



Preliminary Comments

Re: TMP 2050 Phase II Public Engagement

Bike Winnipeg is very concerned that the process to develop strategies and recommendations for the Transportation Master Plan: 2050 has not facilitated the decisions and trade offs needed to align Winnipeg's transportation system with the values set out in the process or with requirements that Winnipeg faces as 2050 approaches, most notably meeting our climate change goals and responsibilities.

Despite the city's pressing deadline to achieve a community wide Net Zero emissions target by 2050, we fear that the issues, directions, strategies, and actions outlined for discussion are too close to business as usual to achieve the significant mode share changes that will be needed to meet our 2050 goals.

Of particular concern to us is that the issue of traffic congestion seems to have been elevated to the same level as the issues of safety, climate change, and financial stability. Yes, traffic congestion confronts us with an inconvenience in our daily lives. But that few minutes of occasional delay should not be promoted to the same degree of urgency as the safety of our citizens, the existential threat of climate change, or the issues of equity that are exacerbated when services are cut or frozen in order to dedicate property tax increases to roadway expansion and renewal as Winnipeg has chosen to do.

While the Key Directions Booklet includes many positive transit and walk/bike-friendly ideas, experience has taught us that merely accommodating transport by foot, bicycle, or transit is insufficient motivation to shift people's behaviour in a car-centric city such as Winnipeg. To modify behavior and reach the plan's proposed goal of reducing private vehicle use and their greenhouse gas emissions, the city must make walking, biking, and/or transit more convenient than driving.

Simply put, people will abandon their vehicles when they are offered alternative modes of transportation that are more convenient and generally more attractive than driving. Cities that are achieving significant transitions from driving to cycling and/or transit are doing so by making travel by private automobile less attractive while they make travel by bike and transit more attractive.

Many cities successfully manage congestion to discourage travel by private motor vehicles, and encourage travel by bike and transit. When drivers sit stuck in traffic watching buses and bikes go by unhindered, they are learning a lesson. They are being nudged to consider Active Transportation or transit alternatives.

We are happy to see that the city is proposing that it only expand, extend, or add roads “to provide space for goods movement, sustainable mobility options, or to connect new developments to the existing network”. That would indeed be a positive change.

However, the next sentence of the key directions booklet is used to introduce a map of 33 potential roadway additions and expansions under consideration. The very clear implication is that expansion of roadways is a primary goal of the TMP, and that road expansion and construction of an inner ring road will be recommended as a tradeoff for any roadspace reallocated to sustainable modes of transportation. That will guarantee private vehicles remain Winnipeg’s dominant mode of transportation.

Acknowledging that Winnipeg has to significantly change its transportation system to meet climate goals is a vital and difficult step in achieving those goals. That Winnipeggers have so strongly identified the need to meet climate goals as a priority of OurWinnipeg, the Climate Action Plan, and the Transportation Master Plan, and the fact that actions taken to tackle our climate goals will also address financial and safety goals show that they want to see actions that align with these values.

It will be a struggle to move Winnipeggers away from their personal vehicle habit to the use of sustainable modes. The city needs to start that process now, not kick the can farther down the road.

We believe that bicycle transport should play a major role as an inclusive, healthy, and carbon-free mode of transportation. We are also aware that it will take enormous change to significantly increase cycling’s mode share of daily transportation in Winnipeg. Particularly during the winter months .

This discussion document is not helping Winnipeg turn the corner from personal vehicle dependency to less polluting – and less socially costly – modes of transport.

Having baked this bias into Phase II, Bike Winnipeg urges the City to avoid this mistake in your final round of engagement on the TMP. Be clear to Winnipeggers about the challenge we are all facing, and get feedback from them on what it will take to change mode share away from personal vehicles, be they Electric Vehicles or Internal Combustion Engine Vehicles.

There is no time to waste; scaling up the transition from personal vehicles to other modes will be hard on people who have built their lifestyles around personal vehicle transportation. The city needs to find a way to achieve a successful transition with minimum friction. That will take a lot of engagement, but it is a necessary part of achieving an affordable carbon neutral transportation system by 2050. Don’t wait any longer to engage in that difficult discussion.

Yours sincerely,

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