

Active transportation

The rising cost of transportation combined with rising costs for housing and food have pushed more and more people into transportation poverty, defined as a lack of transport options that are available, reliable, affordable, accessible or safe that allow people to meet their daily needs and achieve a reasonable quality of life.

Walking, cycling, and rolling offer an affordable, healthy, sustainable way to travel to jobs and education, health and social services, recreation, shopping, dining, and entertainment. But to unlock their potential to alleviate transport poverty, walking and cycling need to be **affordable, available, accessible, safe** and **reliable**. Failure to include proper infrastructure for people on bike or foot has left major gaps in the city's walking and cycling networks, putting key destinations out of reach for many.

Our next budget needs to provide staffing and funding needed to build out our planned walking and cycling networks within a reasonable timeline of 15 to 20 years.

Overview

In a car oriented city such as Winnipeg, a lack of transport options puts people at risk of losing their job or preventing them from accessing work, education, health and care services.

Investments in our walking and cycling networks make the city a more equitable place by providing people who may have limited or no access to a vehicle with safe, reliable access to employment, education, shopping,



St. Boniface walking bridge / Alanna Yuen

services, and recreation opportunities that are currently outside of their reach. At the same time, making walking and cycling more attractive and convenient by enhancing and expanding networks encourages more people to get out of their cars and walk or bike to their destinations. Any shift from driving to walking or cycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions, may improve people's health, cuts transportation costs, and helps build social networks.

Improvements to the walking and cycling networks can also reduce the risk of injury causing collisions. Sadly, 23 pedestrians and 6 people on their bikes were killed or seriously injured on our streets in 2023. It's a preventable tragedy stemming from a car culture and street designs that encourage excess speed in the absence of safe walking and cycling facilities. That's unacceptable, but also preventable. On busier streets, we can build better cycling infrastructure to separate people on bikes from traffic. On less busy streets we can reduce traffic speeds to a much safer 30 km/hr suitable for mixed traffic cycling. Intersections can be improved to reduce potential conflicts.

Adopted in 2025, the City of Winnipeg's Pedestrian and Cycling Strategy outlines the estimated cost of building out Winnipeg's cycling



Assiniboine Ave. bike path / Alanna Yuen

network will be \$1.742 billion dollars for pathways and bike lanes. The estimated cost to complete the pedestrian network sits at \$194 million.¹ An additional \$214 million will be required to build structures to get people on bikes safely across rail lines, rivers, and major roadways.² With a forecast budget of just \$6.7 million devoted to the Pedestrian and Cycling Program in 2027,³ the timeframe to build out the City's planned pedestrian and cycling network will stretch into hundreds of years. As both the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies, and OurWinnipeg 2045 point out, we need to accelerate the enhancement and expansion of our walking and cycling networks.

To be built in a cost effective manner, it will be critical to ensure that improvements to walking and cycling facilities are included in regional and local street renewals as a default case. This is by far the cheapest way to add infrastructure, as projects benefit from scale and costs to add features are often incremental. Dedicated AT staffing to oversee the inclusion of walking and cycling facilities in road renewal projects is key to the success of this recommendation. Any needed public engagement or design work needs to be scheduled in advance of roadway renewals.

Beyond the need for a safe, comfortable, and convenient network of pathways, sidewalks, and bike lanes, there is also a need to provide people with a secure space to store their bikes. In particular, the lack of long term bike parking (bike rooms, bike sheds, bike lockers, ...) in residential buildings and at places of employment is a barrier to getting more people riding to their destinations.⁴

Ensuring equity

The need for better walking and cycling facilities is especially acute in areas of the city identified as higher needs. Residents of these areas often have less access to private vehicles, and less income that they can (or that they would like to) dedicate to transportation.

For transportation projects, an equity lens that better addresses both the burdens and the benefits generated by transportation projects (whether AT related or not) is needed. Affected communities need to be fully engaged throughout project development, measuring support for or opposition to projects, soliciting weighting for criteria, and identifying and evaluating alternatives early in the process.

Equity also affects people with mobility challenges and those with reduced or no vision. This may result in barriers related to curbs, to the placement of street furniture, lack of audible signals, right of way, or grades. Guidelines need to be updated to ensure new facilities are accessible, and that they are backed with funding to upgrade existing infrastructure to meet those guidelines.

Encouraging the shift to active transportation

To complement the expansion and enhancement of the City's walking and cycling network, it will be important to build awareness and enthusiasm for the improved networks. Educational and encouragement programs build community knowledge about the growing network while providing opportunities to develop skills and build confidence by experiencing routes first hand.

Programs that provide instruction and assistance on bike repair and access to affordable bikes are also key, especially for those with limited budgets and limited space to manage repairs on their own.

Actions

- **The AMB will** reallocate \$2.8 million in forecast capital funding within the Regional Street Renewals program so that the scope of the ongoing Rapid Transit — Downtown Corridors — Preliminary Design project can be extended to include preliminary design work for the Northern Corridor between Sutherland Ave and Smithfield Ave. This will ensure that a planned rehabilitation of Main St between Sutherland Ave (the southern limit of the Downtown Corridors project) and McAdam Ave forecast to occur between 2028 and 2031⁵ will incorporate modifications needed to implement rapid transit along Main St as recommended in the Transit Master Plan.
- **The AMB will** add two additional FTEs to help implement the recommendations of the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies (\$250,000):⁶
 1. A bicycle and pedestrian design engineer.
 2. A bicycle and pedestrian education and outreach coordinator
- **The AMB will** advance capital funding of \$500,000 to complete functional design work for rehabilitation of the Osborne Underpass, including functional design alternatives for an active transportation grade separation, from its currently forecast date of 2027 to 2028. Funding can be reallocated within the regional street renewals program, using funds currently allocated to regional street renewals — various locations to be identified.
- **The AMB will** increase capital funding for the Pedestrian and Cycling Program in 2027 to \$20 million (triple the 2026 budget projection) to accelerate development of the walking and cycling networks. The additional funding will include:
 - Construction of new pedestrian and cycling facilities.
 - Enhancement of existing pedestrian and cycling facilities.
 - Studies to plan new pedestrian and cycling facilities as part of planned street renewals.
 - Capital funding of \$500,000 to retrofit pathway intersections and crossings to better accommodate cargo bikes and trikes, as well as adaptive bikes used by people with reduced mobility,

- Increase funding for the bike rack rebate program to encourage installation of secure bike parking in residential and employment sites.
- Increase funding for THE WRENCH to help lower income individuals obtain and maintain bikes.
- Increase funding for the Bicycle Education and Skills Program to increase the number of students provided with cycling skills instruction.
- **The AMB will** provide an additional \$5.5 million in capital funding to the Road Safety Improvement Program to replace \$2.5 million in funding removed from the 2025 Adopted Budget in response to a provincial request for funding to be re-prioritized,^{7 8} and to increase funding for the implementation of the Road Safety Strategic Action Plan.

Notes

- 1** *2024 Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies*, City of Winnipeg, pg. 121.
- 2** *2024 Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies*, City of Winnipeg, pg. 122.
- 3** City of Winnipeg Supplement to the 2026 Capital Budget, City of Winnipeg., g. 37.
- 4** Views on Cycling and Driving in Winnipeg, September 2022 Probe Research Omnibus Poll, CAA Manitoba/Bike Winnipeg , pg. 6.
- 5** City of Winnipeg Supplement to the 2026 Capital Budget, City of Winnipeg, pg. 63.
- 6** *2024 Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies*, City of Winnipeg, pg. 120.
- 7** Rollason, K. (2026, February 10). City of Winnipeg looks at delaying projects to tackle province's wish list. *Winnipeg Free Press*. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2026/02/10/city-of-winnipeg-looks-at-delaying-projects-to-tackle-provinces-wish-list>
- 8** Agenda, Executive Policy Committee (February 17, 2026). Agenda Item 15, Amendment to the 2025 Strategic Infrastructure Basket Funding Allocation. City of Winnipeg <https://dmis.winnipeg.ca/ViewMeeting?documentId=27795§ionId=799392>