



**MORE PEOPLE BIKING
MORE OFTEN**

December 4, 2020

Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works

Re:2021 Multi-Year Budget Review

Dear Councillors,

First off, I want to thank the committee and the city administration for the efforts they put in to expand our Open Streets program and extend hours of operation over the spring, summer, and fall as the city worked to cope with the fallout from the COVID-19 epidemic.

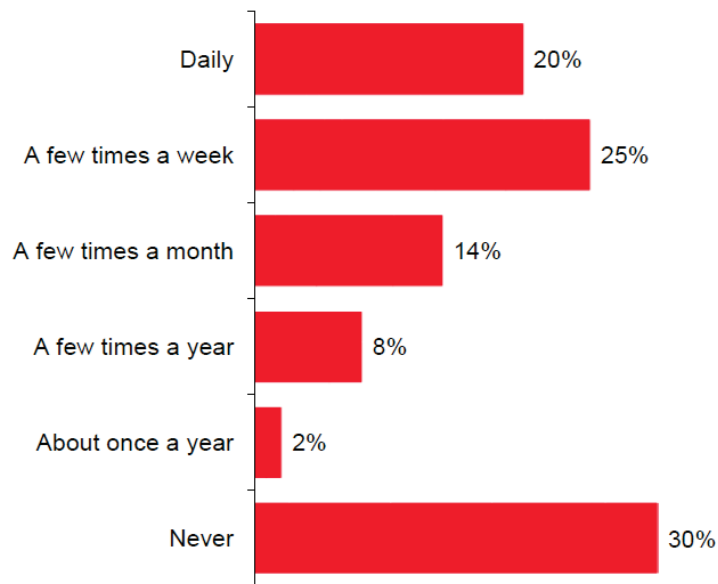
Without question, this one simple, affordable change made a huge difference in people’s lives and in our collective ability to cope with the epidemic. It also showed us the huge demand for walking and cycling in the city, and Winnipegger’s insatiable appetite to travel by foot and bike.

As we head into our 5th week of lockdown, with the probability of extension on the horizon, we urge to once again act to Open Streets up and provide people with needed respite from the lockdown and improve transportation options as well as we can. As a bare minimum, we would like to see weekend support for Open Streets.

This should not come as a surprise, as we have shared with you in the past, a Probe Research poll conducted on behalf of Bike Winnipeg and CAA Manitoba in June of 2018 showed that 45% of the population would cycle on a regular basis if provided with safe, attractive, and convenient ways to get around town by bike.

POTENTIAL OF CYCLING FREQUENCY

Q3. “Suppose the circumstances were positive for cycling – you felt safe cycling, there were better bike paths and the weather was good. If that were the case, how often do you think you might cycle to work, school or to run errands?” (N=600)



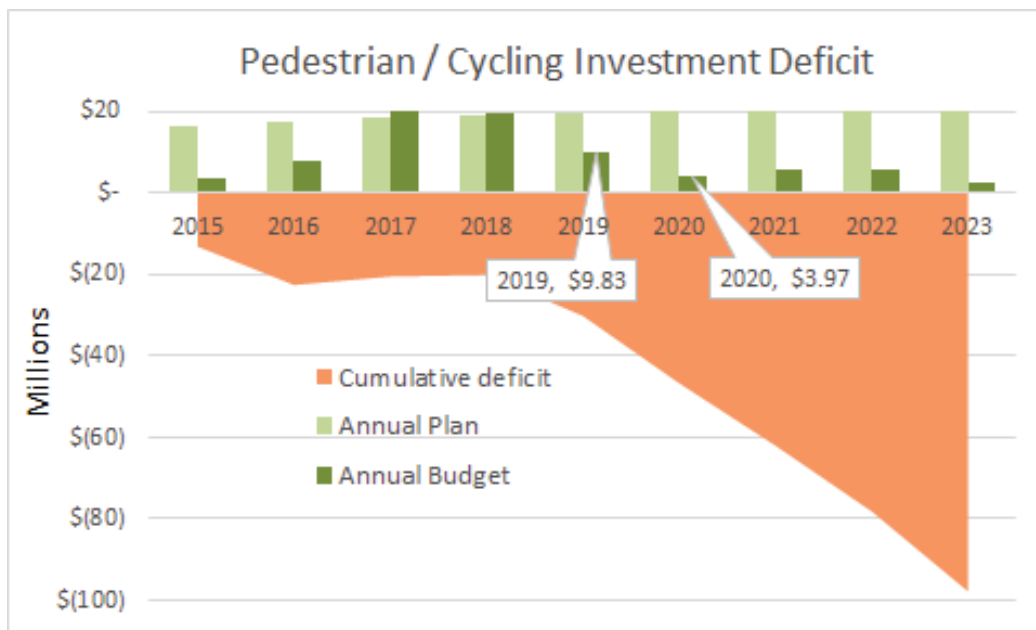
On September 20, 2018, [Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan: Planning for Climate Change, Acting for People](#) received unanimous support from Council and was approved for implementation. That plan calls for:

- 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 relative to 2011 levels.
 - 17 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transportation
- 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 relative to 2011 levels.

Short term actions included within the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan include:

- Establish a dedicated Climate Action Reserve Fund (CARF) to support implementation of this Action Plan.
- Create an annual capital program for departmental sustainability and climate initiatives. Applications should be accepted by all departments.
- Accelerate the implementation of the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies (i.e., through increased funding, staffing levels).

Your budget needs to reflect this, but we continue to fall behind in funding for the pedestrian and cycling program. Funding levels for the Pedestrian and Cycling Program and for the mandated incorporation of pedestrian and cycling facilities in road reconstruction and rehabilitation projects will leave an accumulated shortfall of more than \$96 million dollars by the final year of this budget.



While it may take bold action, we fully expect council to review the proposed budget through the climate lens it recently adopted and act appropriately to ensure that the budget that comes forward through this review process takes us closer, not further from those goals.

Of particular concern to Bike Winnipeg are the proposed cuts to the Pedestrian and Cycling Program beginning in 2021, which would come sharp on the heels of significant cuts to this program in the 2019 budget. If we want to meet the goals set out in Our Winnipeg, in the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies, and in our Climate Action Plan, we need to be restoring and actually increasing our Pedestrian and Cycling Program budget.

Many Rehabilitation/Reconstruction Projects Overlapping the Bicycle Network fail to include Cycling Improvements

Furthermore, we need to be ensuring that Pedestrian and Cycling projects are prioritized and included within the Local and Regional Street Renewals Program, and that rehabilitation projects to our regional streets move forward only if they include improvements to walking and cycling facilities. This is not happening now, as many bike network facilities identified on the city's bike network are being rehabilitated under the Regional Street Renewals Program without any corresponding improvements to the cycling facilities along those roadways.

- River Ave – River Ave to Stradbrook
- River Ave – Osborne to Wellington Cr
- Stradbrook Ave – Wellington to Osborne
- Pacific Ave – McPhillips to Xante
- Roblin Blvd – Dieppe to PTH 101
- Saskatchewan Ave – Multiple segments

Missed Opportunities

- Midland – Notre Dame to Saskatchewan – Connection to Northwest Hydro Corridor
- Mountain
- McGregor

Dead ends

- Keewatin – Selkirk to Logan – actually Gallagher for the pathway extension, but that leaves you without a crossing of Logan and Keewatin to connect you up to the Alexander Neighbourhood Greenway. Logan @ Dee has a pedestrian crossing, but it can't be activated from someone on a bike without riding onto the sidewalk. An Alexander crossing of Keewatin has been requested by the community.

This is not an exhaustive list of missed opportunities. If a key goal of our Roadway Construction and Maintenance budget is to “Implement active transportation components in regional street projects where feasible”, then this budget is failing to meet that goal.

Likewise, our bridge rehabilitation projects need to be scoped and budgeted to include planned improvements to walking and cycling facilities. For instance, scope and budget for the Lagimodiere Twin Bridges Rehabilitation project needs to include a grade separated walk/bike crossing of Lagimodiere south of the CPR Keewatin line in the vicinity of Ravelston/Callsbeck. This is part of the proposed cycling network, and provides connections between Transcona and areas north and south of Concordia on the west side of Lagimodiere.

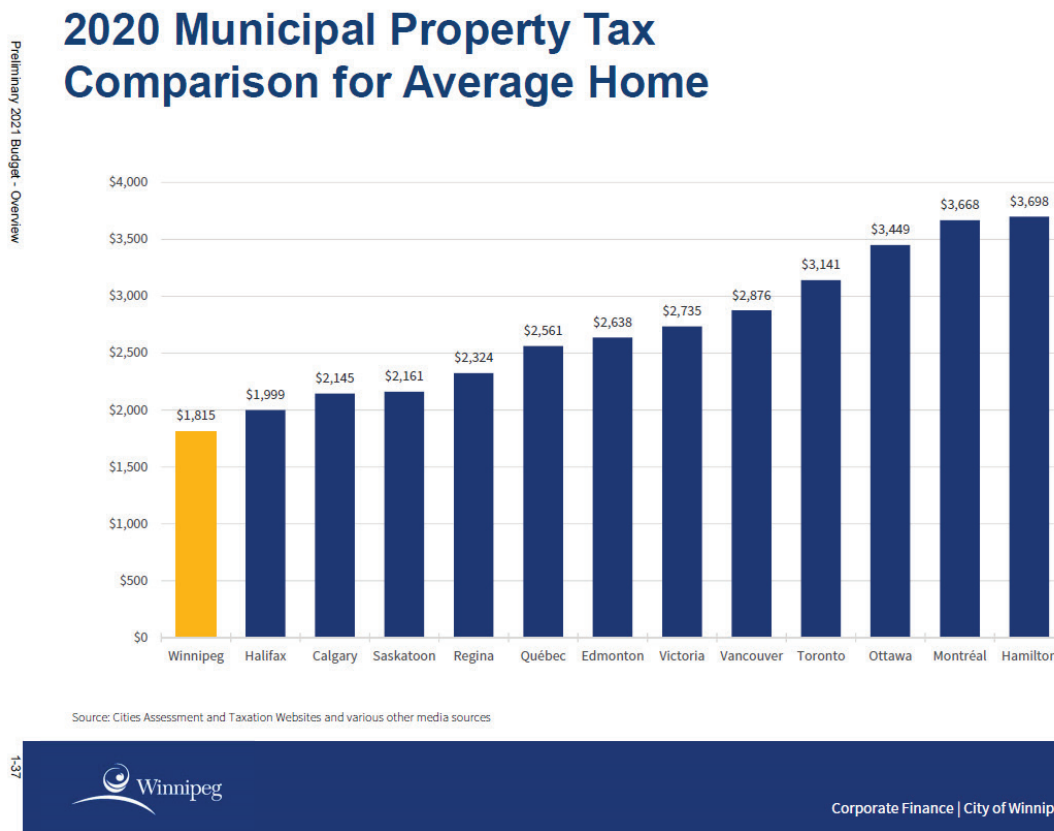
Finally, we are very concerned that a number of critical walk/bike projects have not been prioritized for funding:

- Arlington Bridge Replacement
- Osborne Village to Downtown Walk/Bike Bridge and Connections
- Keewatin Underpass Pathway
- Ruby/Banning Neighbourhood Greenway
- Enfield/St. Jean Baptiste Neighbourhood Greenway
- Downtown Protected Bike Lanes
- Etc.

Recommendations

We feel that the restrictive tax increase of 2.33% does not reflect the needs of the city, nor does it reflect the city's ability to generate revenue. We urge the city to:

- Make funding for the Pedestrian and Cycling Program a top priority for any Federal stimulus money
- Raise property taxes beyond the proposed 2.33%, which acts as a de facto tax freeze given the dedicated nature of the proposed tax increase. Implement with a property tax credit to reduce impact on lower value homes.
- End the practice of dedicating 1% property tax increases to the Local Streets Renewal Reserve and the Regional Street Renewals Reserve in 2020 and 2022 respectively, as outlined in the 2013 and 2014 budgets that created these reserves.
- Ensure that all Reconstruction and Rehabilitation projects in the Regional Road Street Renewals program incorporate planned improvements to walking and cycling facilities.
- Ensure that all Waterway Crossing and Grade Separation projects incorporate planned improvements to walking and cycling facilities.
- Pass a residential streets speed of 30km to improve conditions on residential streets.



We would also like to see the city consider charging a commuter fare on exurban commuter traffic. As pointed out in a recent report from the Centre for Policy Alternatives (The High Cost of Free Riding and How We Fix It), more than 25,000 people currently drive into the city for work on a daily basis yet pay no city property taxes. A commuter fee would have the potential to keep more of those people in the city by removing what is currently a free resource, encourage others onto transit, and generate needed revenue for the city.

Be bold. Let's take this opportunity to update the 2020-2023 multi-year budget to provide people with the transportation options we call for in our planning documents, and take advantage of planned local and regional street renewals to achieve the budgets stated goal of implementing active transportation components in regional street projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Cohoe'.

Mark Cohoe,
Executive Director
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