# Task Force Report

**ıld like the thank the Mayor for appointing me to this task force and for the opportunity to be part of this most dynamic and interesting group.**

**I assure you that at the beginning of this process…few people were on the same page. As the Mayor asked of us…minds were open and a many hours spent studying all sorts of different options.**

**It was fascinating to see the committee evolve to it's unanimous conclusion…that Winnipeg needs bus rapid transit and it needs it now.**

**What was accomplished was 100% consensus around a plan that does several things:**

**One thing the report does is it reaffirms Plan Winnipeg's overall vision of a rapid transit system for Winnipeg -**

**It is clear that we need a decent alternative to the automobile.**

**People want choices.**
**Gas prices alone have become an impetus for people to be demanding other options.**

**Gas is a limited resource…it will not be dirt cheap in any time soon and certainly not for any length of time in the future.**
**Other benefits of moving forward with this rapid transit plan are apparent.**

**The Federal and Provincial governments are placing a huge emphasis on meeting Kyoto requirements.. They are virtually throwing money at cities to move forward on these sorts of initiatives. There is no better time to act than now.**

**The economic spinoffs of investment in transit infrastructure should be celebrated.**

**The new construction brings jobs and dollars to all levels of government and our citizens and business.**

**The spinoff investment impact is quite remarkable.**

**One example is the potential Fort Rouge Yards Development. This is a 100 million dollar private investment in our city.**

**There will be hundreds and hundreds of new residential dwellings created on a 25 acre site.**
**The schools are there, the parks are there, the transportation infrastructure is there.**

**This is the ideal development and business opportunity for our city….and for our financial bottom line.**

**This potential huge development hinges on the south west busway corridor being built in order to make it all work.**

**Revitalization of the downtown is another function that this investment in rapid transit plays a vital role in. I know we are all on that page.**

**Another important result of this report is that it should put to rest the discussion about which kind of rapid transit should be built: LRT, train or Bus rapid transit.**

**Although LRT could happen someday as more funds become available and busways could be upgraded.....it was agreed that it simply isn't doable today.**

**Steve Juba wanted a subway.**

**Bill Norrie wanted LRT…**

**Even Glen Murray at first was pushing for LRT….but in the end all of them came to the same conclusion….Bus Rapid Transit is the option that makes sense for Winnipeg.**

**The rail option using existing tracks was studied as well (by the same company that built the O-train in Ottawa) …and it was determined to not be practical in Winnipeg.**

**Now that we can put that debate to rest we can focus on getting something happening once again.**

**What this study does that goes beyond what Glen Murray's plan did …is that it maps out a clear plan for what we can realisticly do in the next 15 years…**

**With a utterly doable 3 to 5 million in Capital for the city's portion each year for 10 years we can build two complete busways as well as city wide onstreet improvements.**

**The on street improvements make a lot of sense in conjunction with separate roadways for busses where one cannot achieve the speed and reliability simply by on street measures alone.**

**A further benefit of the busways is it makes total sense to build bicycle pathways at the same time…which provide a safe active transportation alternative for our citizens…Something citizens are demanding!**

**The committee clearly understood that the 3 major issues for the public are, in order, speed, reliablility and comfort.**

**In regards to speed, if it takes 1 ½ hours to get to school in the morning that…is unreasonable…yet we know many students depend on the bus.**

**Others would choose to take the bus if they knew they could get there in less than 35 minutes and they knew the bus would arrive on time.**

**Reliability is compromised when busses are slowed down by bottlenecks of congestion…such as the Donald Street Bridge and confusion corner.**

**When they are running 10 minutes late…people don't know when the bus is coming. This discourages ridership significantly.**

**The only way to achieve speed and reliability is to bypass congested areas via separate busways or move through them quicker through on street transit priority measures.**

**There seems to be a misnomer that on street improvements are cheap and somehow better than the separate busways.**

**The on street improvements actually are a large part of the recommended capital dollars required.**

**In some situations..such as the Donald bridge bottleneck..there is no way to widen the streets to allow for diamond lanes.**

**Busways also remove busses from car traffic lessening traffic congestion and can reach very high speeds similar to that of LRT.**

**Comfort is also important to people…transit stop improvements , comfortable busses, park and rides. The report includes these improvements. They are clearly important…but comfort alone is not enough to increase ridership.**

**If it takes a long time to get there and there is no guarantee of reliability there will be huge resistance to taking the bus whether or not there is a lovely stop to stand in.**

**But Yes, the report does address transit stops, park and rides and many other issues that will increase the desire of the public to use the transit system more.**

**As a package this plan makes sense and addresses speed, reliability and comfort and truly will transform our transit system.**

**With Waverly West and the growth in South Winnipeg…something must be done to relieve car congestion and to give citizens an alternative.**

**We know that Pembina Hwy for example will simply become more and more intolerable with out this…as we learned in the Waverly West discussion.**

**Our public works department has said for years that the capital expenditure should be split 20% for active transportation and transit and 80 % for roads.**

**For as long as I can remember council has not accomplished this.**

**We will never fix every single pot hole.**
**But if we invest in a balanced way in our capital dollars we will have better roads…which we need to fix for busses and cars….and we also will provide our citizens with a viable alternative to the automobile …**

**It is not an either or situation..**

**We can make a balanced investment that will benefit all winnipeggers.**

**Regarding the policy recommendations, there isn't time to go through them all but I will highlight a few.**

**It is imperative that we adopt a policy of acquiring abandoned rail corridors.**

**Although we do this now on an ad hoc basis…it is a tragedy when we let these opportunities slip by.**

**We must think long term about such matters.**

**Otherwise we risk losing future transportation options that we ought to be safeguarding for our grandchildren.**

**Governance issues are discussed in the report .**

**I support beginning the process of considering a new governance structure…as in a separate transportation authority.**

**However, we all know how long those kind of investigations and processes take.**

**I urge council to understand that we must not wait to begin implementation of the system improvements for governance issues to be resolved.**

**With all the studies required to begin building…there already will be a delay of several years before a shovel is in the ground.**

**The world has changed and Winnipeg must join the rest of the country and begin building a modern transit system.**

**We are now behind Halifax and even Saskatoon is talking about bus rapid transit. We must change our thinking .**
**I thank the Mayor for his leadership in supporting this important study.**

**Now I urge all of EPC to continue to demonstrate that leadership by acting on it swiftly.**

**Thank you for your attention**