



Traction for Winter Cycling

By Leanne Dunne



Members of the Ice Riders show their pride in winter cycling.

EACH FRIDAY AFTERNOON the Ice Riders, a student group from the University of Winnipeg, congregate in the dimly lit Lo Pub to discuss winter commuting issues.

Each member of this student group has taken a pledge to commute by bicycle during the winter months in one of the coldest places of the world: Winnipeg. Each week members meet to discuss personal cycling experiences and share advice on how to engage and educate other people about winter cycling, as well as setting up educational workshops for other students.

Although most people living in Winnipeg choose to commute by bus, car or foot, these cyclists have strong reasons for biking year-round. With an inefficient bus system, the need for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the minimal cost of maintaining a bicycle, it is no surprise that these students choose to support active transportation.

For Jesse, a first-year student at the Univer-

sity of Winnipeg, becoming an Ice Rider meant being a part of a student group that is educational, promotes environmental sustainability and is helpful. For Keith, a fourth-year student, cycling solo during winter months can be "Zen-like" and provides a personal sense of peace.

Third-year student Fabian cycles year-round

because it is often cheaper, faster and more efficient than other modes of transportation.

An avid winter cyclist prior to joining the Ice Riders, Caleigh decided to join out of common interest. "This group is a successful and progressive community of people who like to have fun

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and work hard, and we're making real changes rather than just talking about it," noted Caleigh.

Robin, a third-year student and founder of the Ice Riders, decided to start a student group that could encourage people to become more self-reliant in transportation and have fun while doing it. For Robin, active transportation is a means of improving the quality of life for people living in the city, while staying warm and active during the winter months.

Although winter biking is gaining popularity with the younger generation of Winnipeggers, cycling is also a mode of transportation for many people who cannot afford to pay for a monthly bus pass or own a vehicle. The Ice Riders hope to build a community and culture of cyclists who can make self-reliant transportation a positive alternative, rather than an obligation.

“Each week members meet to discuss personal cycling experiences.”

Although students are the driving factor behind this group, the Bike Lab at the University of Winnipeg is a community resource for anyone interested in winter cycling. Or, to get involved with the Ice Riders, contact Robin at iceriders@theuwsa.ca.

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Executive Director's Letter

WELCOME TO 2011! Perhaps that's a bit overdue, most of us having completed our New Year festivities, but it's a new year for the Eco-Journal — and a good time to look ahead to see what is on the environmental horizon.

Here at the Eco-Network, we have some new faces: Karina Cardona Claros joined us as the new Project Manager for the Children's Health and Environment Partnership. Karina brings a wealth of experience with folks as diverse as inner-city youth and rural seniors — and has some creative new ideas for communications in this key area. Laurel McDonald has settled in to her term position as the Water Caucus Coordinator. Ryan Simmons is on board as a Video Intern for two months, under the YMCA's Youth Eco Internship Program. Ryan will be working on a promotional video for the Network, as well as polishing up our YouTube channel. Amanda Kinden, last year's eco-intern, is back in the office on a part-time basis for now, helping to set up this year's Organic Lawn Care activities, and the next Rain Barrel Sale (look for that to happen in April).

This year's Reel Green Film Festival is scheduled for Feb 4 and 5, promising a terrific lineup of environmental documentaries, along with the presentation of our 2011 Protecting the Earth Awards. Check out the accomplishments of the wonderful nominees on our website at www.mbeconetwork.org.

Looking further out, the Water Caucus is planning a gathering to look at impacts of water level regulation on Lake Winnipeg, and is extending the Protect Our Water program for conservation and stewardship to Brandon and Morden, partnering with groups in those communities.

We are discussing a new mapping project with the Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews Community Association, and early plans are in the works for an organic lawn care seminar with larger-scale groundskeepers.

Member groups are equally, if not more busy with all kinds of events and initiatives. A great way to find out what is happening on the environmental scene is to regularly check our online calendar — new events are posted there almost every day.

Two happenings that could have major impact on the environmental community this year? Elections! We know for sure that there will be a provincial election on October 4. So far, there are signals that at least one key environmental issue will be front and centre: the location of the Bipole III hydro transmission line.

The NDP have firmly committed to a west side route, thus avoiding the area proposed for the UNESCO World Heritage site on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. The Progressive Conservatives believe that an east side route is more appropriate for economic and environmental reasons. And the Liberal Party is touting a route down the middle of the province — and underneath Lake Winnipeg. Ironically, a clear "left, right and centre" debate, as pointed out by our board member Kevin Freedman. Manitoba's Green Party has a different approach: They would create a moratorium on new hydro-electric dam construction in Manitoba pending a cumulative ecological assessment of the effects of hydro-electric generation in Manitoba.

Manitoba Eco-Network plans to animate some public discussion around environmental issues leading up to the provincial election.

At the federal level, it's anyone's guess, but a 2011 election is clearly possible. With Canada's environmental reputation in tatters on the international stage, and many contentious issues domestically, environment should also figure in the national debate.

Whatever your political persuasion, the Eco-Network encourages you to get engaged in 2011 and learn about the issues that affect all of us, not just today, but for generations into the future! 🌱

Anne Lindsey
Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network



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FEBRUARY

4-5 Reel Green Film Festival

The Eco-Network's 2nd annual RGFF will celebrate change-makers, showcase award-winning environmental films and bring together a dynamic community of concerned citizens. Feb. 4: 7:00 to 10 p.m. at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, Feb. 5: 12:00 - 5:30 p.m. at the University of Winnipeg. For more info and tickets: www.mbeconetwork.org or 947-6511.

7 The Lake Winnipeg Foundation Commitment to Lake Winnipeg

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation, dedicated to restoring and protecting the health of Lake Winnipeg and its watershed, will present some of its projects. Admission is \$2 for members and \$3 for non-members at Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain's Salle Antoine-Gaborieau, 7:30 p.m.. For more info: naturemanitoba@mts.net or 943-9029.

16 Remediation & Prevention Conference

Manitoba Environmental Industries Association (MEIA) will hold its 3rd annual conference, Innovative Approaches for a Cleaner Future, to connect innovative research with environmental professionals. Victoria Inn (1818 Wellington Ave.). For more info: www.meia.mb.ca.

16 Less Waste — More Resources

A free public forum on options for Winnipeg's new waste management strategy, co-sponsored by Green Action Centre and the Green Action Committee of the Unitarian Church. Unitarian Church (603 Wellington Cres.), 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.. For more info: cgarlich@mts.net.

19 Seedy Saturday

Find inspiration for your garden, learn about local biodiversity and global conservation issues, and take part in the community seed exchange at Winnipeg's 11th annual Seedy Saturday. CMU South Campus (500 Shaftesbury Blvd.). For more info: mbrook@mts.net.

24-26 Growing Local Food Conference

Food Matters Manitoba's 4th annual conference brings together community members, producers and retailers who are interested in building local solutions to improve food security in Manitoba. The keynote speaker (Feb. 24) will be Joel Salatin from the documentaries *Fresh* and *Food Inc.*. For more info: www.foodmattersmanitoba.ca or 943-0822.

MARCH

1 Manitoba Trees in Winter

Learn the differences between Manitoba tree species with Richard Staniforth. 7:30 p.m. at Kelvin High School. Cost: \$5 for Nature Manitoba members, \$10 for non-members. For more info: call 943-9029, or www.manitobanature.ca.

2 MEIA Environmental Career Fair

The Manitoba Environmental Industries Association invites you to participate in the second annual MEIA Environmental Career Fair. U of Winnipeg Duckworth Centre, and reception at Convocation Hall. 12:30 - 5:00 p.m. (Reception 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.). For more info: www.meia.mb.ca.

15 Migrating Hawks

A multi-media workshop with Ward Christianson that will look at the basics of raptor identification. 7:30 p.m. at Kelvin High School. Cost: \$5 for Nature Manitoba members, \$10 for non-members. For more info: call 943-9029, or www.manitobanature.ca.

Please email your event notices to info@mbeconetwork.org.

Calling member groups, citizens, writers and visual artists!

Consider contributing to the Eco-Journal — we're striving to be Manitoba's premier environmental issues publication.

We're looking for articles, interviews, book, magazine and movie reviews, research, photographs, art — you can select a subject from a long list of ideas, suggest your own, or ask for an assignment (particularly for the photographers/artists among you). Standard articles and reviews are 300-600 words in length.

Other than the Eco-Network's appreciation, the main benefits of contributing include deepening your knowledge of or connections to environmental issues and environmentalists in Manitoba, professional writing samples and the satisfaction of seeing your contribution in print (and online).

The next two submission deadlines are March 11th and May 11th. Contact Editor Joel Trenaman for more information: editor@mbeconetwork.org.

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Solace in Science

Suzuki biopic opens Reel Green Film Festival

By Lindsay Kavalench

FORCE OF NATURE, a documentary of David Suzuki's life and legacy, will be screened at the Winnipeg Art Gallery on Friday, February 4. The film will kick off the second annual Reel Green Film Festival, presented by the Manitoba Eco-Network.

David Suzuki has been one of Canada's most inspirational activists in the scientific community; he is a man who has raised awareness amongst Canadians about the impact that a global economy and mass consumerism have had on the environment. The film discusses how humans have single-handedly transformed the natural world and changed the biological, physical and chemical features of the planet in a mere instant of cosmic time.

The film discusses the need and search for companionship, and the connectedness of mankind with the universe. David Suzuki experienced racism and discrimination as a child, and sought solace in communing with nature. David was born in 1936 in Vancouver, British Columbia. He recounts how, as a child, he would often go to the swamps to catch salamanders or out to a lake to fish, because the other children in the internment camp where he

lived would not play with him. Although David's family was Japanese Canadian, they only spoke English, and in the camp most of the other prisoners spoke Japanese.

As a result of this, David found that he did not fit in amongst the Caucasian community, nor did he fit in with the Japanese Canadians.

David turned to science and the beauty of the natural world to find solace in a time of social change and unrest. As a young man, he had believed that as we acquired more scientific knowledge, life would get better and better for people. He discusses how science is a tool that can be used in different ways — that it is neither inherently good nor evil, but rather the contributions of one scientist go towards a larger body of knowledge. This creates linkages to a better understanding of the workings of the universe.

The film represents an evocative analysis of both Suzuki's contribution to the body of knowledge, and to the social and cultural constructs of our society.



The Prairie & Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program

Wetlands are an important part of the prairie landscape, improving water quality by filtering and absorbing pollutants, recycling nutrients that move through the natural environment, and providing habitat for many animal and plant species. In recent decades there has been a drastic reduction in the amount and quality of wetland habitats across North America, particularly in the Prairie Provinces of Canada. As a result, many wetland-associated bird species have been in decline.

To improve conservation efforts for several species of wetland-associated birds, we need to improve our knowledge of species distribution, and patterns of species occupancy in relation to habitat characteristics. In partnership with the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture, Bird Studies Canada (BSC) began the Prairie & Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program (PPMMP).

Prairie and Parkland Marsh Monitoring Survey Coverage



Surveys of marsh birds are conducted at wetlands across all three Prairie Provinces.

The PPMMP seeks to link the occurrence of wetland-associated birds to habitat characteristics at varying spatial scales

(i.e. wetland-specific to landscape-level); the overall goal being to serve efforts to conserve and manage habitats for wetland-associated birds. Support for this program has been generously provided by Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta NAWMP Science Fund, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Environment Canada, Manitoba Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, TD Friends of the Environment Fund and Wildlife Habitat Canada.



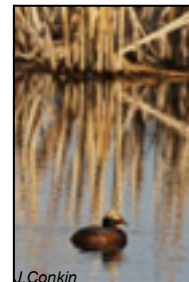
Become a marsh bird monitor!

BSC is seeking enthusiastic individuals that have bird identification skills to conduct marsh bird surveys at these locations. Marsh monitoring is a fun activity that gives people an opportunity to experience a group of birds that are often overlooked!



Marsh bird surveys involve recording all birds detected during a 15-minute period at a specified survey location. Participants will survey a route of ~6-8 survey stations, which in most cases will require walking a few kilometers over uneven terrain, a minimum of three times throughout the survey period (May 20th – June 31st). Surveys are conducted between sunrise and 10am or between 6pm and sunset to coincide with peak bird activity. The survey targets 10 focal species (including rails, bitterns, and grebes), but many other wetland-associated birds are documented. Participants need to be able to identify 60 species of birds by sight and ~60% of these birds by sound. Participants will require some equipment.

Training materials will be provided, but prior experience with bird identification is necessary. Participation in this program can require as little as 20 hours per year, but we encourage folks to do as many surveys as they wish. Volunteer opportunities also exist to annotate audio recordings of bird calls made in the field. Participants must be proficient with all target species vocalizations and be willing to annotate a minimum of twelve 5-minute recordings within a set deadline. Headphones and a computer are required.



To learn more about the program, please visit our website at:
<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/ppmmp/index.jsp>



Or contact Katherine Brewster:

prairieprograms@birdscanada.org
(306) 249-2894
115 Perimeter Rd. Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X4

Beyond Growth

Moving towards a 'steady-state' economy

By James Johnston

THE END OF 2010 marks the end of an important decade in the history of economic growth. Across the breadth of this lonely planet of ours, more of us are living beyond our means — ecologically and economically — than at any point in human history.

Dollar figures notwithstanding (no small exemption for an economist), we have more of just about everything except for the things that sustain life itself. Our human family now consists of 6.9 billion people. We drive more than a billion cars — a continually stunning climb due to growth in countries like India and China — and we're hungry for more resources to feed the frenzy. To contrast these figures, in 1956, only 2.8 billion people drove 90 million cars. At this rate of expansion, global resource use is on track to grow by an unprecedented third before the end of the next decade.

Yet we've run out of room to grow. Of the nine planetary boundaries identified as critical for the maintenance of life support, three have been crossed (including climate change, interference with the phosphorus and nitrogen cycles, and biodiversity loss), and the remaining six are on track to be crossed within the coming decade. Each of these boundaries is associated with exponential growth in the use of fossil fuels as well as changes in land use for urban expansion, farming, mining and ocean contamination.

Steady-state research into the connection between economic and ecological debt suggests a stronger relationship than commonly assumed. By the laws of physics, a unit of money indeed represents a quantifiable unit of mass. In plain language, that means financial growth also constitutes growth in the physical size of the economy as well as a unit of pressure on the environment. But this logical connection has so far escaped conventional economic wisdom and infinite growth remains the prevailing assumption.

Indeed, conventional economists — like weather forecasters — are failing on many fronts, unable to explain why Western economies are struggling to grow financially, becoming not only more heavily indebted, but also less productive. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce warns of slow growth next year, after a "sluggish" expansion of a mere one per cent in the third quarter last year. Recognizing the persistence of this trend, what if — rather than desperately clamouring for 'more' in a finite world — we decided to create an economy of quality rather than one of quantity?

With all the popular talk of 'greening' and 'eco-efficiency,' you would be forgiven to think that we're on the cusp of some revolutionary global decline in resource use. The only time we've seen a reduction in the physical scale of the economy since statistical recording of this sort began was during periods of economic recession. Dangerously high levels of growth appear to be occurring due to income and efficiency gains rather than in spite of them, making a mockery of reduction targets and revealing a critical weakness in the single-minded 'efficiency' strategy. Only policy goals and economic mechanisms which truly incentivize living within our means can break this self-defeating cycle.

Of course, recession isn't a healthy state either. Our debt-based growth economy has fed a boom-and-bust pattern that makes recessions more serious and longer lasting. Steady-state economists were among the first to point out that, according to the laws of physics, the economy is not an equilibrium system as commonly assumed, but a highly volatile, dynamic, self-adapting system that can only achieve a 'steady-state' if it is encouraged to do so through institutional reform. Knowing that growth is becoming less economic and more volatile with every passing year, now's the time to actively pursue an economic steady-state. 🌱

James Johnston is the Winnipeg-based Canadian director of the Centre for the Advancement of the Steady-State Economy. www.steadystate.org, james_johnston@steadystate.org

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To NIMBY or Not to NIMBY?

Fort Rouge Yards infill positive, but only with smart development

By Anne Lindsey

“NIMBY” (OR NOT IN MY BACK YARD — used pejoratively to describe opposition by residents to a proposal for a new development close to them. — Wikipedia .org). This is how I and some of my neighbours have been described because of our concerns about the Fort Rouge Yards development in South Winnipeg.

I’ve lived in Lord Roberts most of my life. We own a home there, participate in many neighbourhood initiatives, and generally love it for its old trees, ample green space, walkability, good people, proximity to downtown and many other attributes. Lord Roberts has changed in some ways since my family first moved there in 1968. There are considerably fewer inhabitants, for one thing, and gone are the numerous corner groceries that could be found scattered around the area. The South Osborne strip has had its ups and downs — never quite establishing itself as a trendy destination like Osborne or Corydon Village, but nevertheless with numerous restaurants, small and unique businesses, a library and recreation centre, it provides plenty of amenities.

The area known as Fort Rouge Yards provides a northwest border for Lord Roberts along the mainline train tracks from Confusion Corner to Pembina and Jubilee. It’s known as a “brownfield” site — formerly industrial, with some moderate contamination issues, and left vacant for many years.

Where some see empty space, others see a seasonally changing landscape hosting many species of birds and other wildlife.

The first leg of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor is nearing completion parallel to the rail tracks. The remaining land is targeted for in-fill housing development as one of the “major development sites” delineated in *Our Winnipeg*, the new development plan for the city. I’m in favour of this. Winnipeg has sprawled for too long and it’s time to end the gobbling-up of adjacent farmland with large luxury homes that make unsustainable demands on Winnipeg’s infrastructure to the detriment of our inner-city neighbourhoods. I’ll be sad to see the end of the green field by the tracks, but housing is definitely a high priority. No argument there.

I also favour the concept of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) — new urban-speak for densification of housing adjacent to convenient transit — as a means of reducing reliance on personal automobiles. Billed as just that, “the Yards” plan embodies many of the features that characterize TOD. But not all — and in some important ways.

1. The development itself is not “mixed use”

It is 100 percent housing, outside of the transit stations. While some units are designed to be “flexible,” so that commercial use might be contemplated sometime in the future, it is not setting

out to be a mixed-use pattern. Instead, the development relies on the adjacent Lord Roberts area and South Osborne to fulfill the “mix” of uses. There are potential benefits: area schools will see higher enrolments, which will mostly be welcome. Also, businesses on Osborne may see increased patronage. However, most of the residents will be located at quite a distance from south Osborne — probably further than comfortable walking distance. So if they do choose to patronize South Osborne, how will they get there? This leads to a real concern about traffic impacts in the adjacent neighbourhood, but it also undermines the “walkability” criterion for TOD: with few amenities in walking distance, people in the new development won’t have many destinations to walk to.

2. Traffic concerns

The 1,800 new residents will need to access their places of employment, and all the other amenities that city dwellers expect. One hopes that, being very handy to the rapid transit way, many of them will choose transit as their optimal transport mode. If the decision-makers at city hall were signalling their determination (read: financing) for the immediate completion of Winnipeg’s rapid transit system, this goal would seem closer at hand. But sadly, they aren’t. Our Winnipeg makes a clear case for rapid transit, and the good people at the planning department, as well as community transit



A mix of low rise multi-family residential units will be sited in this area, to the west of Argue St. Two twenty-story towers are to rise in the area just to the right of this photo.

advocates, express confidence that it will materialize. Let's hope they are right. In the meantime, however, parking spots are being allocated at the city requirement of 1.5 spots per unit. That's a lot of cars, and while the developer's traffic study indicates only moderately increased congestion on the major routes in and out, they have not taken into account any increase on residential streets leading to Osborne and Jubilee. Rush hour on Osborne is already a headache, and local residents have legitimate safety concerns with higher traffic volumes — especially near schools, child care centres, and parks.

3. And what about transit?

The map of the proposed development shows many adjacent transit routes. But a closer look reveals that most of them are on Pembina Highway — and with no plan for pedestrian access to Pembina for the length of the development, those routes don't count. The Osborne street routes aren't too bad — unless you are using them outside of rush hours, in which case long waits are the norm. And then there's the feeder bus: the 95 — running only once every 40 minutes, it's hardly convenient as most current residents will attest. Happily, this is not an insurmountable problem — with political will, additional regular and dependable transit service could be made available.

4. Housing types

Most units in the development are slated for private ownership, and many may in fact be condominiums. While such housing is in demand, so too are affordable rental units. Winnipeg's vacancy rate is precipitously low. No affordable rental is contemplated for this development — evidently at the request of some existing residents, even though most that I've spoken to believe that some affordable housing is really important here.

These are but some of the concerns that I've heard voiced and that I share. There are others: do 20-storey high-rise towers fit into this older neighbourhood, for example? And are there safety issues associated with dense housing adjacent to the main rail line with regular shipments of hazardous materials?

Perhaps the most challenging question is what constitutes adequate consultation with the existing neighbourhood. Planners and the developer point to an "excellent" consultation process, claiming that information was provided by mail to every neighbourhood resident. Why then does almost everyone that I've asked tell me they did not receive anything? Sugges-



The Yards at Fort Rouge Area Master Plan.



Lord Roberts residents have a wide spectrum of views on the plan: everything from supportive to adamantly opposed — with many perspectives and ideas in between the two extremes.

tions that perhaps we all "overlooked" the information are insulting. A number of people attended the two open houses that were advertised in the newspaper the day before, and an invites-only design charette included a few residents, along with many other "stakeholders," but many more people did not know these were taking place. The fact that this process went way beyond anything required by the city only suggests that the city has much to learn about public consultation.

One of my neighbours put it well: "It's important to make sure all the new people coming in will be satisfied — but would it not be of greater importance to ensure that those *already* living

here, invested here, are likewise equally satisfied?"

That's a message the City of Winnipeg should hear, considering that several more "major development sites" are on the drawing board. This is the perfect opportunity to build community and set up processes to work through the existing residents' concerns, instead of just dismissing as NIMBYs the people who took the time to attend the rezoning hearing and express themselves. Not everyone will be happy with the outcome, but at least people will feel that they've been heard and given a chance to contribute. It's the least that the city can do as it embarks on this ambitious project to slow urban sprawl.



Ambition Drives City's Transportation Plan

Process expected to continue for six more months

By Jim Chapryk

MODERN ROUNDABOUTS could become more familiar to Winnipeggers should they become part of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) currently being developed by the City of Winnipeg. Very different from the traffic circles installed last fall as part of the city's active transportation plan, a very successful example of a roundabout has been in place for two years on Lakewood Boulevard in St. Vital.

The production of the TMP is being driven by two reports that emerged from the city's Speak Up Winnipeg campaign — *Complete Communities* (a guide to land use and development) and *Sustainable Transportation*. As stated by Kenn Rosin, the project manager for the creation of the TMP, "the land-use plan drives transportation, and vice versa." The report is being created by city staff in consultation with IBI Group and MMM Group.

The goals to be reflected in this TMP require the transportation system:

- be dynamically integrated with land use;
- support active, accessible and healthy lifestyle options;
- move people, goods and services in a safe and cost-effective manner; and
- the infrastructure be well-maintained and financially sustainable.

Dynamically integrated with land use

Rosin notes the need to create opportunities for transportation options by increasing density and building corridors: "Give people more choices on how they move around." The *Complete Communities* report lists many opportunities to regenerate corridors around local community or neighbourhood centres, including narrowing roads and sidewalks and adding trees.

From a transit perspective, Rosin suggests that as a critical mass develops along a corridor, the plan will trigger improvements to the system through the introduction of diamond lanes and transit priority signals. The development of the Rapid Transit system provides an example of where transportation planning will drive land-use planning, as the introduction of transit nodes should spur intense multi-use development in those areas.

CONCEPTUAL MAJOR STREET AND HIGHWAY NETWORK



figure 09c

He noted that although only general corridors for rapid transit and quality corridors were studied in the *Sustainable Transportation* report, the TMP will analyze regional demand for potential new corridors over the next six months.

Support active, accessible and healthy lifestyle options

The transportation report also notes an increase of 25 percent in cycling activity between 2007 and 2008. The report's strategy to achieve active transportation goals is:

- Continue to expand on-street and off-street cycling infrastructure.
- Investigate the implementation of a Complete Streets policy (streets that include facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in addition to transit

and other vehicular needs – Rosin noted that a major transportation corridor with sufficient right of way would be Bishop Grandin).

- Investigate the establishment of a downtown bike-sharing program.
- Develop guidelines ensuring that new development contributes to the pedestrian environment.
- Increase bicycle parking throughout the downtown and other commercial/employment centres.

Move people, goods and services in a safe and cost-effective manner

The modern roundabouts, according to Rosin, are an example of ITS (Intelligent Transportation Design), which along with other trans-

CURRENT ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK-2010

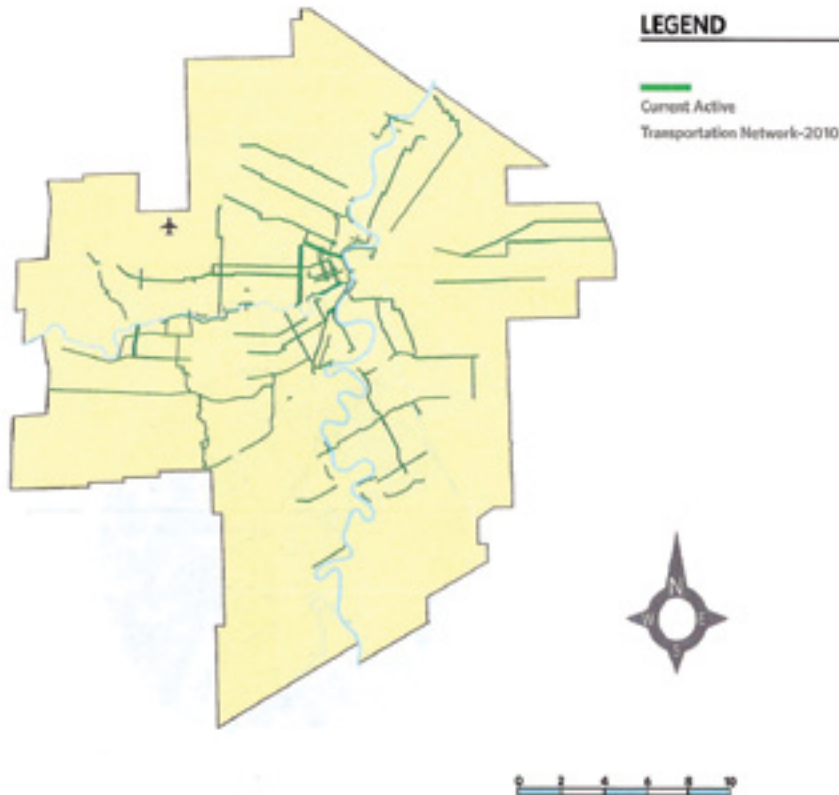


figure 03a

PROPOSED FUTURE ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

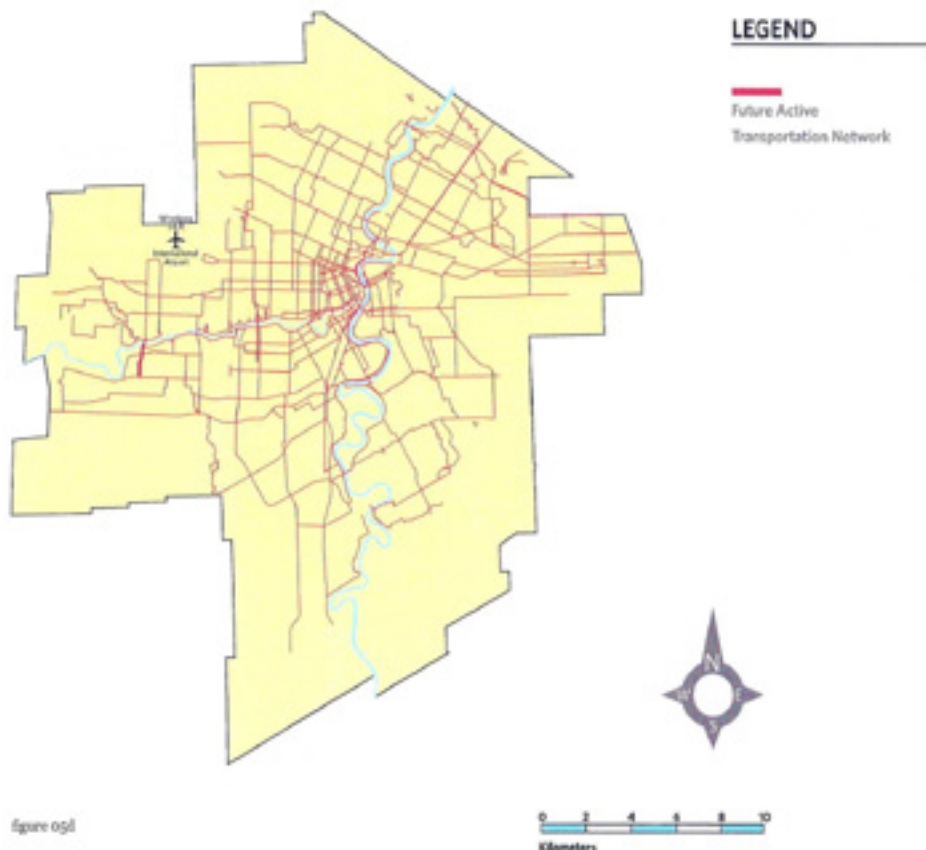


figure 03b

Members of the Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan Advisory Committee:

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Community Economic Development Committee of Cabinet
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Winnipeg Access Advisory Committee
Winnipeg Parking Authority
Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
Manitoba Local Government
Green Action Centre
University of Manitoba Department of Civil Engineering

portation systems management tools will help move people, goods and services. He noted that maintenance is minimal with modern roundabouts, and emissions are cut by reducing stops and starts. They are also a lot more fun for cyclists.

Another component is major street additions, in particular, those required to support the development of "inland port" CentrePort Canada (one of the key recommendations in the Mayor's Trade Council Report). The main project would entail the creation of an inner ring road, including an extension of Chief Peguis Trail west to Route 90, joining a thoroughfare called Centre Port Canada Way that would continue to the west Perimeter Highway.

Regional growth in the capital region will also have an effect on Winnipeg. "There needs to be a consistency of approach between the regional highways and Winnipeg streets," said Rosin, adding that active transportation (such as walking or cycling) can be used for trips between Winnipeg and neighbouring communities, especially in combination with transit.

Be well-maintained and financially sustainable

Ah, now here's the rub. A cross-departmental review of the city's infrastructure revealed a \$2 billion price tag to cover operating and unfunded existing capital transportation projects over the next 10 years. That's before any costs are included for the above ideas. In order to be sustainable financially, the city may have to become more aggressive at making our transportation system more sustainable by decreasing the number of cars on the road and increasing the accessibility and frequency of public transit and the safety of active transportation.



Growing Green: Winnipeg in 2025

How our city can prosper in a green economic revolution

By Shaun Loney

DURING THE RECENT WINNIPEG civic election, the Winnipeg Citizens' Coalition released a strategy called Growing Green. It presented a snapshot of what Winnipeg could look like in a vibrant future. There were employers from the geothermal, solar, wind, and energy efficiency sectors represented — even a made-in-Manitoba electric car that travels 100 kilometres on a \$1.50 charge. We can “grow” our city with local companies that supply, install, manufacture, and service green products that will cut our energy bills. Growing Green is the kind of vision that sets great cities apart from mediocre ones.

Winnipeggers currently spend well over a billion dollars per year in gasoline, natural gas and other fossil fuels. Our plan would halve these imports in just 15 years. Each of the specific measures outlined in “Growing Green” would generate impressive returns on investment by growing Winnipeg's business community, saving Winnipeggers money and increasing the tax base.

The most important of the no-cost recommendations was a call for the City of Winnipeg to set up a new utility that would lease geothermal and solar systems to landlords. If the city can partner with an international conglomerate (with a less than stellar reputation) to create a new waste water utility, can it not partner with local green energy companies to help us lower our utility bills?

Winnipeg 2025

Growing Green also calls for the City of Winnipeg to set a target to halve fossil fuel consumption by 2025. Wouldn't it be something to celebrate if, in September 2025, the mayor of Winnipeg marked the 15th anniversary of Winnipeg's green economic revolution by plugging in a residential solar rooftop system that took Winnipeg over the mark of halving our fossil fuel consumption from 2010 levels?



Winnipeg 2025 would be vibrant, with efficient and livable communities. There would be

a strong rapid transit system reaching all corners of the city; hybrid buses powered by electric motors and biodiesel; thousands of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles plugged into city meters; half of Winnipeggers growing fruit or vegetables in their yards and community gardens; thriving neighbourhood farmers' markets; a majority of buildings using geothermal heat pumps to heat and cool; our old housing stock newly insulated... Now that's what we call vision!

Other recommendations in Growing Green include setting up a local food council, directing the Winnipeg Parking Authority to install electric plugs in all underground parking lots (to support electric vehicles), and to offer the mechanism of optional local improvement charges on property tax bills as a way of financing any green venture that has a solid economic payback, such as geothermal or solar energy.

continued on page 11>>

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*inspired.**

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New In the Library

All of the materials in the Alice Chambers Memorial Library may be loaned out free of charge. There is no-charge postal delivery outside Winnipeg. Please contact Erica Young, Resource Assistant, at 947-6511 for more information. www.mbeconetwork.org/library.php

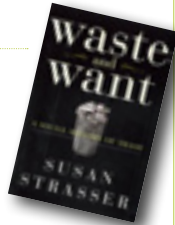
New Books:

Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash

By Susan Strasser

Metropolitan Books, 1999

Industrialization and the rise of consumer culture have changed the way waste is understood and treated. As the author points out, "what counts as trash depends on who's counting." A homemaker in the late 19th century would tell a different story than her counterpart 100 years later. This book collects many of those stories and paints a fascinating picture of reducing, reusing and recycling over the last century or so in American history.



Global Showdown: How the New Activists Are Fighting Global Corporate Rule

By Maude Barlow and Tony Clement

Stoddart Publishing
Co. Limited, 2001

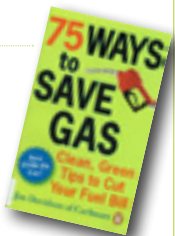
These two well-known Canadian activists and authors document "the movement" that is perhaps still best known for shutting down the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle. They describe what unites this new civil society movement, as well as the diversity it encompasses. With dramatic stories they demonstrate what's at stake, offer inspiring examples of organized opposition to corporate globalization and close with a six-step plan of action for strengthening the movement.



75 Ways to Save Gas: Clean, Green Tips to Cut Your Fuel Bill

By Jim Davidson of CarSmart Inc.
Penguin Canada 2009

A quick, easy read, this book's suggestions cover alternatives to using your car, fuel-saving maintenance, driving habits and more. The tips range from basic to sophisticated, from those that could reduce your gas use drastically to those that will shave off the tiniest amount. There's something for every driver.



Featured Book Review

The Urban Homestead: Your Guide to Self-sufficient Living in the Heart of the City

By Kelly Coyne and Erik Knutzen

2008, Process Self-Reliance Series, Vol. 3, 307 pages

"**THINK YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH** land to grow your food? Change the way you see land."

An encouraging, simple, and practical guide, *The Urban Homestead: Your Guide to Self-sufficient Living in the Heart of the City* is a call to action for newbies and practiced urban farmers alike. With a keen eye for the need for paradigm shifts and new perceptions, Coyne and Knutzen urge readers to take practical action in their own lives to create communities that are joyfully resilient and environmentally low-impact. The authors cheer us on to perceive cities in a new light — as places of resource, community and possibility.

The layout is simple and clear, and the tone is friendly, encouraging and even a bit cheeky. Coyne and Knutzen steer clear of guilt- or obligation-inducing comments, making new ideas seem approachable and possible. Dividing the book by practical area of interest, the authors outline essential farming projects, mostly surrounding food self-sufficiency, but also including power, water, play and transportation. Rather than feeling intimidated and losing interest, the simple design and language keep the reader engaged and inspired. From sourdough bread to de-paving your city, from beekeeping to DIY grey water, *The Urban Homestead* provides a fun and clear look at tangible actions everyone can take.

Advocating for new perceptions on waste and impact, *The Urban Homestead* offers a "to-do list" for the urban enviro-geek. Sticking to inexpensive, and do-it-yourself principles, this outline can propel an urban farm enthusiast into taking their homesteading skills one step further. Coyne and Knutzen give us tips on authors and resources to check out for further detail. They don't pretend to know everything, and gladly refer us to other sources. They do, though, offer us a compact, big-picture look at how we can transform our urban lives and mindsets into something closer to "sustainable."

Based in Los Angeles, Coyne and Knutzen write what they know. As a result, some of the projects suggested in this book may not be suitable for the average Manitoban. My guess is, however, that with closer attention and creativity, this book can be a helpful starting place for made-in-Manitoba ingenuity. Hopefully, we'll be inspired to seek out local examples and learn from them (and we already have!). While the authors certainly encourage community resource-sharing, the book could stand to benefit from more emphasis on how skill-sharing and bartering can contribute to the urban homestead and its community.

For those who are new to urban homesteading, this book is a boon. Friendly and open, but without letting the reader off the hook, Coyne and Knutzen prove that even the most squeamish can build and operate their own home compost toilet. Seasoned urban farmers can stretch themselves to incorporate more advanced projects, like windmills, or urban livestock. While this is not a book that will give you all the nitty-gritty, it's an inspiring start to a wealth of worthy and important projects and lifestyle changes. And it's fun.

Coyne and Knutzen's popular green-living blog, the origin of their book, can be found at: www.HomegrownEvolution.org.

—Coral Maloney

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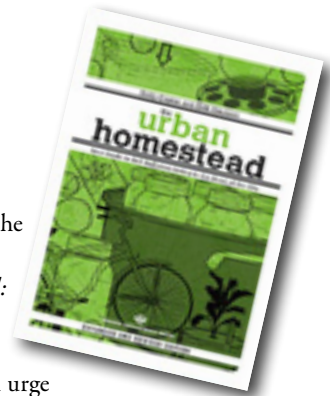
Winnipeg 2025 will have been built by local workers whose employers have captured market share nationally and internationally because they had a head start in the green economy.

Falling gasoline consumption means reduced gas taxes sent to Ottawa by using electric vehicles with twice our current average mileage. Halving our fossil fuel-related energy bills means cleaner air and more affordable homes. Eating more local organic food means healthier bodies and more jobs.

Winnipeg 2025 is ours to create.

Unfortunately, the civic campaign was focussed on crime and taxes and there was no real discussion of the green economy. But if you want to find out more about the WCC and Growing Green — please visit our website at www.ourwinnipeg.org, and spread the ideas far and wide.

Shaun Loney is Co-chair of the Winnipeg Citizens' Coalition.





How Ethical Are Ethical Funds?

'Conscientious' investments and the oil sands connection

By Larry Powell

FEW INVESTORS with a social conscience would assume that the ethical investment funds they hold would be helping pay for such projects as the Alberta oil sands.

I certainly didn't — turns out, I was wrong.

All five of Canada's major banks lend money to tar sands operators. And all five are actually included in the portfolios of the many ethical investment funds in this country. As if that isn't enough, so too is at least one major corporation, Suncor Energy, which actually extracts the tar from the sands.

Ethical Funds, managed by Canadian firm NEI Investments, lists Scotiabank, the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) and Suncor Energy among its top 10 holdings. The investment company states that RBC, for one, "provides significant capital to the oil and gas and other smoke-stack industries."

Suncor describes itself as a "pioneer" and one of the biggest players in the development and up-

extended underwritten by each bank to companies operating in the tar sands since 2007." RBC was number one at a staggering US \$16.9 billion.

So just what is the concern here?

For years, critics have been pointing out the profound impact that development of the sands is having on the environment and the health of people, both regionally and globally. Some even describe it as the "dirtiest project on earth."

The Alberta-based Pembina Institute says, of all the provinces, Alberta was responsible for over half of the increase in national greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2008 — about 52 percent. (The tar sands, of course, were operating full-bore during that period.) Pembina predicts that, given the projected growth of the sands, their already substantial emissions will nearly triple by 2020. The 25-year-old Institute researches and advocates for "sustainable energy solutions that can help to protect the earth's living systems;

have been reporting high rates of cancer and other illnesses. George Poitras, a member of Mikisew Cree First Nation says, "My people are dying," and blames oil sands development.

What does the ethical investment community have to say?

I contacted Robert Walker, vice president of ESG (environmental, social and governance) services for NEI Investments in Vancouver, to comment on this story. His firm manages several "sustainable" or "social investment" companies, including Ethical Funds.

As he puts it, "Every major bank in Canada has exposure to oil sands."

Ethical Funds lists "respect for the environment" and a pledge that "disadvantaged communities should not bear the brunt of adverse environmental impacts" among its "core values."

So just how does it justify this state of affairs?

In Walker's words, "Note that we do not describe the companies in our Funds as 'ethical.' This is not our claim."

Walker recognizes that the companies in question have a checkered reputation in managing their social and environmental responsibilities. But he says his industry is constantly "engaging" and "pressuring" them to do better. It even hands out and publishes report cards on their performances in this regard. All this, he believes, will gradually help convince them to change their ways.

Walker believes banks like RBC can play "a pivotal role in encouraging their clients to tackle climate change."

He concludes, "We are at least partially responsible for progress that banks like RBC are making in this space."

In its defense, RBC does sponsor the Blue Water Project, through which it promises millions of dollars to help protect watersheds and ensure access to clean drinking water.

Despite these assurances, it's not clear just what specific "progress" Walker can point to; whether his industry is, in fact, convincing the banks to become better corporate citizens; or what it means, exactly, when ethical investment firms do not describe the companies in their funds as "ethical."



“All five of Canada's major banks
lend money to tar sands operators.”

grading of the Alberta oil sands. So far this year, the company has been producing, on average, more than a-quarter-of-a-million barrels of oil per day.

Last spring, a U.S.-based environmental group, Rainforest Action Network, (RAN), listed the five major Canadian banks: RBC, Toronto Dominion (TD), Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), Scotiabank and Bank of Montreal (BMO) as investors. At that time, RAN reported that these banks' investments totalled almost US \$50 billion.

In a letter to RAN about a year ago, RBC confirmed it was a financier of oil sands activity, although "not currently the largest." A RAN report, using numbers from Bloomberg, ranked major world financial institutions by tabulating "credit

[and to] ensure clean air, land and water...."

Meanwhile, millions of hectares of pristine boreal forest are being bulldozed to make way for more and more tar sands plants. According to Greenpeace, this could soon amount to an area twice the size of New Brunswick.

The National Academy of Sciences in the U.S. reports that oil sands development has been contaminating the Athabasca River watershed, downstream of the sands, to a greater degree than earlier thought. It warned that oil sands development was elevating levels of poisons in the Athabasca River and its tributaries that were "likely toxic to fish embryos."

Meanwhile, people living downstream of the oil sands, in the community of Fort Chipewyan,



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