



Bike to the Future
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December 11, 2012

Marilyn McLaren
President and Chief Executive Officer, Manitoba Public Insurance
234 Donald Street
Winnipeg MB
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Dear Ms. McLaren:

Re: Bicycle Safety

In its recent order 157/12, www.pub.gov.mb.ca/pdf/mpi07/157-12.pdf, the PUB recommended that "MPI review and act upon the recommendations put forward by the presenters from Bike to the Future and the Manitoba Cycling Association with respect to road safety and messaging to motorists regarding cyclists."

As you will recall, we told the hearing that it is critically important to our members that Manitoba drivers learn as quickly as possible where bicycles should be positioned on the road, and how much room cars must allow when they pass a bicycle. We recognized MPI's public information campaigns as helpful first steps, but pointed to the need to establish a consensus in Manitoba on what constitutes safe passing distance and the correct way to "share the road".

We believe that the Road Safety Research Technical Conference required by the PUB provides an excellent opportunity to establish that consensus. We would very much like to work with MPI on the agenda and the invitation list for the bicycle safety portion of that conference to maximize its impact in setting the framework for a safer cycling environment in Manitoba, one that shares the standards set by leading jurisdictions in North America.

In describing the Road Safety Research Technical Conference, the PUB stated that it expects MPI "would seek to involve scientists and experts from North America on road safety issues such as ... roadway bicycle safety, and the role of other road safety investments". We would be glad to help your staff identify people throughout North America who could be most helpful to improve road safety in Manitoba.

We believe that the conclusions of a successful conference should inform MPI's new and improved public education programs and revisions to the Driver Handbook to ensure safe interaction between motorists and cyclists. This will require quick turnaround following the conclusion of the conference to integrate the consensus standards into the spring bike safety public information campaign.

The PUB also pointed to ongoing reviews of road safety initiatives: "The Board anticipates that at the next GRA [General Rate Application] proceeding, MPI will come forward with new road safety initiatives, including with respect to ... bicyclists ..., in addition to its ongoing initiatives relative to unsafe speed, impaired driving and seatbelt usage." The PUB stated: "It is the view of the Board that bicycling is an activity that will only increase in volume over time, and as such it is an important consideration for future Road Safety initiatives."


As I am sure you are aware, through funding provided by MPI and Cycling Canada, Bike to the Future has recently completed training that greatly increased the number of CAN-Bike certified instructors in Winnipeg. In the New Year, we will be working on proposals to extend our education programs to a wider audience of cyclists, and would greatly appreciate MPI's support of those initiatives.

Time is of the essence. Please let us know who we can work with to help you achieve a successful consensus on bicycle safety standards at that conference. The lead for Bike to the Future will be Mark Cohoe, who has recently been appointed our Executive Director.

We are also very interested in working with MPI on the organization and analysis of data related to bicycles on Manitoba roads. The PUB noted MPI's "goal, as stated in its Strategic Plan, that it will become a community leader and act as a central repository to facilitate the sharing of data amongst stakeholders for research and making informed decisions, and to take a more active role in road safety research." This is especially relevant to Bike to the Future, as we are acutely aware of the lack of good data on bicycles on the roads, on collisions, and on injuries.

We look forward to a successful relationship working with MPI on road safety. We envision our success in terms of more cyclists riding in greater safety on Manitoba roads, and we hope MPI will be rewarded with fewer bicycle-related injury claims and cost savings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom McMahon', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Tom McMahon
Co-chair, Bike to the Future

cc. Mark Cohoe