

APPENDIX C
Active Transportation Focus Group Results

Active Transportation Focus Group – Summary of Session

Date: Tuesday, June 1, 2004, 10.00 a.m. – 12 noon

Location: Fairmont Hotel

A focus group on Active Transportation was held on June 1, 2004, by Marr Consulting & Communications as part of The City's Active Transportation Study. Members of the group included 10 individuals¹, who regularly participated in some form of Active Transportation for commuting or recreational purposes. The objective of holding the meeting was to gain an insight into Winnipeg citizens' perspectives on the state of Active Transportation in The City of Winnipeg, and to make recommendations for improvement.

Active Transportation Current Issues

During general discussion a number of specific issues were identified early and often – here is the list:

- Donald Street Bridge
- Pembina/ Jubilee underpass – also south and west
- Bike Lanes that become sidewalks – what is a cyclist to do?
- Taylor and Waverly - narrow and unclear
- Archibald
- Pothole Hazards
- Lack of marketing
- Route clarity- signs and knowledge of.

Overview of Potential Barriers

An overview of barriers, which may potentially limit the ability of Winnipeg residents to make use of Active Transportation within Winnipeg, was provided for discussion purposes. No additions were made to the list

- Physical Infrastructure including (cycling barrier)
 - Underpasses
 - Narrow bridges
 - Train tracks/crossings
 - Busy roads with no alternatives
- Lack of continuity in facilities (cycling, walking and other active transportation barrier)
- Poor Maintenance (cycling, walking and other active transportation barrier)
- Bad Drivers (cycling, walking and other active transportation barrier)
- Weather (cycling, walking and other active transportation barrier)

¹ Focus group participants were: Dan Bullock, Neil Cunningham, Jaymi Derrett, Allan Grant, Molly Johnson, Gord McGonigal, Lawrence Peters, Randall Shymko, Howard Skrypnik, and Harold Westdal.

- Distance (cycling, walking and other active transportation barrier)
- Theft (cycling barrier)
- Personal Safety (walking barrier)

Active Transportation Focus Group Question Period

The Members of the focus group were asked to answer a series of four questions pertaining to active transportation within the city of Winnipeg.

Question 1 - What is the City of Winnipeg currently doing well? What could it be doing more of?

The members of the focus group have stated that the following aspects of Active Transportation within the City of Winnipeg are good:

- Lane widths
- Bike lanes (referring to shy zones on bridges)
- The Charleswood Parkway
- Bridge Design in some areas (Osborne, Provencher)
- The Closing of Wellington, Wolsley and Scotia Streets to cars on Sundays
- Winter dog-mushing trail is great – especially for X-country skiing to work (should be expanded and advertised)
- Can skate, ski and walk
- Churchill Drive is liked by some
- Skating is great
- Bike racks on busses
- The Winnipeg Transit website is excellent-the website includes walking routes and times

The focus group indicated that the following items/issues are in need of improvement/ should be addressed.

- Bridge design for some areas for biking and walking, for example the Donald Bridge
 - A lack of physical barriers for traffic – to slow motorized vehicles down
 - Provision of “bail out areas” for cyclists travelling in heavy traffic.
 - The clarification of bike lanes from sidewalks- particularly at Archibald, Taylor and Waverly.
 - Additional hours of road closures in Wellington, Wolesley and Scotia
 - Sunday road closures for Churchill Drive
 - Improved clarity of and distinction between bike paths versus on road facilities
 - Improved continuity of bicycle paths
 - Improved distinction between bicycle paths and routes
 - Congestion - as it forces commuting cyclists off of bike paths and onto roads
 - A lack of clear labelling of bicycle route and no real sense of ownership of the system.
- Suggestions for improvement include:
- Improved route naming
 - The inclusion of destinations on path/ route signs
- A lack of connectivity and direct routes for the bicycle

- Publicize and update the bicycle map
- Creation of more direct bicycle routes
- Improvement in the reliability of buses with bike rack facilities such as an increased availability of information about routes and time/availability
- Increased education about the speed and time it takes to travel using active transportation as compared to using the automobile
- Clear the sidewalks in the winter and spring. The Osborne Bridge has been stated to be particularly bad in the winter, while Assiniboine Avenue is good for walking during this time of year. In spring, summer and fall there is a real problem for pedestrians with splash from passing buses and cars.

Question 2 - What are the barriers to Active Transportation?

The following items/issues have been labelled by the members of the focus group as barriers to participating in Active Transportation within the City of Winnipeg:

- Road conditions, for example potholes, provide a significant potential risk for bicycles as compared to cars
- Distance to destinations. For most individuals a travel time of 30 minutes is considered a reasonable commuting distance.
- Poor visibility/ sightlines due to obstruction by residential fences.
- The Nassau intersection tends to “pinch” cars and bikes together. (Cause bicycle-automobile congestion)
- Political and public apathy to active transportation
- See list of Potential Barriers discussed above.

Question 3 - What are some solutions to these barriers (including things the City is not doing now.)?

- Require lower fences on corner lots to improve visibility at intersections
- Experimentation with road design, for example at the Corydon plaza, to improve the vehicle/ pedestrian intersection. Suggested road design experiments may include
 - The implementation of curb cuts
 - Clear lines of sight
- The implementation of raised intersections
- The implementation of speed bumps to displace vehicular traffic (would be beneficial for bikes)
- The dedication of funds from bike fines into bicycle infrastructure
- The development of campaign strategies (like the Active Edmonton website) to promote awareness of Active Transportation
- The improvement of sign clarity for cyclists, including the improvement of right turn only lanes
- Clear lane painting
- Enforcement of diamond bike/bus lanes
- Provide an increased level of safety information to increase public awareness of the risks of Active Transportation.

- Provide education for training in Active Transportation skills.
- Educate drivers about sharing the road. This may be undertaken (for example) through advertising campaigns like the one used for motorcycles
- Provide shower facilities and bicycle lock up facilities. (For example, the provincial government offices at the VIA Station.)
- Provide better bicycle racks at travel destinations, particularly shopping malls like St. Vital and Polo Park.
 - Phone St. Vital to ask them for their reaction and to ask them about any concerns that they may have.
- Have a second look at some of the incentives that currently exist – these tend to promote non-AT modes of transportation. For example:
 - Subsidize mileage and parking
 - Taxation of Eco pass on non-profits
 - Charges and parking costs paid
 - Malls with parking validation
- Are there ways to have AT incentives:
 - Make car insurance rates distance based
 - Bus tickets provided in lieu of parking validation
- Create “location efficient” mortgages where the city is divided into zones related to place of work. “Smart Commute Mortgage Program”-Fannie Mae- Programs have been implemented in Seattle and Chicago, although the final conditions of the program has considerably diluted its effectiveness.
- City has eco pass and will provide bus tickets to employees, however the provincial government will not do the same because transit is a service of The City.
- Develop policies for The City to work with businesses. For example providing bus tickets instead of paying for parking. (This strategy may raise issues of liability.)

Question 4 - How would you get people to participate more often? (In Active transportation)

- Provide positive images of Active Transportation
 - Make use of “Test Subjects” to demonstrate Active Transportation travel times for “regular people.”
 - These demonstrations could be used as promotional advertisements. For Example “Follow Dan Down His Block.”
- Publicize the health benefits of Active Transportation.
- Provide information on cycling gear such as – wet weather gear, cargo-carrying gear.
- Provide information on safe routing for bikes
- Work with the Physical Activity Coalition to address active transportation issues through an incentive based creative approach.
- Screen a sample of individuals to determine their distance to work and how much time they are willing to dedicate toward an Active Transportation commute.
 - Examples of possible items to include:
 - Identify obstacles
 - What would you be willing to do in support Active Transportation?
- Traffic Flow

- Sidewalks are under utilized. A possible measure to increase Active Transportation with in the City may be to convert these sidewalks into bike or multi use lanes.
- Make city policy more integrated. For example, co-ordinate policy between Public Works, Transport and Property Development to promote AT.
- Designate exclusive lanes for cycling during rush hour, seven days a week.
- Make use of surface painting and colour icons in the designation of lanes.
- Provide integrated planning. Build neighbourhoods, both new and infill developments, so that cars are not needed.
- Promote improved public awareness, included as part of the budget.
- Emphasize a message for lifestyle change, increased levels of activity through creative initiatives.
- Link major arteries, such as Waverley and Wellington to use. (Not too extreme.)
- Fix the bottleneck at Pembina and Jubilee
- Provide improved clarity of bike trails and sidewalks.
- Find tar that does not soften in the summer – specific problem for in-line skaters).
- Incorporate the Southwest into the planning, application and design standards.
- Address Safety, particularly in regard to cycling, for example through information on the path system.
- Re-convene the Bicycle Advisory Committee.
- Institute a Coordinator for the Reinitiated Bicycle Advisory Committee.
- Develop a Pilot Program for the publication and identification of Active Transportation needs particular to various areas (such as shopping centres, and work areas) and for the development of Active Transportation plans. (For example a demo project in St. Vital.)

Recommended Telephone Survey Questions and Other Recommendations:

Questions

- Would you support dedicated funding for active transportation?
- Would you make use of educational materials? What Type?
- Do you feel Active Transportation amenities would improve the image of The City?

Recommendations

- Re-instate the Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Develop a focus group with non-active transportation users