guidelines](#).

### **3) Create a network map based on significant public input at the neighbourhood level.**

The network map presented at the Open House was too small and too general for us to be able to offer comments on specific routes selected. It was also not clear when or who had provided input into this network map. We would recommend a meaningful public consultation effort such as the [Bike, Walk, Roll Fort Richmond process](#), which engaged the broader community, including schools, to create a neighbourhood walking and cycling map. This is a critical component of fleshing out the AT network map in Winnipeg, since the past and proposed versions focus on a spoke and hub approach that does not address cross-town trips.

What was painfully apparent on the network map shown at the Open House was the small number of protected bike lanes (cycle tracks) that are planned and the continued exclusion of major thoroughfares, such as Portage Avenue, Main St., Osborne St. through the Village, that connect with major destinations, shopping and employment. (On this note, we highly commend the City for the parking protected bike lane planned for Sherbrook St.)

It is now recognized in North America that protected bike lanes are a key facility type that successfully draws out more residents to feel safe to cycle ([see related article](#)). Notably, they enable much broader participation, including more women and people with children. For this reason, we believe there should be more emphasis on neighbourhood greenways (bike boulevards) for adjacent, quieter streets and protected bike lanes (cycle tracks) on major roads. For reference, please see Seattle's [revised bicycle master plan](#) and this [related article](#).

### **4) Include sufficient staffing to implement the strategies.**

No matter the quality of the strategies, it will be meaningless without sufficient staff allocated, particularly within Public Works, to implement the recommendations.

#### **Other recommendations to strengthen the strategy are to:**

- Include traffic calming and reduced speed limits as specific measures to increase safety and improve the walking and cycling environment.
- Address the role and impact of major projects such as the redevelopment of the Southwood Lands at the University of Manitoba and the area surrounding Polo Park Shopping Centre.
- Strengthen integration of the strategies with transit and carsharing ([Peg City Car Co-op : Bike. Walk. Bus. And Sometimes, Drive.](#)) for a multi-modal network. For reference, consider the Canadian Urban Transit Association's Task Force on Integrated Mobility.
- Include community-based travel marketing in the Marketing and Communication plans. Travel marketing has clearly demonstrated success both in Winnipeg and other cities in converting drive alone trips to walking, cycling and transit, as well as increasing uptake of new infrastructure. For reference, see Winnipeg's pilot project on [Community-Based Travel Marketing](#).
- Complete the design guidelines, which have been underway at the City for several years. These guidelines are an essential component of the strategies and are clearly necessary to help choose treatments and avoid situations such as the current two-year closure of the Assiniboine Ave protected bike lane (cycle track). For reference, we would point to the [NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#) for best practices.

## **Implementation Costs**

Overall, the price tag of \$334 million to implement all aspects of both strategies seems very reasonable compared with the cost of major road projects (Disraeli Bridge & Overpass \$195 million; Chief Peguis Extension to Route 90 \$240 million).

A cost/benefit analysis of the \$334 million on walking and cycling, which would benefit all Winnipeg residents and neighbourhoods, would be helpful to identify the savings from reduced motorized vehicle traffic, reduced wear and tear on infrastructure, improved health and quality of life, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and improved ability to attract and retain young people.

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Summary of links provided:

- Boston Complete Streets Guidelines – <http://bostoncompletestreets.org/>
- Bike, Walk, Roll Fort Richmond – <http://greenactioncentre.ca/living-green-living-well/bike-walk-roll-project-helps-fort-richmond-community-find-their-vision/>
- Article: The Rise of the North American Protected Bike Lane (Momentum Magazine) – <http://momentummag.com/features/the-rise-of-the-north-american-protected-bike-lane/>
- Seattle Bicycle Master Plan – <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/bikemaster.htm>
- Article: Revamped bike plan to have separated lanes, back-street routes (Seattle Times) – [http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2023382652\\_bikeplanxml.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2023382652_bikeplanxml.html)
- Peg City Car Co-op – <http://pegcitycarcoop.ca/>
- Winnipeg Community-Based Travel Marketing Pilot Project – <http://greenactioncentre.ca/content/cbtm/>
- NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide - <http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/>