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Executive Policy Committee Meeting
June 6, 2018

Re: Item # 2 Active Transportation Network – Winter Maintenance Strategy

Green Action Centre is a non-profit, non-governmental hub for greener living based in Winnipeg and serving Manitoba. We are a registered charity, governed by an elected community board. We promote greener living through environmental education and encourage practical green solutions for households, workplaces, schools and communities. A few examples include the annual Commuter Challenge (taking place this week), Active and Safe Routes to School, the Workplace Commuter Options Program, and Compost Winnipeg.

We are pleased to see the City moving forward with a much-needed Winter Maintenance Strategy for the AT Network. Through the various programs Green Action Centre delivers in schools, workplaces and the community at large, we hear about the challenges that Winnipeggers face trying to use healthy methods of transportation in winter. We also hear about their interest in active, healthy transportation year-round if there were reliable, predictable and consistent clearing during the snowy season.

A few key highlights on Active Transportation and winter maintenance:

- AT routes do not necessarily (and often don't) match up with P1 streets, requiring a separate approach.
- **Surface conditions of an AT route are a better indicator of whether people will bike in winter than the temperature.**
- Winnipeggers who walk or bike need to know which facilities will be cleared and when, so they can plan their route and count on it being clear. This includes walking (or wheeling) to a bus stop.
- Clearing a bike lane, sidewalk or path is not like clearing a road. Bikes and people do not have the weight or power to push snow away or the friction to burn it away like cars do. It requires different equipment and levels of service.

Winnipeg is a winter city—a fact that we can celebrate and embrace. But it also requires that access to our transportation facilities—streets, sidewalks, pathways—be open year-round to all residents whether we are travelling on foot, by bike, bus or by car.

Supporting Winnipeggers to walk and cycle year-round maximizes our investment in facilities, makes our city more attractive and livable, helps reduce congestion, and creates physical and mental health benefits for community members from being active outdoors. Simply put, we do not want to compel residents to drive if they are willing to walk, bike or use transit.

And while there are many benefits to healthy, active transportation year-round, there is also a cost associated with not maintaining sidewalks and bike facilities in the winter.

Pedestrian slips and falls in 2015-2016 across Manitoba resulted in *2.6 times more* injury hospitalizations than any other sport or winter activity, accounting for 36% of these hospitalizations (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2017).

For cyclist safety, protected and separated bike lanes have 1/9 the injury risk compared to major routes with no cycling infrastructure. Bike lanes on major routes (without parked cars) have 1/2 the injury risk (Teschke et al., 2012). Winter maintenance of cycling facilities provides year-round access to these safer infrastructure options. Due to ice and snow, protected or separated bike facilities (that are cleared and well maintained) are even more important in winter than in summer for the safety of people on bikes and to reduce the number of collisions. And, as noted earlier, it is not the temperature that keeps people from cycling year-round. The lack of road surface maintenance in winter is the primary deterrent to cycling (Fisher, 2014).

Improved winter maintenance of sidewalks and cycling infrastructure is a key component of transportation and social equity for Winnipeg residents, as our most disadvantaged community members often have no choice but to rely on walking, cycling or transit year-round. (Please refer to attached maps and table comparing household income levels and percentage commuters using Active Transportation.) Those with mobility issues may end up socially isolated at home or hospitalized due to a fall.

Approving the AT Network Winter Maintenance Strategy is a critical step forward. It was clearly identified as a priority during the public engagement for the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies and is supported by the Transportation Master Plan.

We eagerly anticipate implementation of the Active Transportation Winter Maintenance Strategy as soon as possible and doing what we can to ensure its success and continued improvement.

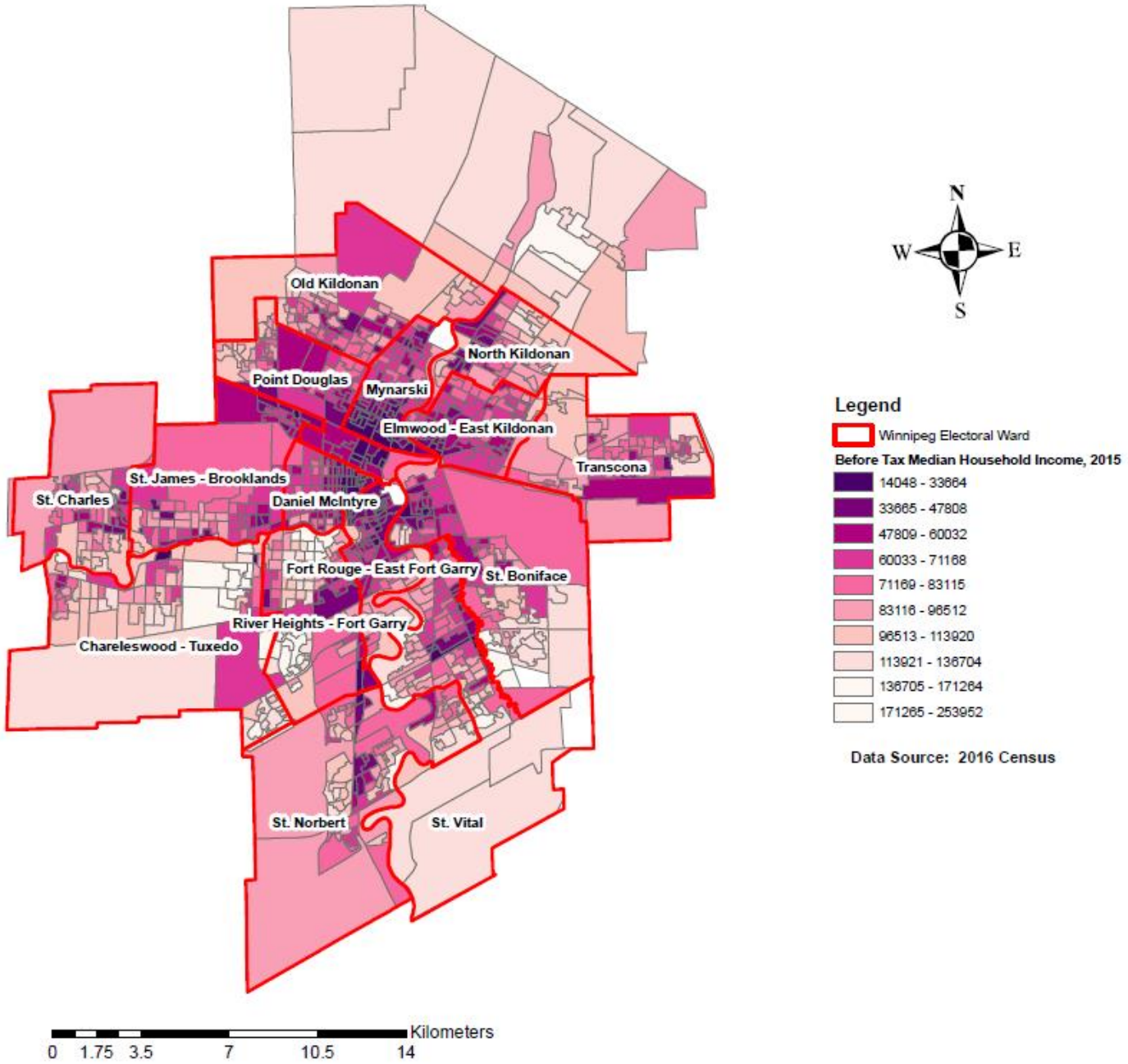
Submitted by:
Beth McKechnie
On behalf of Green Action Centre

References

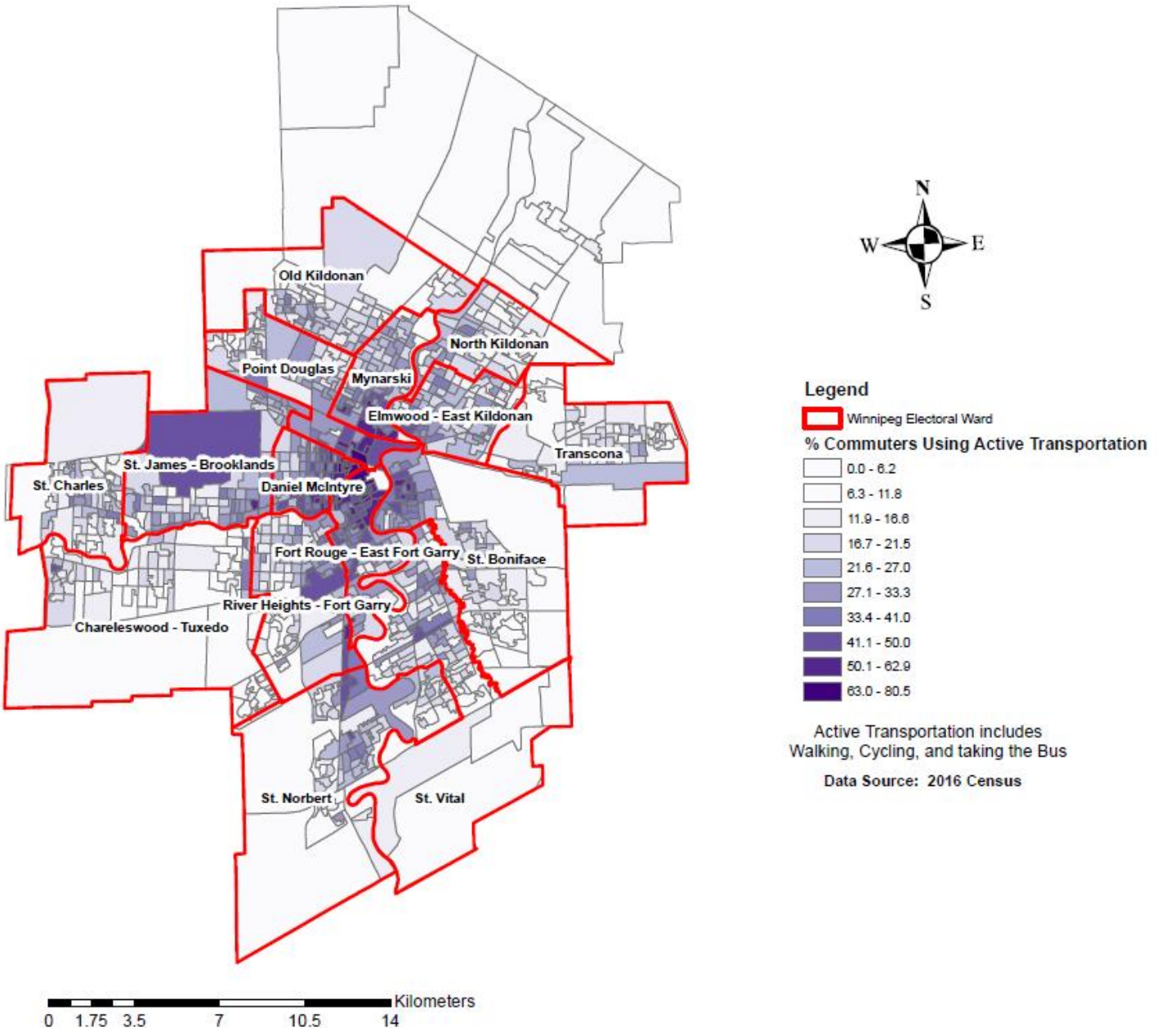
Canadian Institute for Health Information, *Injury and Trauma Emergency Department and Hospitalization Statistics*. (Ottawa, ON: CIHI2016).

Fisher, C. (2014). Cycling Through Winter. Canadian Institute of Planners.

Teschke, K., Harris, M., Reynolds, C., Winters, M., Babul, S., Chipman, M. Cusimano, M., Brubacher, J., Hunte, G., Friedman, S. Monro, M., Shen, H., Vernich, L., & Cription. P. (2012) *American Journal of Public Health*. Dec; 102(12):2336-43.



Before Tax Median Household Income (2015) by Winnipeg Electoral Ward, 2016 Census



Mode of commuting to work by income quintile in Winnipeg, 2016 census, n = 349935

Table 1: Mode of commuting to work by income quintile in Winnipeg, 2016 census, n = 349935

*Each income quintile consists of 20% of the population in Winnipeg

Income Quintile* (median household income)	**% by car**	**% by AT total (*walk, bike, transit*)**	***% walk***	***% by bike***	***% transit***
1 (<$53,376)	60.0	39.0	11.1	2.4	25.6
2 ($53376 - $66047)	72.8	25.9	5.5	2.1	18.3
3 ($66048 - $79871)	79.3	19.8	4.0	1.7	14.1
4 ($79,972 - $98,367)	83.2	15.6	2.9	1.7	11.0
5 (>$ 98367)	88.8	10.3	1.8	1.2	7.3
Winnipeg (total)	77.7	21.2	4.8	1.8	14.7