Resource Conservation Manitoba

A non-profit centre for applied sustainability

Presented to the City of Winnipeg Executive Policy Committee
Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Submitted by Resource Conservation Manitoba,
Workplace Transportation Demand Management Programs

Resource Conservation Manitoba is an environmental non-profit, non-governmental organization. Through our green commuting programs, we encourage workplaces, schools, and individuals to try alternative transportation (walking, cycling, transit, carpooling, and telecommuting). We have been the local Commuter Challenge coordinators for the past 9 years.

The Workplace Perspective on Active Transportation

Through my presentations at local workplaces, I have found that employees are very keen to try cycling and walking to work, but they say they do not feel safe. It is very important to have a network of AT infrastructure completed and available to those interested in a **timely** manner.

For the Employer:

- Cycling and walking to work are great ways to build physical activity into an employee's day. Employees who are physically active take fewer sick days, have a lower turnover rate, lower health care costs, and increased productivity on the job (*The Business Case for Active Transportation*, prepared for Richard Campbell and Margaret Wittgens, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, March 2004).

For the Employee:

- Better health can be enjoyed through physical activity achieved by walking or cycling to work.
- Employees who walk and cycle to work can realize large cost savings. Owning and operating a vehicle is estimated to cost between $8,500 and $14,000 per year (*Driving Costs*, Canadian Automobile Association, 2007 Edition). Employees who have the option to cycle or walk have a larger portion of their disposable income to spend locally. Non-automotive expenditures have a regional impact that is 22 cents on the dollar **greater** than for automobile expenses (*The Business Case for Active Transportation*, prepared for Richard Campbell and Margaret Wittgens, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, March 2004).

Benefits of Active Transportation Infrastructure to Business:

Providing parking spaces for customers and employees can amount to a large expense for businesses. An additional stream of customers arriving on foot or by bicycle increases revenues without increasing parking demand. Walkers require no parking at all, and fourteen cyclists can be accommodated in the area for one car parking space. Walkers and cyclists make smaller, more frequent shopping trips, exposing shoppers to greater impulse buying temptations (*Cycling: the way ahead for towns and cities*, J. Dekoster, U. Schollaert, European Communities, 1999).

Increased Investment in Active Transportation is Needed

- Congestion is currently estimated to cost Winnipeg between $48 and $104 million dollars each year. Cyclists and walkers take up a lot less space than cars do (*The Cost of Urban Congestion in Canada*, Transport Canada, March 2006). In past decades, the response to traffic congestion was one of supply-side management, whereby with greater traffic, roadways were widened, at great expense to the municipality. More recently, the solutions of Transportation Demand Management have been successfully applied in many cities across Canada to offer greater transportation options to citizens; encouraging alternative transportation modes, and reducing the demand placed on roadways.
- In cities that have invested significant resources into their AT network, like Portland, the percentage of workers commuting to work by bike rose from 1.8% in 1996 to 4.4% in 2006, and continues to rise (*Bridging the Gaps: How the Quality and Quantity of a Connected Bikeway Network Correlates with Increasing Bicycle Use*, July 2005); Mia Birk and Roger Geller; Portland Bicycle Counts 2007; Portland Department of Transportation).

The Demand is Here

With tougher economic times approaching, employees are looking for cheaper transportation alternatives. The demand for a high quality, connected network of Active Transportation routes is already here. Resource Conservation Manitoba has seen participation in the Commuter Challenge increase year after year. More employees are asking their employers for secure bike parking and showers. An increase in downtown employees with the opening of the new Manitoba Hydro building will mean an increased interest in cycling downtown. At every workplace presentation I do, people are interested. They want a pleasant alternative to sitting in traffic each day. Young people are especially keen to access a high quality active transportation network.

Conclusion

Winnipeggers have indicated they would like more cycling and walking opportunities, both for shopping and for commuting. **A significant and sustained investment in the City's Active Transportation network is needed.**