



Bike to the Future

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December 4, 2008

Gregory Selinger
Minister of Finance
103 Legislature Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8

Dear Mr. Selinger,

Re: Support for Cycling in the 2009/2010 Budget

As you know, we at Bike to the Future have been pursuing our vision of transportation cycling in Winnipeg and in Manitoba generally which we communicated to you last year. At this time we would urge your government to take the following three steps to truly recognize and support cycling as a real transportation option:

- **Establish a provincial 50/50 municipal cost-sharing program** targeted at on-road infrastructure.
- **Establish an educational program for both cyclists and motorists** that would provide everyone with a common understanding of the rules of the road and how cyclists and motorists can safely share the road.
- **Adopt a transportation infrastructure policy** such as is promoted by the U.S. Department of Transportation policy statement: “Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure” (attached).

Through meetings with Ministers Ashton, Irvin-Ross and Lemieux we have received indications that your government agrees in principle with Bike to the Future’s goals and can see the benefits of using the bicycle as transportation, including:

- **environmental and health benefits**
- **increased access to affordable transportation**
- **reduced traffic congestion**
- **reduced road construction and maintenance costs**
- **increased tourism**

In spite of agreements in principle with these benefits, there has been reluctance on the part of the provincial government to commit to specific spending on programs and infrastructure that would support the goal of increased cycling.

We recognize that the provincial government has begun to make some tentative moves towards supporting transportation cycling. We have heard from Minister Rondeau, for example, that a provincial advisory committee is being planned. We are also aware that the

province has provided free bicycle helmets in the past. And we recognize that the province has provided funding for multi-use trails. While these trails are great recreational facilities, they are not, in themselves, a practical transportation network. They could well be **part** of such a network, if they were to be linked by well-maintained on-road infrastructure that allows cyclists to feel safe while getting to their destinations. However, support has not been provided for on-road infrastructure to this point.

We think you will agree that provincial support for cycling infrastructure to date has been very modest. Other jurisdictions in Canada spend substantially greater proportions of their budget on cycling. They understand that cycling is not a recreational issue, it is a transportation, health, environmental, social and economic issue. As we have documented through our independent bicycle counts, cycling is in fact increasing in Winnipeg, despite the lack of substantial improvements in cycling infrastructure. Our counts suggest that commuter cycling increased by 25% between 2007 and 2008. However, it could grow much more quickly if people felt there were safe routes and facilities for them to use. The impact of improved facilities on cycling levels has been well documented in many studies.

We would be happy to provide you with other information we have gathered on programs and policies in other jurisdictions, such as information on the “Complete Streets” movement in the United States, which has been adopted in a number of state and local jurisdictions, or the concept of “bike boulevards” which has been used in cities such as Vancouver to create traffic-calmed routes that are attractive to cyclists. Québec is a leader in this area, as is the City of Edmonton which has just completed a comprehensive revision of its Bicycle Transportation Plan, the type of plan we believe all municipalities should have in one form or another.

We also note that the City of Winnipeg has begun to give increased attention to the needs of cyclists through its Active Transportation Plan. We are encouraged that last Tuesday the City’s Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works Committee recommended \$4.7 million in increased spending for active transportation in 2009. We would like to see the province support this type of development, in Winnipeg and throughout the province. The time has come for the provincial government to provide concrete support for the development of transportation cycling in Manitoba.

Jeremy Hull
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cc: (copies are being sent by email to all Manitoba MLAs)