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Submission to Executive Policy Committee, Winnipeg City Council

Presented on behalf of Bike to the Future by Rob Cosco and Molly McCracken

More and more Winnipeggers are using a bicycle as their main mode of transportation because cycling promotes personal health, is environmentally friendly and affordable. Good cycling infrastructure holds the promise of making Winnipeg a vibrant city that retains young people and supports tourism.

We are Bike to the Future: a voluntary, inclusive group of concerned cyclists working to make cycling in Winnipeg a safe, enjoyable, accessible and convenient transportation choice. We are interested in working with the City to improve infrastructure and safety for cyclists, we have two key points to present:

1. Strengthen Cycling in Capital Works 2007 / 2008 Budget

We applaud the increase in contributions to cycling in the draft capital works "Recreational Walkways and Bike Paths" budget line to $1.5 million dollars for 2007. The increase in cycling budget will allow for more infrastructure for cycling in Winnipeg. This, along with projects such as Marconi rail to trail and Winsmart, are signs that the City is making cycling a priority.

We encourage the City to ensure the needs of commuter cyclists are met in public investments in cycling infrastructure. For this reason, **cycling and walkway budget lines should be separated so that both receive an adequate budgetary allocation and priority.**

Bicycles are considered vehicles in the Highway Traffic Act, therefore funding for cycling routes should be planned and allocated from budget lines for specific roads and bridges.

Paths, Greenways and Trails are for recreational use primarily, and trails alone cannot create a complete transportation network for cyclists. For most destinations in daily travel, a trip solely by path is not feasible. Therefore, on road facilities such as bike lanes are needed to make cycling a safe transportation option. **We urge the City to consider commuter cyclists and develop key cycling arteries and connect cycling routes, with a priority on high density areas such as downtown and Pembina Avenue to the University of Manitoba.** A pilot bike lane in 2007/2008 would be a good first step toward showcasing this type of infrastructure.

2. Plan for the future: Winnipeg's Bicycle Plan!

We urge EPC to match the wise investment in cycling infrastructure in the 2007/2008 Capital Works budget with a bicycle plan for Winnipeg that strategically maps out priority areas and connectivity for cycling routes and bike lanes, with meaningful input from the cycling community. Most other major Canadian cities already have such a plan (i.e. Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax).

Adopting a bicycle plan in 2007/2008 would ensure scarce resources are allocated effectively. This action is one of the key recommendations of the Active Transportation Study, adopted almost a year to this day in 2006, and completed February 2005 to a cost of $100,000.

Many Winnipeggers want to see action on the Active Transportation study. In an effort to engage cyclists on our vision of cycling in the city, Bike to the Future organized a public participatory forum on September 20th, 2006. More than one hundred cyclists attended the forum, and shared their ideas about what they think is needed to make cycling better and safer in our city and province. The proceedings of this forum were delivered by bicycle to City Hall and the Legislature, and can be found in a report of proceedings available on our website *www.biketothefuture.org*.

Based on the input of 100 cyclists at this forum, the report strongly urges the City to:

Implement the Active Transportation Study, with a priority on:

- **A detailed bicycle plan for a citywide Active Transportation network that includes:**
  - **Public Consultations**
  - **Priority areas**
  - **Time Frames with resource allocations**
- **Dedicated ongoing funding, at least 2.8% of Public Works –Streets capital budget for roadways, reflecting the number of cyclists using roads.**
- **Integrate cycling needs into all road construction**
- **Hire an Active Transportation Program Coordinator**
- **Form an Active Transportation Advisory Committee**

We know from a 2005 Winnipeg Public Works Survey, **2.8% of Winnipeggers use cycling as their *main* mode of transportation**. The city of Winnipeg's Civic Environmental Committee 2002 survey found that **74% of citizens polled are willing to reduce their motorized transportation by walking or cycling more**.

Bike to the Future looks forward to working with the City to improve cycling in Winnipeg, and make this a quality transportation mode of choice. **Making Winnipeg a bicycle-friendly city will have outstanding benefits both for our health and the health of our planet.**