

Green Party of Manitoba's (GPM) Response to the Winnipeg Trails Association Election Questionnaire

QUESTION 1. The number of children walking and biking to school in Manitoba has been declining for decades due to what experts in engineering, planning and health promotion agree are mostly traffic-related issues. This exacerbates the incidence of chronic diseases linked to physical inactivity such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer and mental illness, threatens the very sustainability of our healthcare system and has serious impacts on individual lives. Knowing that School Travel Planning and school-travel focused infrastructure is helping to reverse this trend right here in Winnipeg and that it's effect is limited only by the amount of time, effort and funding currently being invested.

Will your party commit to an ambitious province-wide strategy tasked with adopting policies, design standards, and roadway improvements that will make it safer and easier for more children to walk or bike to school?

Response: The GPM is committed to introducing a \$50/tonne carbon tax to finance a range of measures that will reduce dependency on fossil fuels. The tax will raise \$500 million per year of which \$166 million will be dedicated to helping Manitobans reduce their use of fossil fuels. Funding active transportation infrastructure and programs designed to encourage people to walk or bike more is a key element of that Green Infrastructure Fund.

QUESTION 2. People of all ages and abilities across Manitoba would like to walk or bike more often, but that aim is frustrated far too often the lack of bicycle infrastructure or, especially for young people, by heavy traffic and scary crossings. For those of us living with disabilities, unnecessary barriers and substandard infrastructure and lack of winter maintenance can make things dangerous and/or severely limit our freedom to move. That's why provinces like BC, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec have created dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure funding backed by robust plans and aimed at building age-friendly, bike-friendly, kid-friendly, accessible communities. We need a similar commitment to make ours more connected, accessible, safe and inviting.

Manitoba municipalities have begun to address the demand for more and improved walking and cycling infrastructure, but limited transportation resources are all too often dedicated to unsustainable and expensive roadway projects. With healthcare and environmental stewardship falling under provincial responsibility, the Government of Manitoba plays a crucial role in ensuring that we take a coordinated approach and do the right thing. Dedicated funding helps show political leadership and gets results faster. All Manitobans benefit from investments in walking and cycling infrastructure, which provide good jobs for Manitoba families in the short term while generating long lasting benefits through improved health, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and reduced traffic congestion. For less than the average cost of owning a small car for just one day (according to CAA), we can provide a free pass for all Manitobans to complete networks of healthy, fun transportation and recreation throughout the province. It is time for the Province to lead the way and leave a lasting legacy in all Manitoban communities.

Will your party commit to annual funding in the amount of \$17/person/year to be made available to municipalities to be used only for the planning, design, and construction of walking and cycling infrastructure?

Response: As noted above, the GPM will dedicate revenues from the Green Infrastructure Fund to expand the active transportation infrastructure of municipalities. It has not set a specific amount for that purpose but would consult with organizations like the Winnipeg Trails Association in defining what level of funding is required.

QUESTION 3. The value of a provincial-level approach to walking and cycling cannot be underestimated. Many individual Canadian cities have more than a dozen staff dedicated to improving walking and cycling. The Province of Manitoba employs just shy of 1,500 people to plan, build and maintain our highway network, yet there is currently just one staff member dedicated to making it easier for all Manitobans to walk or bike. We need to do a better job to ensure that we are meeting the mobility needs of all Manitobans, including those who would like to walk and bike to their destinations more often.

Will your party commit to dedicate resources and staff toward the development and implementation of a comprehensive provincial walking and cycling plan that would transform Manitoba into a walkable/bikeable province and an even greater place in which to live, work and raise a family?

Response: Yes, through funds made available from the Green Infrastructure Fund financed by the carbon tax.