

**THE CITY OF WINNIPEG ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION
STUDY**

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

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SUBMITTED TO:



SUBMITTED BY:



The complete version of this report contains two additional documents:

- 1) The City of Winnipeg Active Transportation Study – Final Report**
- 2) The City of Winnipeg Active Transportation Study – Appendices**

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Executive Summary

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Active Transportation (AT) represents a significant opportunity for the City of Winnipeg to simultaneously improve the health of its residents, increase quality of life, and achieve other environmental and socio-economic benefits. It is a sustainable form of transportation and is defined as any human-powered mode of transportation, such as cycling, walking, in-line skating, skateboarding, ice-skating or cross-country skiing.

The Active Transportation Study was intended to provide strategic direction for improving AT opportunities in Winnipeg by:

- updating and expanding the Winnipeg *Bicycle Facilities Study*, prepared for the City in 1993;
- by recommending improvements to facilities for all modes of Active Transportation; and
- by examining other opportunities to enhance the AT option within the city through programming, policy and other non-facility based initiatives.

Vision for Future Active Transportation in Winnipeg

Active Transportation represents both an opportunity and a responsibility for the City of Winnipeg. Over the past decade, Active Transportation has gradually grown in Winnipeg – facilities have been constructed and programs undertaken. Many recent studies or City initiatives have incorporated Active Transportation directly or indirectly, and ongoing processes, such as Winnipeg-In-Motion and the *Embracing Sustainability* report, continue to build momentum. Remarkably, public consultation reveals that relatively few Winnipeggers recognize the strides that have been made, even as health, quality of life and environmental responsibility remain priorities identified by individuals and the community.

The recommendations of this study need to be placed in the context of a broader vision for Active Transportation in Winnipeg. A vision for Active Transportation:

- builds on the successes of the past. Much has been accomplished and these successes need to be celebrated and further enhanced.
- coalesces all the many elements that do and could exist.
- continues to integrate existing and proposed activities, and seek partnerships to ensure efficiency, cost-effectiveness and the best possible likelihood of success.
- needs to be rooted in the realities of Winnipeg and needs to be practical with tangible results.
- is linked to existing City Of Winnipeg policy, particularly *Plan Winnipeg*, allowing the City to be a catalyst to leverage the opportunities that already exist to move forward.

Despite a cold climate, restrained budgets at all levels of government and other apparent obstacles, the City of Winnipeg and Winnipeggers have already achieved success in Active Transportation. Winnipeg has the opportunity to further be a leader and become an innovator in Active Transportation which will build a city that matches Mayor Sam Katz's "vision of a city that has plenty of opportunity for its youth, value for our citizen's hard-earned tax dollars, and a healthy thriving environment that allows our business community to flourish." A vision

for Active Transportation in Winnipeg foresees a sustainable culture and commitment with policies, practices, programs and facilities that support Active Transportation choices for and by Winnipeggers leading to better health and quality of life, as well as environmental and socio-economic benefits.

Active Transportation is not new, but what can be new is a clear articulation of the need for and benefits of Active Transportation, and a commitment to continue to move forward in delivering on the promise and providing the opportunity.

Key Findings of the Study

The City of Winnipeg has demonstrated a commitment to Active Transportation through past studies, existing policy, future projects and in particular, current and proposed processes. These provide a positive context in which further action and improvement can occur. Interest, funding and promotion of Active Transportation also comes from provincial and federal government departments and from non-governmental sources, such as the various interest groups and associations that are involved in AT programming and lobbying for and development of new facilities.

While significant momentum exists that supports Active Transportation in Winnipeg, opportunities are myriad to further enhance AT through programs, policy and processes. Some of these opportunities include:

- working to improve the governance of all modes of Active Transportation;
- making Active Transportation an integral part of all of the City's planning;
- developing a clearly articulated vision and profile for Active Transportation within the City, with supporting policies;
- linking Active Transportation related policies to reasonable action plans;
- developing a long term framework for action with related benchmarks, which is important in both accountability and communication;
- coordinating the incorporation of Active Transportation elements in the review processes for new and existing developments within the City; and
- improving the regularity of monitoring and review of programs and policies, as related to Active Transportation.

Extensive public consultation occurred as part of this study. There was significant consistency in the message that Winnipeggers were sending. Here is what Winnipeggers said:

- Active Transportation is important to their quality of life.
- There is a strong need to bring Active Transportation options into the mainstream of transportation choices.
- The City could help to increase their participation in Active Transportation through the construction and improvement of related facilities.
- There is a need for increased awareness, education and promotion of the Active Transportation option and its related facilities.
- Winnipeggers feel it is important for the City to promote and expand its Active Transportation network and they believe Active Transportation deserves priority in the City's budget.

These messages and key findings from the public consultation demonstrate a public desire for the City to financially commit to strategically improve and construct Active Transportation facilities. The City of Winnipeg has a great number of Active Transportation facilities already in place. Despite past and present successes, the City faces a number of challenges regarding facilities:

- Many Winnipeggers remain unaware of the extent of Active Transportation facilities in their city.
- There is a need for consistency between existing and future policies as related to Active Transportation facility development.
- There is a need for a financial commitment by the City to continue to strategically improve existing, and build new, Active Transportation facilities.

To address these challenges, planning for new facilities needs to focus on:

- maximizing the usability of current facilities,
- developing demonstration facilities that are unique or new to the city,
- developing an AT network, and
- identifying the need to review and apply design standards.

The study findings also suggest a need for the City to increase public awareness of improvements to facilities and to meet public demand on the programming side, which could be accomplished by:

- Marketing new programs and facilities to increase public awareness.
- Launching a targeted campaign advocating Active Transportation to individuals who are on the “cusp” of becoming regular Active Transportation users.
- Using City-owned advertising mediums to promote programs and events to encourage participation in Active Transportation (e.g. Leisure Guide, bus boards).
- Releasing reports and studies on Active Transportation to the public.
- Providing or supporting education about Active Transportation.
- Using the City’s web site to provide information to the public about facilities and programs, and the Active Transportation option.
- Allowing the public to have input on planning and ongoing maintenance issues through a feedback mechanism, such as an e-mail address and phone line.

In addition to the information gathered from public consultation within Winnipeg, there is an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other cities, both in Canada and the U.S. In some cases, there are approaches being used elsewhere regarding funding, programming or facility development that could be modified to fit Winnipeg’s needs. Also, there are lessons to be learned from the experiences of other cities, some worth emulating and some worth avoiding. Key findings can be summarized as follows:

- It is essential to have a dedicated AT coordinator to act as the lynchpin, the focal point and the champion for Active Transportation. It is this person who will identify cost-saving partnerships, identify ways to eliminate overlap and duplication, ensure no opportunities are missed, and promote sound community-supported facility development and program delivery.
- AT must be integrated into all City planning and decision-making processes. Interdepartmental coordination is essential to ensure this integration.

- Incorporating public input is important. An advisory committee including AT users and other members of the public is useful as a means of ongoing public input, as a sounding board, and to marshal expert advice.
- Communication with the public is a key element, both in the planning stages and after facilities or programs are implemented.
- Health is a key focus for motivation in promotional campaigns and children and youth should be targeted for educational programs.
- Funding opportunities can be found in a variety of sources, such as other government programs, partnering with business and NGOs, or dedicating a portion of the gas tax revenue.

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide a comprehensive overview of what still needs to be done to promote Active Transportation in Winnipeg through both programs and facilities. The recommendations have benefited from a review of experience elsewhere and best practices, but the recommendations combine to create a plan and a vision that is specific to Winnipeg and based on listening to the public here. As a result, several recommendations are not only innovative, but are also unique to Winnipeg, based on our special circumstances. Although the total list is extensive, it has been organized under five guiding principles and each recommendation is practical and pragmatic.

PRINCIPLE #1: THE CITY SHALL ADOPT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PRINCIPLES AS AN INTEGRATED PART OF DOING BUSINESS.

1. Hire or dedicate an employee with a clear mandate focused on all aspects of AT.
2. Strive to implement AT facilities in all Civic facilities.
3. Incorporate AT facilities in all new transportation infrastructure projects.
4. Incorporate AT facilities in all infrastructure renewal projects where feasible.
5. Formalize considerations for the integration of AT facilities in private development through tools used within the development review process.
6. Ensure that interdepartmental coordination mechanisms institutionalize consideration of AT.

PRINCIPLE #2: THE CITY SHALL ACTIVELY PROMOTE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AMONG STAFF AND THE CITIZENS OF WINNIPEG.

7. Form an AT Advisory Committee.
8. Provide information to the general public about facilities and programs.

9. Market new programs & facilities.
10. Launch a targeted campaign advocating AT.
11. Focus on health benefits.
12. Promote programs and events to encourage AT.
13. Publicly release reports on AT.
14. Allow for public input into ongoing maintenance and planning related to AT.
15. Lead action by example.
16. Provide or support education about AT.
17. Develop programs to educate children.

PRINCIPLE #3: THE CITY SHALL DEVELOP AN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY.

18. Profile the vision for Active Transportation and link it to a clarified AT policy.
19. Link policy to reasonable action plans.
20. Set forward looking, adaptable goals.
21. Plan and implement strategically.
22. Create and maintain an up-to-date facilities database.
23. Regularly monitor and revise programs and policies.
24. Tighten enforcement.

PRINCIPLE #4: THE CITY SHALL BE INNOVATIVE AND SEEK PARTNERSHIPS IN FUNDING AND SUPPORTING AT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.

25. Continue and increase a clear, sustained budget allocation for AT.
26. Marshal governmental programs.
27. Consider alternatives to funding.
28. Co-fund with developers & business.

29. Engage with non-governmental organizations.
30. Co-fund with other cities.
31. Dedicate a percentage of the federal gas tax revenues directed to the City of Winnipeg towards AT.

PRINCIPLE #5: THE CITY SHALL ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE CITYWIDE NETWORK OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.

32. Maximize usability of current facilities.
33. Develop demonstration facilities.
34. Develop an AT network.
35. Address legitimacy issues for small wheel users
36. Regularly review design standards.

Implementation

It will take commitment and determination to implement the above recommendations, but they do not require a large financial investment. By implementing these recommendations based on the vision of Active Transportation, the City of Winnipeg can achieve further successes and change lives for the better. The following priorities are recommended for implementation in the short term:

- Hire or dedicate the Active Transportation Coordinator
- Form the Active Transportation Advisory Committee
- Build awareness and foster dialogue with the public
- Develop a detailed action plan with time frames
- Begin to implement the priorities for facilities by first identifying projects from the following list:
 - regular maintenance
 - new roadway construction or Capital Works projects
 - signage
 - innovative facilities
 - facilities providing connectivity

A comprehensive listing of potential facilities has been identified, and a short-list drawn up, and it is included here. Building Active Transportation facilities requires both up-front capital investment and longer-term cash for maintenance. However, the recommendations for facilities focus on practical, lower cost solutions and emphasizes dovetailing with existing plans, in order to achieve maximum success within the current fiscal realities. As well, promoting

selected demonstration initiatives will visibly demonstrate the City's commitment and achievements while providing needed facilities.

By beginning with the priorities identified in this study, the City of Winnipeg can actualize both the opportunity and responsibility of Active Transportation, with its many benefits to both individuals and the community.