

Bike to the Future
Presentation to the Manitoba PUB hearings on MPI's 2013/14 Rate Application

Introduction

Greetings. My name is Tom McMahon and I am the current co-chair of Bike to the Future. Today, I am speaking on behalf of Bike to the Future and the Manitoba Cycling Association. The Manitoba Cycling Association has 860 members. Bike to the Future has 780 members and more than 1,600 Manitobans who receive our email announcements and news. I am advised that approximately 4,000 persons cycled on Bike to Work Day in 2012. A recent survey by Bike to the Future volunteers found that nearly 13,000 persons were commuting to work by bicycle. That figure is up by 47 per cent compared to last year, and up 64 per cent since the non-profit advocacy group began conducting bicycle counts in 2007. We believe that an average independent bike store in Winnipeg sells approximately 1,000 bikes per year, which does not count the numbers sold by places such as Canadian Tire and Walmart. Nearly all cyclists are car owners, or have parents who own cars, or own multiple cars and other insured vehicles (trailers, etc). My family is a two car family and between the five of us, we own 7 bicycles.

Bike to the Future was incorporated as a non-profit organization in Manitoba in February 2007. We are a voluntary, inclusive group of concerned citizens working to make cycling in Winnipeg a safe, enjoyable, accessible and convenient transportation choice year-round. We envision a city where everyone – children, seniors, the disabled, adults just learning to bicycle, the working bike commuter and competitive cyclists – feels that cycling is a safe and healthy choice that they can make. We envision a city where cycling is embraced as a preferred mode of transportation, where cycling is integrated into urban design and planning, and where Winnipeg is recognized as a leader in cycling infrastructure and programs. Getting many more people out of their cars onto bicycles will result in a healthier population, a more liveable city, lower infrastructure costs, more tourism and a population with more income to spend on local businesses than on transnational oil companies.

Bike to the Future has become the “go to” organization for issues relating to commuter cycling in Winnipeg. Our organization has been a strong participant in trail-development initiatives and stakeholder committees for public consultation. Our volunteers have been key to developing a City of Winnipeg bike map, conducting annual surveys of cycling in Winnipeg, organizing Bike to Work Day, and creating Bicycle Valet Winnipeg.

We talk about Winnipeg, because that is where most of our members live, but we are very much aware of the many opportunities to improve cycling elsewhere in Manitoba as well. We know that cycling is a provincial issue as much as it is a municipal issue; the *Highway Traffic Act* is provincial; infrastructure spending is largely driven by the provincial budget; paved shoulders on highways is a provincial issue; tourism in Manitoba generally is a provincial issue; and of course, driver education and licensing are provincial issues through MPI.

We have learned that many people don't consider cycling as a good option because they don't feel safe riding their bicycle on the roads or streets. We look enviously at cities and countries with well designed bicycle routes that are separated from traffic and suitable for commuting and running errands. The Danes and the Dutch are leaders at the international level, and Minneapolis, Montreal and Vancouver are leaders in North America. Data from jurisdictions such as those show that more people of all ages choose to ride bikes because they feel safe going about their business on a bicycle if they can travel on facilities that keep them away from cars.

Separate facilities for bicycles are the best and the safest way to move people out of their cars onto bicycles, and they are especially important if we want seniors, children and parents with kids to bike more often, but separate facilities require expenditures and it takes a long time to build a complete network.

We are here to talk to you, the Public Utilities Board and Manitoba Public Insurance, about the less expensive and more immediate route to making cycling safer; giving all road users clear and sound information about how to behave on the road when there are – or may be – bicycles present.

MPI's vision to be a leader to reduce risk and protect Manitobans.

We are here to address this item in MPI's vision as stated on its web site:

Manitoba Public Insurance will make our roadways safer by enforcing standards for drivers and vehicles, and by raising awareness of the inherent risk of driving. We will develop educational programs and controls that help and encourage Manitobans to acquire the skills to avoid collisions.

This is echoed in MPI's Corporate Strategic Plan, A1.7, Part 2, item 7, which states:

7. Manitoba Public Insurance will lead driver and vehicle safety initiatives that reduce risk and protect Manitobans, their streets and their neighbourhoods. Manitobans will recognize the Corporation is living its mission.

We acknowledge that MPI has consulted *Bike to the Future* from time to time, and that MPI has shown good will in communicating with us, but we will show you how MPI's information to drivers to date has not been clear and directive. As a result, we are cycling on the road with drivers who don't know how to pass us, how to merge with us, or how to turn when we are approaching.

We are here to show that MPI can only live up to its vision by being braver and more forceful; by becoming an advocate and leader for the safety of vulnerable road users, and by delivering the right information to road users in clear and effective public education.

To us, this is a life and death matter.

Manitoba has an unfortunate history of experienced cyclists getting run down by motorized vehicles in good weather, light traffic, and broad daylight. In 2012, four cyclists have died on Manitoba streets – and those are the cases we know of through newspaper reports. We are not informed of the circumstances of these deaths, or other accidents, except through media reports and personal knowledge of some of the individuals. One of the persons killed was a touring cyclist who had ridden in many countries and across Canada. He was run over by a cement truck on an empty, open highway, because the truck did not move over and possibly because the paved shoulder came to an abrupt end forcing the cyclist into the traffic lane. In another instance, a regular commuter, who had ridden in the city for years, and taught others to ride, was pushed under a truck by a delivery van merging in light traffic.

When we hear about these incidents, it hits too close to home. That could have been us, our spouses, partners, parents, siblings, our kids...

We are vulnerable road users; they are travelling in big trucks and cars; we need them to understand clearly how to behave. We need a change of driver behaviour and education IMMEDIATELY.

Examples of how other jurisdictions teach driving around bicycles

Let me show you a couple of good examples of driver information projects from other jurisdictions:



The sign on the left is on a road in a federally managed park in Quebec; the Gatineau Parkway. Notice how it clearly indicates one metre of clearance as the car passes the bike, and it shows the car has moved half-way out of the right lane to get by. That's pretty clear.

Below is a simpler, and slightly less clear sign on a small highway in France ("rappel" = "reminder"):



Notice the reference to one point five metres of space. That is nearly five feet of space. Most street lanes are about 12 feet wide. There is no way to put a bicycle in a lane, and have a car in the same lane, and leave three to five feet of clear space between the two. The driver has to move into the next lane to pass safely.

MPI's current public education invites drivers and cyclists to be in the same lane together

We believe Manitoban motorists often think it is fine to squeeze into the same lane as a cyclist, or to pull back into the lane as quickly as possible after passing a cyclist. We believe that MPI teaches drivers to attempt to share a lane with cyclists, and thus puts cyclists in danger.

Here are some examples of what we have in Manitoba:

MPI includes this sign in its Driver's Handbook (p. 72).





These “share the road” signs are common on Manitoba streets. They are either useless or actually dangerous because they do not tell drivers or cyclists how to share the road.

What is a driver supposed to do upon seeing this sign? We believe that drivers and cyclists think this sign means that sharing the road and sharing the lane mean the same thing.

The sign seems to send a message that there is nothing wrong or dangerous with a car driving alongside a bicycle in the same lane

In fact, this sign can be interpreted as telling cyclists to move over and share the lane with motor vehicles, sending a signal to drivers that a cyclist who takes a position such that the car has to change lanes is in the wrong; and a signal to cyclists that they have to tolerate cars driving alongside them.

And what about “sharrows” markings on the roadways? What do they tell drivers and cyclists about where they should be on the road? I think they tell cyclists to move far to the right so that cars can try to squeeze into the lane beside them.



Page 34 of MPI’s Driver’s Handbook says this:

2. Sharrows

Sharrows are pavement markings painted on a roadway to encourage cyclists and motorists to share the road. They are generally intended for use on roadways with lanes that are wide enough for side-by-side bicycle and vehicle operation. Motorists should, at all times, pass cyclists at a safe distance and not assume that the sharrow indicates that they can pass within the travel lane. In sharrow lanes, cyclists should never pass a motor vehicle on the right side. This can result in the cyclist being potentially hit at an intersection if the vehicle turns right.

Sharrows do not designate a bicycle lane and should not be treated as such. While some cyclists will ride down the center of the arrow, in many locations, the sharrow marking simply indicates cyclists and motorists are to share the lane and is not an indication of where a cyclist rides within the lane.

Pavement Markings

A chevron and bicycle symbol designate a sharrow lane.



MPI could not be any clearer: “the sharrows marking simply indicates cyclists and motorists are to SHARE THE LANE.” (our emphasis) If that is not clear enough, MPI tells drivers: “Sharrows do not designate a bicycle lane and SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS SUCH.” MPI is practically urging drivers to drive in the same lane as cyclists.

Further, “In sharrow lanes, cyclists should never pass a motor vehicle on the right side.”

Think about that. Left unstated, MPI is saying that although cyclists should never pass a motor vehicle on the right side, it is perfectly fine for a motor vehicle to pass a cyclist on the left side – in the same lane!

Below are MPI’s “driving tips” about drivers encountering cyclists in traffic:



Safely share the road with cyclists

Cycling is a great way to get around in the summer – it’s beneficial to the environment and your health. While it’s important that both drivers and cyclists know how to share the road, as a driver you need to be extra careful when:

Passing cyclists
You must slow down and change lanes if possible when passing a cyclist. If you can’t change lanes, allow enough room between your vehicle and the cyclist to pass safely.

Turning
Always-shoulder check before making a right turn because there might be a cyclist right beside you who isn’t turning.

Parking
Before opening your door, check your side-view mirror and look behind you to make sure there are no cyclists passing on your left side.

At intersections
Be alert for children riding on the sidewalk at intersections and driveways. By having an increased awareness of how to safely share the road with cyclists, we can all work to reduce risk on Manitoba’s roads and highways this summer.

For more information, check out our website and watch *The 60-Second Driver* on CTV.
mpi.mb.ca



We want to emphasize what MPI is telling drivers in this ad:

“You must slow down and change lanes IF POSSIBLE when passing a cyclist. If you CAN’T CHANGE LANES, allow enough room between your vehicle and the cyclist to pass safely.”

What does “if possible” mean? What does “can’t change lanes” mean?

We say: there is no such thing as “can’t change lanes”. Wait until the next lane is clear.

MPI appears to be suggesting that if the car can drive alongside the bicycle without actually hitting the cyclist, then the driver has enough room to pass safely. We say that passing safely means more than simply avoiding a direct collision.

We believe that with the above types of messaging, MPI, the City of Winnipeg and Province (responsible for street markings and signs) are sending a clear message to drivers: if the driver sees a car in the next lane, then a driver “can’t change lanes” and the driver should continue on and drive alongside the bicycle in the same lane.

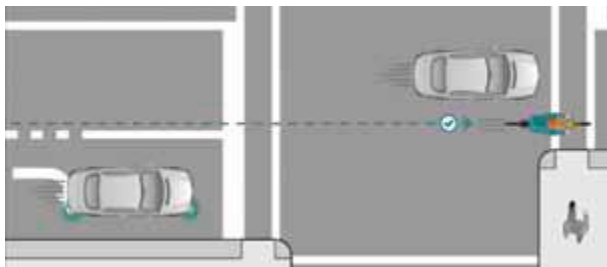
Here is what MPI publishes in its Driver Handbook (p. 74)

<http://www.mpi.mb.ca/PDFs/DriverHandbook/CompleteHandbook.pdf> :

Understanding a Cyclist’s Position on the Road

The Highway Traffic Act indicates that cyclists should position themselves ‘as close as is practicable’ to the right side of the roadway. This means that cyclists are required to exercise good judgment when determining their positioning on the roadway. Motorists need to be aware that a cyclist’s position on the road may be affected by traffic volume, road conditions, weather hazards and municipal lane restrictions.

Motorists can help reduce the number of bicycle and motor vehicle crashes, injuries and fatalities by understanding a cyclist’s positioning on the road. There are certain situations when a cyclist may choose to be further away from the right side of the road or ride closer to the middle of the lane. Motorists should be aware of these hazards for cyclists which may include: ...



- When the right lane is intended for right turns only and the cyclist intends to go straight. Cyclists in these situations will carry on in a straight line through the intersection.

Notice that this diagram shows it is perfectly normal and approved for a motor vehicle and bicycle to be in the same lane together. There is no indication of the amount of space between the bicycle and car and the bicycle and the curb.

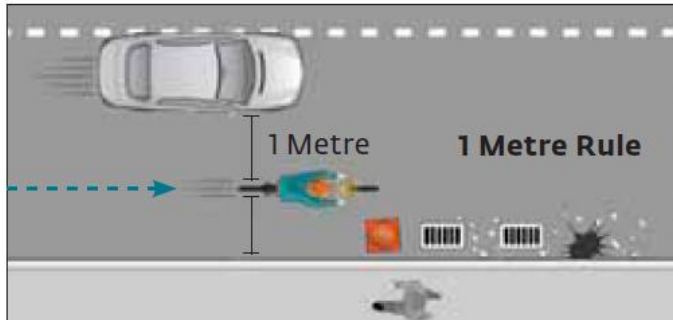
The next section in the Driver Handbook says this (p. 74):

Passing a Cyclist

Motorists should pass a cyclist only when it is safe to do so. Cycling advocacy groups suggest providing approximately one metre of clearance. Extra caution must be exercised and additional space may be required when passing cyclists in highway travel situations.

There are some situations where it is not safe to pass a cyclist including:

- In construction zones where traffic is reduced to one narrow lane.
- In lanes with narrow widths that do not permit passing at a safe distance.
- In a yield lane.



The car in the picture is passing the bike while staying in the same lane. We believe this is dangerous for the cyclist and teaches poor driving. It is definitely disrespectful and discourteous to cyclists.

The picture is confusing. As diagrammed, many people would interpret the 1 metre shown in the diagram to apply to the distance between the car and the curb.

Let us assume the diagram is showing one metre between the car and cyclist, and one metre between the cyclist and the curb. That's a bit more than six feet. Assume the cyclist is about two feet wide. That's eight feet. Even a small car is more than five feet wide. The average lane is 12 feet wide. It is not possible to have an average car (never mind an SUV or pick-up truck), a bicycle, a metre from car to bicycle and a metre from bicycle to curb all in one average lane. Why does MPI show that this is possible?

MPI's handbook above also says there are some situations where it is not safe to pass a cyclist. MPI says one of the situations where it is not safe to pass a cyclist is where there is a narrow lane. This suggests that the normal situation is that most lanes are wide enough for a car to pass a bicycle within the same lane. It seems clear to us that what MPI is really saying is that there are some situations where it is not safe to pass a cyclist AND STAY IN THE SAME LANE. We say it is always safe to pass a cyclist – in the next lane.

MPI is teaching dangerous driving that puts cyclists' lives at risk.

Why won't MPI tell drivers to change lanes when approaching cyclists, or at least tell them that they have pull half-way into the next lane in order to pass safely? How hard is it to instruct new drivers to move at least half-way into the next lane when approaching cyclists? Is MPI teaching safe driving, defensive driving, or driving only to the minimum required by the vaguely worded *Highway Traffic Act*? Is MPI showing concern for vulnerable road users like cyclists? Is MPI showing leadership in road safety and risk reduction?

Bike to the Future believes that MPI's responsibility is to teach safe, respectful and courteous driving. We reject the idea that "if it is not expressly stated in the *Highway Traffic Act*, then we can't teach it". We believe there are many, many examples where MPI teaches good driving practices that are not expressly stated in the *Highway Traffic Act*. We do not accept the excuse that MPI cannot teach drivers to move at least half-way into the next lane when passing a cyclist because those precise words are not in the *Highway Traffic Act*.

We urge MPI to stop encouraging drivers to squeeze into a lane with cyclists. MPI may be tempting civil liability for how it teaches drivers to squeeze by cyclists in the same lane.

Let's compare what MPI teaches about cycling above to what MPI teaches about motorcycles. In MPI's Motorcycle Handbook http://www.mpi.mb.ca/PDFs/MotorcycleHandbook/m_hndbk_comp.pdf, MPI instructs motorcyclists as follows:

Occupy your lane in a position which discourages drivers from moving alongside you. Stay near the centre of your lane, without riding on the centre strip between the two tire tracks ...

When riding on a multi-lane roadway it is recommended that you ride in the dominant position. This is in the tire track that is closest to the line that separates the lanes travelling in the same direction. This will give a rider an area that they can maneuver into should they be forced out of the tire track that they are riding in. It also reduces the chance of another motorist from boxing you in and reducing your maneuvering space. ...

When passing parked cars on residential streets, ride a reasonable distance (approximately 1.3 to 1.8 m) from the parked cars. ...

If a vehicle is overtaking or passing you, keep in the left tire track. If you move to the right, you will encourage motorists to share your lane. ... (our emphasis)

We believe the above is good safe driving advice for motorcyclists. The above advice goes well beyond the literal words in the *Highway Traffic Act*. We believe that many of the above considerations also apply to drivers and cyclists. Cyclists need to take a lane position that discourages drivers from moving alongside them. Cyclists need to ride a reasonable distance away from parked vehicles. Cyclists must resist the urge to move too close to the curb because it will encourage drivers to share the lane with them. MPI needs to tell drivers not to share the lane with cyclists.

MPI's nervousness and ambiguity about cyclists requiring half a lane for safe passage is reflected on the front page of the Road Safety – cycling section on the MPI web site:

DISCLAIMER

Throughout this section suggestions are provided on how cyclists should position themselves on the roadway to be visible and predictable. These suggestions are provided by cycling advocacy groups who contributed to the development of this material. The *Highway Traffic Act* is the legislation that governs the rights and responsibilities of cyclists when riding on the roadway.

The *Highway Traffic Act* indicates that cyclists should position themselves as close as is practicable to the right side of the roadway. As close as is practicable is not specifically defined in The *Highway Traffic Act* and as such cyclists should exercise good judgment when determining their positioning on the roadway. Factors to consider may include traffic volume, road conditions, weather hazards, and municipal lane restrictions.

To be clear, MPI information about cyclists in its driver handbook and its web site is generally quite good, and MPI has consulted with members of Bike to the Future and adopted many of our suggestions. MPI's "Bike Safely" booklet http://www.mpi.mb.ca/english/rd_safety/BikeSafe/AdultsCyclingBooklet.pdf represents a clear improvement in MPI's public education, although the audience for this is primarily cyclists and even this booklet contains some passages and diagrams that might leave an impression that cars can be expected to pass within the same lane as a cyclist.

Bike to Future supports calls to amend the *Highway Traffic Act* to be clear about what passing at a safe distance means. We believe it means giving at least one metre of space to the cyclist. We believe that Manitoba should join the 21 other jurisdictions in North America that have enacted this clarification. We are very pleased that MPI has included reference to the "1 Metre Rule" in their handbook. MPI should do more to explain the "1 metre rule" (which is not actually a "rule"). The philosophy of changing lanes, or moving at least half-way into the next way, is consistent with the "1 metre rule". Not all lanes are the same width and not all roads have lane markings. Drivers should not be trying to be as close to one metre away as possible. One metre should be viewed as a *minimum* passing distance. At higher speeds, such as 60 km per hour, drivers should given even more space to the cyclist. If passing by at least one metre takes a car halfway (or even partway) into the next lane, they should commit to the change (including signaling and shoulder checking) and then do another signal and shoulder check before moving back.

So we thank MPI for mentioning the "1 metre rule". Now, we ask MPI to create a new diagram that accurately and clearly shows what it means to give a full metre of space (and more at higher speeds). We also ask MPI to support our calls for amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* that will make cycling in Manitoba safer and will provide greater clarity to drivers, cyclists and law enforcements about what safe passing actually means.

Let's compare MPI public education programs.

MPI has a "look twice" campaign that tells drivers to "look twice" for motorcyclists and mopeds, because accidents happen when motorists don't "see" those vehicles. But there is no mention of cyclists. The MPI message states: "Keep a safe lane position so you can see traffic ahead and other vehicles won't try to crowd into your space." This is good advice for cyclists too. MPI tells readers to watch for their "60 second driver" public service commercial on CTV. Do they have a PSA about how to pass cyclists safely?

Compare also the Canadian Automobile Association "Watch for Bikes" campaign:

Awareness campaign aims to educate motorists about sharing the road

In an effort to increase awareness about how easy it is for cyclists and motorists to have accidents, CAA Manitoba is launching an awareness campaign that provides motorists with small plastic decals that say "Watch for Bikes" – specifically designed to be placed on their driver's side rear-view mirror.

According to police-reported data, in 2009 there were 239 bicyclists involved in collisions with a motor vehicle in Manitoba. (Source: 2009 Traffic Collisions Statistics, published by MPI, Table 7-3, page 124) It's a statistic President and CEO of CAA Manitoba Mike Mager says could be lower if cyclists and motorists knew how to safely share the road.

"A cyclist can be virtually invisible from inside a car," said Mager. "When motorists place this sticker on their mirror, it provides a constant reminder to check for cyclists and other traffic."

We believe that MPI could follow their example of "Look Twice for Motorcycles" and CAA's example of "Watch for Bikes" in their public education materials. We believe that MPI could also distribute the "Watch for Bikes" stickers. We believe that MPI should provide a special license plate that includes some kind of message about cycling, such as "watch for bikes" or simply "go biking".

Let's compare Manitoba's MPI with British Columbia's ICBC's driver manual, <http://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/Getting-licensed/driver-full.pdf> p. 54: "Remember, if you move into another vehicle's lane, that vehicle has the right-of-way. It doesn't matter if it's a car, a motorcycle or a bicycle." At p. 87:

Space margins

Allow following distance — allow plenty of following distance. You need to be able to avoid hitting a cyclist who falls. Cyclists who wobble are probably inexperienced and are more likely to fall than experienced cyclists. Give them even more space than usual.

Allow side margins — a significant number of crashes involving cyclists result from side-swiping. Make sure there is enough space if you want to pass a cyclist. On a narrow road, wait for a clear, straight stretch that will allow you to pull out and give the cyclist room. Remember, you are allowed to cross a single solid yellow line when passing a cyclist, provided you can do it safely.

On a multi-lane road, change lanes rather than risk crowding the cyclist. Even if you pull just slightly into another lane to pass, you are changing lanes. Remember to mirror check, signal and shoulder check. (Bike to the Future's emphasis)

The City of Vancouver wishes to make cycle safety awareness a key component of all B.C. driver training courses and examinations. ICBC is investing \$24,000 this year to create a standardized bicycle training program for cyclists across the Province of British Columbia, in conjunction with a major BC bike advocacy group. Further, ICBC reports that

Three pages in its Learn to Drive Smart guide deal specifically with cyclists. Topics include maintaining a wide margin when passing bicycles and hand signal explanations.

ICBC-approved training courses teach drivers how to interact with cyclists as well, including indirectly through lessons on hazard identification.

The learners' licence written examination may include up to 13 questions on cyclists, Grossman said. The 50 questions on the exam are randomly selected from a database of 150-200.

The road examination also tests awareness of cyclists, Grossman added, by emphasizing skills such as checking over your shoulder.

<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/ICBC+backs+plan+provincewide+bike+training+standard/6853030/story.html#ixzz27P5zVYJg>

In addition, ICBC invests money into specific road improvements, including bike infrastructure. ICBC explains:

Why do we spend money on roads? Fewer crashes mean fewer injuries and wrecked cars—and fewer insurance claims. And these savings can be passed onto you. That’s why our investments in road improvements are an investment in your safety. We fund road improvements based on a return on our investment. In 2011, we contributed approximately \$6.9 million to road improvements throughout B.C.

A 2009 evaluation concluded that for every dollar invested, ICBC and its customers see a return five to 12 times the investment. That is, for every dollar invested, ICBC and its customers save \$5.60 over two years and \$12.80 over five years.

<http://www.icbc.com/road-safety/safer-roads/invest-roads>

We call on MPI to follow ICBC’s examples.

PUB: tell MPI to improve and increase its public education for driving around cyclists

The Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario released a report in June 2012 entitled “Cycling Death Review”, reviewing all 129 accidental cycling deaths in Ontario from 2006 through 2010.

<http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/stellent/groups/public/@mcscs/@www/@com/documents/webasset/ec159773.pdf>

It provides a sober reminder that accidents are preventable: “it is important to note that deaths resulting from cycling collisions, just like motor vehicle collision deaths and pedestrian deaths, are not “accidents” in the sense that all of these deaths were predictable, and therefore preventable.”

The Coroner’s report contains 14 recommendations, each of which traces back to the death of one or more cyclists.

Recommendations 4 – 7 are most directly relevant to MPI: they call for a comprehensive and collaborative cycling safety public awareness and education strategy, targeting existing road users, public schools, and purchasers of bicycles and new drivers through driver’s license testing.

We urge MPI to embrace the Ontario Coroner’s report in developing their new road safety strategy.

MPI needs to be a strong advocate for safety, taking leadership, overcoming obstacles, while collaborating with all the other parties concerned with road safety.

Educating drivers needs to be at the top of MPI’s list. Educating cyclists, local police and municipal officials about cycling safety also needs to be high on MPI’s “to-do” list. Bike to the Future is asking MPI to change its messaging around how to drive when approaching cyclists. Bike to the Future is calling on the Public Utilities Board to support cyclists’ safety and to instruct MPI to change its messaging on this life and death issue. Bike to the Future would like to see a new public education campaign from MPI in the spring and summer 2013.

To improve safety for cyclists, we need MPI to deliver to motorists these simple messages, frequently and clearly communicated:

1. Move at least half-way into the next lane when approaching a bicycle.
2. Allow at least 1 metre when you pass a bike, preferably more.
3. Make sure you are well clear of the bicycle before you pull back into the lane.
4. Bicycles have a right to ride in the middle of the lane if that is what is practicable given all the conditions.

With respect to the written test for drivers, we have been told by MPI that they have a question about driving close to bicycles in their rotation of questions that are selected to be included into driver tests. What is the question and answer about bicycles? Why is there only one question in rotation about how to drive safely around bicycles? We believe that MPI should do more in its written test to test for drivers knowledge of how to pass cyclists safely.

It is not leadership, visionary, or even safety conscious for MPI to encourage driving only to the bare minimum required by the vaguely worded *Highway Traffic Act*.

We know that MPI has been involved in various committees and discussions with groups such as the City of Winnipeg Police, and we know that some members of those groups take a very narrow view of what any government organization can say about how to drive near to cyclists. We would ask that MPI do more to educate local police and municipal officials that there is a difference between narrow interpretations of the *Highway Traffic Act* and safe driving and cycling practices.

We need drivers to be alert and look for cyclists, and automatically take cautionary action when they see a bicycle, as they would when they see a larger, heavier slow moving vehicle, or a parked vehicle, occupying some part of the lane they are headed for.

We draw to the Board's attention that MPI says, in its cycling safety section (AI.13.11) of their application that they have "developed a comprehensive safety program to educate adult and commuter cyclists on safe riding skills and how to share the road safely with motorists..." That does not mean that they have "taken care of" cycling safety. We have collaborated with them in this project, but there is a lot more urgent work to be done, as we have outlined to you in this submission.

Bike to the Future calls on the PUB to require MPI to spend more on direct education for the student drivers in the form of lecture materials and on road instructors that understand how to interact with cyclists and given the opportunity make sure that the students are doing the right things.

We ask that the PUB require MPI to measure and report on the effectiveness of their public education about cycling safety. MPI should measure driver awareness of how to drive around cyclists; should measure driver understanding of MPI materials and road signs; should measure which methods produce the most noticeable improvements in driver behaviour around cyclists on the road – how do radio, TV, newspaper, handbooks and web sites change driver behaviour compared to clearer road signs? In general, we believe that clear road signs are the best way to inform both drivers and cyclists how to drive and ride safely. We do not believe that signs that say only "share the road" or typical sharrows street paintings provide effective information.

We ask the PUB to require MPI to test more often for drivers' knowledge of how to pass cyclists safely.

We ask the PUB to require MPI to change its Driver's Handbook to stop showing cars and bicycles in the same lane together and to tell drivers that the best way to pass a cyclist to move at least half-way into the next lane, when the next lane is clear. Until the next lane is clear, slow down and wait until it is clear.

Education for cyclists

Bike to the Future readily acknowledges that many cyclists need more and better education about how to ride their bikes safely and in compliance with the law. Bike to the Future volunteers work for more and better education for cyclists. Some of our members are active teachers under the "Can Bike" program.

Bike to the Future is very appreciative that MPI is working with Bike to the Future on MPI's "Cycling Champions" program to increase the number of knowledgeable cyclists and hope that these individuals will pass along the information to others. However, we need a much broader, more systemic approach to cycling education in Manitoba. Bike to the Future has called on the Province of Manitoba to add cycling education to the provincial phys-ed curriculum. We want cyclists to have cycling safety education made available to them as much as possible. We need MPI to help grow cycling safety education and to encourage the Province to increase cycling safety education. We need children to learn to ride bikes safely and to adopt biking as a life-long activity.

Road safety statistics

Bike to the Future believes that there is a serious problem within Manitoba in the compilation and analysis of details about cycling related accidents and injuries. We believe that MPI is well placed to play a leadership role in improving the public reporting on how many cyclists are injured on Manitoba roads, how many die, in what circumstances, and what changes could reduce risk and make Manitoba roads safer. MPI should apply the same level of rigorous analysis to this information as it does to actuarial projections.

We believe that there needs to be a more comprehensive approach to collecting information about cycling injuries and deaths: claims to MPI are not enough.¹ Information from police must be collected, and that is not enough. Information from the health care system must also be compiled. Only by compiling data from these three sources will MPI be able to undertake a thorough and accurate analysis and become a leader in "driver and vehicle safety initiatives that reduce risk and protect Manitobans, their streets and their neighbourhoods".

¹ MPI also sends a strong, discouraging message to cyclists with this message on the MPI web site, under the heading "what to do if you're in a collision":

"Since bicycles are not insured through Manitoba Public Insurance, cyclists who are found responsible for a collision could be held liable for damages caused to a motor vehicle. Under such a scenario, you would also be responsible for any damages to your own bicycle."

If MPI's intent was to discourage cyclists from reporting being hit by vehicles, the above might be just the right language to discourage cyclists from making claims with MPI.

Conclusion

The PUB order that results from this hearing will play an important role in determining how MPI deploys its resources in the coming years.

To MPI, we say: you have taken only the first steps in reducing risk and promoting cycling safety. You need to take a stand for safety on our streets; educate those who would water-down your messaging.

STOP telling drivers it is OK to try to squeeze by a bicycle in the same lane. STOP telling cyclists they have to tolerate this.

START giving clear, accurate information about how to drive safely around bicyclists. Be clear that it is not safe, respectful or courteous to try to squeeze a motor vehicle and a bicycle into one lane. Be clear about how much room drivers realistically need to give cyclists in order to reduce risk and promote safety. Do not hide behind the vaguely worded minimal standards of the *Highway Traffic Act*. Help save cyclists lives. Follow ICBC's example.

ADD more questions about driving in proximity to cyclists in your written tests.

ADD elements to the driving road examination to ensure drivers demonstrate they know how to safely pass cyclists.

INVEST more in education for cyclists.

INVEST in bike infrastructure at key locations that will separate motor vehicles and bicycles.

To the PUB, we say: it is not enough for MPI to spend money on safety education, to consult us and to include cycling information in their materials. MPI's messaging has to be effective and actually promote safety. The PUB has the authority to ensure that MPI really is a leader in promoting safe roads and streets in Manitoba.

In closing, I would like to make a suggestion that sounds like a promotional message, but I genuinely want to offer an important educational opportunity:

Anyone, on the PUB or at MPI or elsewhere, who is involved in regulating our roads, reducing risk or promoting safety, needs to experience risk and safety from the seat of a bicycle. In May and June, we urge the PUB and MPI to use the Commuter Challenge and Bike to Work Day to challenge all the people in your organizations to bike to work for a few days. A high level of participant observation would help personnel understand which problems need immediate attention.