COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG
Wednesday December 14, 2005

The Council met at 9:37 a.m.

The Clerk advised the Speaker that a quorum was present.

The Speaker called the meeting to order.

The opening prayer was read by Councillor Lubosch.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie, His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Lazarenko, Benham, Clement, De Smedt, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steeves, Swandel, Thomas and Wyatt.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME OF GUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: I would like to welcome; we have three Pages who will be working with us during today's sitting: Elaine Manipol who attends Kildonan East Collegiate and resides in Transcona, Transcona ward; Michael Dwilow of Fort Richmond Collegiate who lives in St. Norbert ward; and Tayva Pannell of West Kildonan Collegiate, who lives in Old Kildonan ward. Welcome to City Council today. Thank you.

I would like to introduce some special guests who are visiting with us this morning. I draw your attention to the west gallery where we have in attendance Mr. Darrell McKenzie, who is a Municipal Development Consultant for the Province of Manitoba, and he is accompanied by administrators from 50 unincorporated communities in northern Manitoba who are in Winnipeg attending a 3-day workshop being hosted by the Manitoba Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs. On behalf of all members of Council we welcome you here this morning.

(Applause)

Any other guests or announcements?

MINUTES

Councillor Steeves moves the Minutes of the meeting held on November 23, 2005 be taken as read and confirmed.

All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

DELEGATIONS

Mr. Speaker: We have under delegations, we have, we have four delegations who are registered, two with regard to the Notice of Motion on the Environment Committee and two with respect to the Transit fare item later on.

Councillor Gerbasi wishes to move that the rule be suspended to hear a total of seven additional delegations; six on the transit fare issue and one on the Environment Committee motion. If the rule is suspended it would be subject to a maximum five minutes each, no questions.

All in favour of the motion to suspend the rule? Opposed? I believe the motion is carried.

With regard to the registered delegations, the first two delegations with respect to the Notice of Motion on the Environment Committee, Ms. Glenda Whiteman who has the 10 minute slot and Marianne Cerilli who will have the five minute spot. Ms. Whiteman.

Ms. Glenda Whiteman: Good morning. Thank you Mr. Speaker, Mr. Mayor, Councillors. Once again I thank you for the opportunity to be heard in this Council chamber.

I have recently read that there is reason for optimism at City Hall because recent outpourings of civic objection to the Mayor's proposals have seemingly prompted compromises. I would like to start by acknowledging that it is a good thing you have chosen to honour the work of the three other civic committees and decided to allow them to continue doing it.

It is a good thing that you threw out the idea of eliminating the reduced Transit fare and we hope to soon hear the same

with the idea of building condos in the park.

In a perfect world, we could take that all at face value and simply say thank you. In a perfect world there would be no need to look any further than that. No need to question whether democracy simply worked or whether some of that might have been a smoke-screen, a red herring designed to deflect attention from much larger issues of a pro-development, anti-environment agenda. An agenda that includes making Transit more expensive and less effective thereby subsidizing the automobile stranglehold, I mean industry; an agenda that includes eliminating the very civic committee that is not afraid to denounce urban sprawl and pesticide use and very possibly, if allowed to continue its voluntary work, might also publicly oppose oily urban pig factories.

I would like to contrast that agenda with a different vision and a lens I invite you to look through, now; the kind of vision that many Winnipeggers got really hopeful about not so very long ago; the kind of vision for Winnipeg's future that includes such things as a comprehensive environmental strategy; the kind of vision that includes ideas like fiscal and environmental sustainability, the precautionary principal, polluter pay, and leading by example through innovation.

It was called *A Vision for a Sustainable Winnipeg*, and it includes this statement: "Communities will be rewarded for their efforts to save energy, protect natural areas, dramatically reduce the use of pesticides and develop active transportation networks." I would like to live in that City. I hope that some day my grandchildren will live in that City and it will be a shame for all of us if you decide that we won't.

I cannot understand why you would even consider abolishing a committee of dedicated volunteers who have no motivation but to bring their expertise and experience to help move the City forward in a healthy way. It cannot be because of the cost. The committee costs the City virtually nothing especially when compared to the money you threw away when you turned down Federal funds for bus rapid transit or compared to the $5 million plus dollars spent on spreading around toxic Malathion last summer.

Those of us with the greater vision, those of us who can see that our actions now really can protect the future world of our grandchildren, believe that Winnipeg does need a Civic Environmental Committee. And please do not vote this motion down and then try to replace it with some green-washed mayoral committee as an attempt to appease us.

The Civic Environmental Committee is working well and you must allow it to continue its very important work as you have done with the three other civic committees and as recommended by the Benham-Smith motion on which you will vote later on today.

Yesterday, I was interviewed by a young political science student about a social issue which he named. He named in one word - Malathion. After the interview we chatted a bit and I asked him what he's been learning. He said he was surprised what his recent research has taught him about the biggest obstacle to social progress in Winnipeg right now. For this, he had two words: "Sam Katz".

Today, I'm going to ask each one of you to vote on this motion not with your head, not with dollar signs in your eyes, but with your heart. I want you to make this decision not considering what the Mayor would approve. Not considering what your voters would approve but considering what your voters' grandchildren would approve. What kind of City do you envision creating for our grandchildren to live in?

Mr. Speaker: In the five minute slot, Marianne Cerilli.

Councillor Benham: Mr. Speaker just to clarify there will be questions of both proponents at the end? Is that right?

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Councillor Benham: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The five minute slot, Marianne Cerilli.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli: Good morning everyone. Pleased to come and support the motion put forward by Councillor Benham and Councillor Smith.

The last time I was here I was addressing a similar matter. I was advocating the establishment of a Poverty Action or Advisory Committee for City Hall. And I have recently found out that that decision was delayed or sent back for more consideration by the administration, until April of 2006. And it occurred to me that while it's took the City of Winnipeg nine days to decide to sell land to Olywest to develop a multi-million dollar hog slaughtering facility, it's going to take you more than 9 months to decide to strike a Poverty Committee to advise you on poverty issues and develop an action plan for poverty for the City. So, putting those two things together, I think paints a picture of some of the challenges facing us here in the City and dealing with our City Council.

So I'm supporting the motion to keep the Environment Committee in place. And I think that Councillors and Mr. Mayor you in particular, have a responsibility to present a new plan for City organization and structure of City committees before wiping out the existing structures. And I know we're all cognizant of the recent attempt to eliminate the three other Committees to City Hall. So if there is some other master plan for how the City will receive advice from citizens and people in the field on issues like environment, disability access, equity, then I think you have a responsibility to put forward that plan prior to eliminating the existing committee.

And if you're going to tell those of us who are advocating for a Poverty Committee at City Hall that there are too many committees and that's the reason for not moving forward with the committee to advise you on poverty, that you have a responsibility to give us information of what you plan to do.

I understand that the report on embracing sustainability is due imminently and I think that we should also have that report in place. I notice that that wasn't on the website. I was looking for it in preparation. So I, that, that report should also be available because who is going to oversee the implementation of that report if it's not some type of committee like the Environment Committee?

The Mayor's commitments during the election have not been met. The Mayor, when he was elected, ran on a seven page - *Sam's Action Plan, A Vision of Winnipeg*, and he made a commitment for the triple bottom line, talking about consideration of financial interests, environment interests and social interests, in making decisions at City Hall. That's what got him elected. Mr. Mayor, I think that's what got you elected. So how you plan to do this is going to be reflected in having a structure at City Hall that includes Environment Committees as well as a variety of other Committees.

So you haven't met the commitment to meet with the Environment Committee as it stands right now. They've offered a number of, a number of chances to meet. They have expertise. They have expertise on providing full cost accounting and impact information. So, I think that there is a responsibility to have some analysis and if you're going to forge ahead with a pro-business agenda, it's irresponsible to on the one hand say you're going to cut business taxes but then squeal because you don't have enough revenue streams and money to do what you need to do.

We can't continue the way that we are. Poverty is unsustainable in this City. Violence is unsustainable in the City. The over-consumption of natural resources and the pollution is unsustainable in this City. And it's all one big package of the model for development that Mr. Katz and other Councillors on EPC subscribe to. That's the problem. The sustainability plan that's come from the Environment Committee is worth looking at and I urge you to listen to your Environment Committee, give them a second mandate

and let's move forward with making Winnipeg a sustainable City. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much Ms. Cerilli. Are there any questions for this group? Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you Mr. Speaker and welcome to City Hall in the festive season. We wish you the very best.

You rolled in two other issues in relation to your thesis here on the Environment Committee and one was against the violence in the City and a poverty action plan. And my question is have you also been to the Provincial Legislature and asked for their support? Certainly Provincial on poverty, which is a fundamental core responsibility of the Provincial government. Have you done that and what has been the response?

Ms. Marianne Cerilli: Yes dear Councillor De Smedt thanks for that question. I do agree that those of us advocating to address poverty issues and change the way that we do development in this City have a responsibility to go to all levels of government. We are doing that. There's groups that are proposing legislation, changes to the welfare program, changes to the minimum wage, changes to a whole range of things that are in the responsibility of the Provincial government.

However I was quite concerned that the advocates for the Poverty Committee when approaching many Councillors were not given a meeting and some Councillors even suggested that it's not a City responsibility to address poverty. And we would be able to itemize a whole list of the ways that the City could, including dealing with urban sprawl, dealing with public transit, you know dealing with recreation services. There is a whole range of things that the City could do. But yes, we have also gone and developed, we're advocating a Poverty Action Plan at the Provincial level as well.

Mr. Speaker: Do you have supplementary? No. Councillor Benham.

Councillor Benham: Thank you Mr. Speaker and thank you to Ms. Cerilli and Ms. Whiteman who I assume is still with us right now. So I'll address my question to both. Both have made the case that the Civic Environmental Committee should continue and that it has important work to do. I would be interested in hearing from both of them as interested citizens, what they would see the future agenda of the Civic Environmental Committee being. In other words, if all Councillors support it, the motion here today, and continue the Civic Environmental Committee, what would you put on that Committee's plate? So I'll address that to both Ms. Cerilli and Ms. Whiteman. Thank you.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli: And I think that Glenda and I would raise a few different issues. I know that Glenda's been dedicating most of her waking hours to dealing with pesticide use in the City and I commend her for that.

But I spend most of my waking hours dealing with other issues more related to development. I think that the Environment Committee as well as working with some of the other Committees, that's why I'm here, linking the poverty and the Environment Committee to look at the model of development that this City is using and to look specifically at the urban sprawl issue. I think that has been the issue in Winnipeg for quite some time. It connects in with the rapid transit issue.

And one of the, the biggest impacts going on environmentally on the planet is climate change and one of the biggest ways that our City is contributing to climate change is through automobile use and we continue to design our City to accommodate cars rather than to accommodate more public rapid transit, bike paths, walking trails, you know that kind of a system.

So, that's my agenda. What I would put at the top of the agenda. But I have listed a few other things. I think the whole waste reduction issue, I think the amount of chemical use, the amounts of chemical

use on golf courses and lawns and all those kinds of things is an issue.

And I think one of the other things I've spent a lot of time on in my life, is when I was an MLA we did a study in Transcona that looked at 30 industries. Thirty industries that are, in Transcona you know that there is a lot of land use, residential land use conflicts so the issue of zoning and the compatibility of industrial and residential land use planning is a big issue, because of those 30 that we looked at, industries, do you know how many actually had a license with the Environment Department? Two and only about five or six had a file.

So there is a whole issue of the responsibility of industry in complying with the way that they use water, the amount of water that they use, to make them sustainable, to basically make industry sustainable so that they're not producing air pollution, so their not producing excess water pollution which is going into your treatment plants, and so that they are basically operating in a more sustainable way.

And that's where the Provincial responsibility comes in as well because they have a responsibility to license, doing environmental impact assessments on industries so when industries are going to get loans or they're going to get grants that they actually have a clause that said that you have to make your industry sustainable and do these things, so that you're going to, in order to get these loans. And I think the City can be advocating on those kinds of things in co-operation with the Provincial government.

Because one of the things that happened in the new City of Winnipeg Charter was that any responsibility for doing environmental impact assessments at the City level was given over to the Provincial government. And so you know, the thing with Olywest and this hog plant, I mean the idea of environmental impact assessments is they should be done in the pre-planning stage. So before you're giving any commitment to financing, before you're giving away land for $2, that there would be an environmental impact assessment so that we know that that industry is going to be sustainable. And that, that sustainability is going to be Province-wide. We're gonna look at the production as well as the manufacturing.

So, environment issues are not cut and dried, like they do get pretty broad and global and we have to look at the system that we're creating to approve new industries. So, I'll stop there. Those are a few of the issues that I really think need to be addressed in this City. Thanks.

Ms. Glenda Whiteman: Well thanks Marianne. She did a great job of listing some specific things to answer Councillor Benham's question and to that I can only add that in my opinion the work that the Committee has already done in producing this strategy document was phenomenal. There are a number of very important issues that they've identified and initiatives that they have addressed which need to be pursued in Winnipeg and I would suggest that in their next mandate, they be given instruction to carry out these initiatives as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Councillor Benham: Thank you very much. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: That's it?

Councillor Benham: No. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: No further questions? Thank you very much. We'll move on to the next group of delegations. This is with respect to the 2006 Transit fares. We have Mr. Nick Ternette appearing in opposition in the 10 minute slot and Amanda Aziz in the five minute slot. Mr. Ternette.

Mr. Nick Ternette: Mr. Speaker, Mayor Sam Katz and members of City Council. As a preamble I would like everyone to notice that I attached to my presentation, and I would like everybody to look at it, if you haven't had a chance to read, an editorial in the *Free Press* today by my friend, Jeff Lowe, who is an urban transportation expert and Peter Lacey from Transport 2000 with a headline "Make Bus Fares Free". I would

appreciate that some of the comments that I make will reflect some of the comments that are in this article but there are other issues in this article which I am not reflecting but that I think that Councillors ought to be made aware. If you haven't had a chance to read it please read it before you vote on this issue.

Bus fare increases, whether they be 5 cents or 10 cents, which we have had over the past decade, or the 15 cents increase for regular cash fares, and that includes people with disabilities by the way, which surprises me, and/or the amended seniors and students cash fare increase to the 10 cents, are basically symptomatic of what has been a crisis in transit since 1986. In fact a crisis in Transit since 1945, but more specifically 1986.

What is it about our City that we are constantly doing everything opposite to what every other City does? As far as I know all other cities of Winnipeg's population base are using their money generated from the gas tax and the green tax to improve their existing transportation systems, be it LRT or subways, in order to get people out of their cars.

In the meantime, we are doing just the opposite. Instead of putting money into public transportation the City is putting dollars into street renewal, bridges and freeways, servicing the car industry. Instead of lowering bus fares to increase ridership each year we continue to increase bus fares. Instead of improving the bus system that we have, we continue to allow it to deteriorate and that is a fact.

To bring things into perspective here, Transit has been in crisis since 1986, that is the last time that Transit ridership was at its highest rate. Since then there has been and this is your own Transit report, a 21% reduction in service, fewer buses on the road, as well as a overall a significant decrease in ridership each time fares have gone up. Even though, and I'll admit that ridership has leveled off in the past two years, and has occasionally increased somewhat in the last 2 years, the reality is however that ridership is a long way from what it was in 1986 which is the standard that we should be looking at, not in terms of the lower increases that we may have on the way.

The Public Works Committee did not concur with the recommended fare increases because they recognized that this time the Federal government is pouring millions of dollars into public transportation, including Winnipeg. As far as I understand lately, looking at the figures that I noticed in one of the papers, approximately $103 million dollars will be transferred to Winnipeg over the next five years for public transportation. That's close to $20 million dollars a year, because they want to get people out of their cars and onto the bus, due to high gas prices.

But, when the Transit department is asked how they are going to plan to spend our money, this money they have no answer is forthcoming. In fact, it was interesting to note that Mayor Sam Katz after the EPC meeting did go on record stating that he wished to have some improvements in Transit that he wants to see. Whether the Transit department concurs with his vision, I don't have a clue. Whether the rest of City Council concurs with his wishes I don't have a clue, as this is obviously Mayor Sam Katz's personal wish list and which I'm very supportive of.

That includes bus only priority lights, where buses jump the queue in traffic. We have a few of them already. I think an increase in that would be significant. Furthermore he wants to make real time bus arrival updates a reality whereby the actual time will be posted at bus stops. It actually already is by the way except not in the big print that I suspect the Mayor is talking about. It's done in these little things and if don't, can't read properly you won't be able to notice it, so that when the bus is due and it will actually show up on time.

Unfortunately, I would suggest to Mayor Katz, that winter conditions in Winnipeg make that significantly impossible to happen even if the technology is implemented because when you have a snowstorm, buses are usually an hour to

an hour and a half late, and I'll tell you I take the bus every day and in the winter time on the bus schedule that I look at, I have yet to have a bus come on the time that it says it's supposed to come.

Furthermore Mr. Katz suggested there should be more bus shelters built as well as those more heated bus shelters and I absolutely support this and of course I would suggest that it should be built of plexiglas than regular glass, which he didn't suggest, which has been broken so often that it creates nothing but a feeling that people don't want to use the bus.

I would also suggest that in fact bus fares increases that the amount that is being proposed, that therefore as some residents have suggested as part of this discussion, that Transit be usable all day long instead of just for the hour and a half and I think that would significantly increase traffic for business purposes of shopping, and whatever else. If you got on the bus at 9:00 a.m. in the morning you can use it till 9:00 p.m. in the evening, etcetera, is a lot better than getting a bus transfer at 9:00 a.m. and then having to buy another ticket at 10:15 or 10:30 approximately.

I would also suggest, and the article here if you read Jeff Lowe's article, that we should implement electronic fare boxes. We're talking about losing money. Every City has electronic fare boxes. That is they, the electronic fare boxes means they count exactly the amount of money due. I can tell you how many times people put far less money in then what they're supposed to put in and the bus driver doesn't care because it's there. As long as you put something in, it's fine and dandy. And I don't really know how much money is lost but if you're talking about constant deficits it's one thing that definitely improves making sure that you actually collect what you're supposed to collect.

The crisis in Winnipeg public transportation is two-fold. And it's the fact that the only city, Winnipeg is the only city of its size that does not have any kind of rapid transit system. Be it light railway, be it bus rapid transit or subway. This has led, as I've said over and over again and nobody seems to want to talk about this, a ghettoized public transportation system. That is, that only is specific sector of society uses our public transportation system, mainly those on a fixed income, seniors, students, and people with disabilities. While in other cities, suburbanites leave their cars at home and take public transportation to work, here they prefer to buy a second car in order to solve their transportation problems.

I think we're caught in a vicious cycle. As bus fares increase and ridership decreases transit riders are paying more and more of the cost of operating Transit. In fact, it's been quite clear 58%, close to 60% is paid for by the riders and 40% is paid by the taxpayer. So I'll be blunt. Ridership will increase only when there is a significant improvement of service, and to be fair this is something that the Mayor Katz is finally talking about, as well as a decrease in bus fares.

Improved bus service on its own will not be enough to cover the deficit that Transit faces each year. This will result unfortunately in the continued nickel and diming of citizens each year as bus fares continue to increase because the reason they come back to us year after year is because Transit has a deficit, from whatever it causes, whether it is gas prices or whatever else and therefore it keeps on demanding increases. And if there is, if there is a deficit, continually a deficit you cannot maintain a fee level for a long period of time at the same level.

Only this two-pronged approach of improved bus services as well as a decreased bus fare is necessary in order to get citizens to think about the importance of our transportation system. Why not be innovative? Why not try it? You have nothing to lose to give free bus transportation, for example, for one week in the City of Winnipeg and see how much of a ridership increase that might have. Or, in one particular week, in a certain area, suburbanites get a bus, bus ticket or whatever else for one dollar instead of a dollar, two dollars to come to, like they are going to work downtown and then make sure you keep statistics on

what kind of increase in ridership and what those people say about the buses.

If you can at least get 50,000 suburbanites onto a bus that they've never been on in their lives, because I know many of them never have been on a bus, in one week you might have a significant mental attitudinal change towards the way we look at our public transportation system. I don't see why we can't do all this.

As I say, the importance of our transportation system is important; the importance of having a vehicle and perhaps getting the Transit department back on track so they don't have to continue to increase bus fares is significant. It is fundamental that we look at the public transportation system as something that serves the needs of all citizens of Winnipeg, middle class, professional class and the working class.

We've got to stop this ghettoization of public transportation system, and we've got to stop thinking in terms of a totality of how, what public transportation does to service the needs of the citizens, all of the citizens of Winnipeg. We're the only City who doesn't do it and I would hope that we move towards that direction and as I said, bus fare increases will not do it. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mr. Ternette. Amanda Aziz, in the five minute slot.

Mr. Ternette: No, no.

Mr. Speaker: No, I'm running the meeting Mr. Ternette. Amanda Aziz has the five minute slot. Yes. Yeah. Ms. Aziz.

Ms. Amanda Aziz: HI there, good morning. Yesterday when I called they said I had 10 minutes so I'm going to try and get through this and not talk too fast. Good morning everyone and I just want to thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you this morning. My name Amanda and I'm the President of the University Manitoba Students' Union and also the National Executive Representative for the Canadian Federation of Students, and I also have a bit of a cold so I'll try to not cough through this too much.

So I'm here to speak to you this morning and to hope that you'll give careful consideration to the impacts of the proposal before you to increase Transit fares will have and could have both in the short and long term. As I'm sure you've all heard by now many of the City's post-secondary education students are very concerned with the direction of this Council with regards to public transit and in particular with the proposal before you today. So in this regard I'm expressing concern on behalf of every students' association in Winnipeg and on behalf of the over 50,000 students we represent.

As if you've seen my letter which we sent you last week, a large proportion of students in this City depend on Winnipeg Transit for regular use to and from school as well as in their daily lives outside of university or college. Though the increases being proposed are now less than those originally proposed to the Public Works and Executive Policy Committees they still represent a significant increase for post secondary education students who, as you know, do not currently receive any discounts on fares with the exception of the post-secondary education pass.

So as some of you have heard already from Kate Sjoberg my counter-part at the University of Winnipeg Students' Association, the concern from students does not stem solely from the actual increase in costs but also from the negative spin-off effects such as an increase would create.

Students like many other groups in Winnipeg are most often on a low and fixed income and with other necessary costs of attending p.s.e. increasing, an increase in transportation costs may have a greater effect than might be considered by Council members. A 15 cent increase in cash fares and $1.45 increase in monthly bus passes may not sound like a lot but it is an increase that is hard to absorb by those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

This is not only for students. According to the Social Planning Council yesterday who released a news release and a report, fares according to them are already too high and place an unfair burden on those who make up the majority of Transit riders who are those with the least ability to pay. So that includes low and fixed income people, women, youth and students, families with children, seniors, Aboriginal people, people living with disabilities and immigrants. I'm sure that none of this is new information to any of you.

So while we understand that the responsibility of establishing Transit fares and Transit rates falls solely on the municipal government I also just want to note that we also recognize that all levels of government have a role in maintaining the accessibility of our public Transit system. Today or this morning however, my comments focus on the City's role.

As Nick has already said, a number of the facts and comments that I'm going to raise are similar to some of the things that he has already said. Simple supply and demand logic would note that when the cost of service is increased the demand for it will almost always correspondingly decrease. And though I wouldn't suggest that Transit use would follow such simple logic there is merit in examining this further.

As some of you probably saw in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, through Transit's own stats, the number of rides a year on City buses has decreased by 1.3 million each year between 1995 and 2004 and as Nick said, 21% since 1986. While I know there has been slight increases in 2004, I think there is a direct correlation that could be made between increased fares and decreased ridership. Whereas in the context of no considerable improvements to Transit, the factors around a slight increase in ridership were harder to find.

Affordability has been identified as a factor related to reduce ridership and particularly when compounded with or by other increases to the cost of living, and I think, you are all familiar and note that since the 1980's Transit fares have actually increased at a greater rate to CPI, so the cumulative effects on that have had an, or of those continuous increases have had an increased burden.

Okay, so I'm going to skip ahead here. A couple of quick things. I certainly, as students we understand that the costs related to providing services increase each year. I think as a City Council what needs to happen is prioritization and planning of things that we think are important and necessary in this City. So things that we think will make our City attractive to young people, to not only attracting young people in the City but also retaining young people in the City.

There are over 50,000 post-secondary education students. One of the City's and Provincial priorities I would imagine is retaining those students in the City. And I would argue that accessible, effective, and well run and well received public Transit system is a factor that students and young people will look for in a City that they wish to reside. Increasing Transit fares and not having an overall strategy for improving the Transit service in the City is certainly not the direction that I think would take us to an attractive system for students.

We're obviously concerned about some of the environmental impacts. Transit, a good and well received Transit system can have on, on the City but I also just want to point to some of the investments that this City has made in a, in the Social Planning Council report yesterday, and I'll be 30 more seconds. In the Social Planning report yesterday, there was some statistics that were reported on in regards to the investment that the Province and the City has made in Winnipeg Transit, noting specifically that from the new Building Manitoba Fund which shares the municipality's portions of the Provincial Income Tax and Fuel Tax revenues that the Provincial government increased their share of to transit by $2.5 million and that the City decreased its grant by $1.6 million dollars. I was really surprised to read that and I think that this strategy needs to be reconsidered in the vein of trying to improve public transit in this City.

Just in summary, I guess students are really concerned with the lack of support from the municipal government for this City's public transit system and the increasing shift independence on fares for funding Transit. I think this concerns is particularly significant for those with the least ability to pay and most significant for a vision of our City that would be attractive to young people.

So just to finish up here, as a letter, as our letter to all of you stated last week we're feeling more and more that our call for a properly funded high quality public transit system is falling on deaf ears in this Council and I hope that you recognize this society's value of public transit this morning. Consider alternate ways to fund the system rather than with fare hikes. Nick pointed out a couple, decreasing fares, improving service, all of these things could have an impact on increasing ridership and that's revenue. We hope that you oppose the proposal that is before you today. I further call on this Council to increase investment.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, I'm sorry I'm going to have to; you've gone well over your time. There are questions for this group. Councillor Wyatt followed by Councillor Smith.

Councillor Wyatt: Yes, thank you Mr. Ternette, thank you for your presentation. Would you say that this ridership increase, fare increase will have a direct impact on the poor and especially the working poor of our City?

Mr. Nick Ternette: Mr. Speaker of course, absolutely. As I said, the only people who tend to use it are those who don't have a car and those are the disadvantaged in our society. Some will pay, of course, the amount that they have, and you might still feel a level amount, the same level that you had in terms of last year you might still have that ridership because if you're forced to use something you're going to pay it no matter what. You're going to find the money from somewhere else but you've got to sacrifice your food budget or some other budget.

The problem is that it does not increase it enough to cover the deficits. Why is Transit always, the question that should be asked that nobody is asking is why is Transit coming back for the last 12 years, 13 years with a constant deficit? So the point is that the only way that they know how to deal with that deficit is to ask for an increase in bus fares.

They're obviously not going to ask for the property tax holder to pay more of their share for that so they're always coming but if we can't break even there has to be a point where the ridership breaks even with the amount of cost of operating of the Transit system and that requires a significant increase in ridership obviously. I would suspect that you have to have a ridership base that equal to 1986 ridership basis in order to be able to break even. Then you don't have to increase the bus fares anymore. You're going to be able to carry it on for a period of time.

Otherwise we're going to be back here next year no matter what anybody says. I, you cannot take somebody's word saying $2 is it and for the next two or three years we not going to ask for a bus fare increase. That is absolute nonsense because Transit is in a deficit. It's us who use Transit we're going to be asked to carry that load, not the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker: Do you have a supplementary Councillor Wyatt?

Councillor Wyatt: Yes, in light of the fact this is going to a subsidy you have to also look at the reverse side of that and that is that overall would you not agree that we are subsidizing the ridership, is actually subsidizing Winnipeg Transit higher in proportion than most other jurisdictions in Canada?

Mr. Nick Ternette: Mr. Speaker, yes of course. There is an issue here, however, that a lot of jurisdictions, transit is funded by the Provincial governments rather than municipal governments. We're one of two or three that a matter of fact have this so-called cost sharing agreement and no question, the Provincial government has not shown any significant interest in urban

transportation and I don't really know why. I've asked that question of them too.

In terms of providing more of a fair share in terms of bus rates, but the point is 60% of the costs of operating is covered as a basic service that the City provides. Ambulance, fire, police and others, the taxpayer pays 100%. There is no actual additional subsidy. We don't pay, we don't all use the fire service all at once, I mean if you have a fire, you use it. Same thing with Transit. Not everybody uses Transit yet Transit users pay significant user fees in terms of the user transit which is a basic standard service that should be provided in every City and it is provided in every City while other services like ambulance and police and all that are 100% funded by the taxpayer. So you obviously need to look at it in terms of what the priorities are.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Yes thank you Mr. Ternette for your answers. My last question would be are you aware that this, based on 2004 numbers, this would now push us up on average fares into the high bracket in of compared to other Canadian cities? For average fares now we'll be up there with Toronto, Mississauga and Vancouver compared to other like cities like Winnipeg.

Mr. Nick Ternette: Mr. Speaker, yes and the problem is you can't, the Transit department if you looked at their little report, actually compare apples to oranges. They're saying, yes, we're not going to be much higher we're actually going to be roughly the same as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. The only problem is all those cities have either subways or LRTs and in Ottawa's case a bus rapid transit system.

But the point is, in all of those cases you're getting high quality service, okay. You get on, in Calgary for example, you get onto a station where you can buy a coffee and have a newspaper in a warm, heated station and we're not even talking a little bus shelter here. You get on in seven minutes. Every seven minutes an LRT runs downtown. You get downtown in 10 or 12 minutes and you go to your office to work. I mean the quality of service is significantly higher!

I mean if a Calgarian came from Calgary and wanted to use our bus service system and said I've got to pay the same for the quality of service that I get in Calgary, you must be nuts to be blunt. I mean, we're not worth two bucks in terms of the service. If we had the service that every other City has then yes two bucks might be all right.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Yes, Mr. Ternette, are you not sort of surprised that the Chamber of Commerce is not here opposing the increase in Transit fares? This does affect businesses does it not?

Mr. Nick Ternette: Yeah. Yeah, Mr. Speaker. Yes it does and I don't know. They have rarely spoken on bus fare increases. You would think they would want to encourage people to use the buses to go shopping more and more downtown. But they haven't come here and said they support the bus fare increase neither. They don't seem to take any position on this matter so I'm not sure. Somebody should ask Mr. Angus where he stands on it but they're neither here for or against. You would think if they were for bus fares they would be here fighting for something but they're obviously not.

So in my opinion they haven't taken a position on it so for them it's obviously not that important because they figure the majority of people who do shopping downtown use the car. That's why we have such a car mentality. But in fact we could, should discourage people from using the cars downtown and use a bus system, a public transportation to get downtown to do their shopping.

Mr. Speaker: Do you have supplementary Councillor Smith? You're okay? Councillor Benham.

Councillor Benham: Thanks very much Mr. Speaker, and I thank Mr. Ternette but other Councillors have asked my

questions, I wonder if I can direct my question to Ms. Aziz. And Ms. Aziz, of course you're aware that part of the strategy of having a lower fare for students, for post-secondary students is to encourage them to ride the bus and to develop a lifelong riding habit, certainly the hope, that's part of the notion, as well as acknowledging that students have less money.

Can you tell me what, between cancelling bus rapid transit and not reinstating it yet, raising fares on students and threatening to raise them right up to the full $2 dollars, can you tell me what effect that has on the view of Winnipeg Transit, the view of Winnipeg City Council, the likelihood of developing life-long riders among the students, the 50,000 students that you're here representing? And also potentially its effect on that so-called Super Pass as well, the political will for the Super Pass.

Ms. Amanda Aziz: Thank you for the question. Yeah I think the one thing I was going to point to was the passes that we're trying to negotiate with Transit right now. But, to be blunt, I would say that there is a general feeling of discouragement from students, both at the University of Manitoba and I would say at other campuses across the City, in regards to the direction of this Council is taking towards transit.

So first cancelling any improvements that we would see immediately from the bus rapid transit system last year that would have direct impacts on one of the largest communities that exists in Winnipeg to the University of Manitoba and downtown. I think people are getting frustrated and I think even just from seeing not as many students here today as they were during the bus rapid transit fight, I think people are totally discouraged and feeling there is no point anymore to be fighting these causes in City Council. Which I think is really concerning. Which I think you should all be really concerned about as well in terms of participation in civic responsibilities in the City.

In addition to that, I think we are feeling as the student representatives in the associations in the City, we're trying to work out a deal with Transit. It's not the first time we've spoken about it. I think you're all familiar with this idea that we're trying to negotiate. What a number of other student associations provide for their members across the country, and that's a universal bus pass where students vote on a bus pass, you know they pay one fee at the beginning of the year and then that provides each student with a bus pass with the idea that would develop not only, or would not only provide cheaper bus passes for students because they are sharing the cost across all students, but also that you develop these sort of life-long habits of students taking public transit.

It's becoming harder and harder for us to talk about these proposals with the lack of action from City Council on Transit. Certainly after the bus rapid transit plan was cancelled there was a lot of push back in terms of us going forward with a plan around making bus passes mandatory for all students.

I think the best thing that the City can do is not support this proposal to increase fares and instead support increased services and in that sense it would certainly give us a lot more opportunity to strike this deal with our students with Winnipeg Transit and then we would have you know this increase, mass increase ridership of all these students who would automatically have bus passes. So in response I guess I would say that yeah, there is a fair amount of discouragement right now among the City's students.

Councillor Benham: Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Mayor Katz, very short, you have 30 seconds.

Mayor Katz: Very short. Ms. Aziz, if you could, just a couple of comments that you just made. If students who are regularly using Transit to go to school as well as to go to work, why would they not take advantage of a $1.25 fare by buying tickets whether it's 10 or 5 tickets at a time, so that it would be much less expensive for them?

Ms. Amanda Aziz: What, why wouldn't they? Well I guess, I wouldn't say that students; students sometimes will take classes one time or three times a week, so Monday, Wednesday and Friday. But a lot of the other time, I would say that it's out of convenience too right. Like bus passes, I don't know where you can purchase 5 tickets. I was reading some of the *Winnipeg Free Press* notices the other day and I've never seen bus tickets sold for 5, in packs of 5, but it's a matter of convenience right. I think, instead of focusing on this idea that students can be buying tickets for $1.25 I think we need to be encouraging the idea that we need to be providing universally accessible passes so this idea that we should be encouraging students to purchase bus passes so that they're taking the bus all the time.

This is, the services in the City are not convenient and conducive enough for students from St. James, you know, to have four days in their, or four hours in their day to take the bus all the way to the University of Manitoba, all the way downtown. I think part of the problem is service. So the service needs to be improved in this City and that would go a long way in terms of increasing ridership both among students and among other citizens.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. The time for questions has expired. Thank you very much for your presentation.

Okay, we'll move on now to the additional speakers pursuant to the rule suspension, maximum five minutes each, there will be no questions and we'll keep everybody to their time. In this order I have on the Transit fares, Wade Kojo Williams, Myfanwy Cawley, Emily Ternette, Margoe Lavoie, Marlene Vinot, Carol Ellerback, and I have, I believe it's Michelle Kading on the environmental item. I don't think this name is spelled correctly but I'll get to that. Beginning with Mr. Williams. He's not here? He is not here. Myfanwy Cawley.

Ms. Myfanwy Cawley: Good morning and I'll guarantee that I will not even need the five minutes. I'm going to speak without notes today. And I just want to encourage City Council to vote on no increase if at all possible for seniors as this negatively impacts this particular low-income community who have no opportunity to get money from anywhere else and are completely reliant on Transit.

Also remember these are not necessarily people you want driving their cars. These are people who are no longer able to drive and must take the bus. We don't want to see any more seniors starving. We don't want to see them using any extra money they have to take the bus to get somewhere instead of feeding themselves, or alternatively not getting medical treatment because they can't afford to get there because they can't afford the bus. We understand that an increase needs to happen and if it does need to happen, please make it as small as possible. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much Ms. Cawley. Emily Ternette.

Ms. Emily Ternette: Thank you Mr. Speaker, Your Worship Mayor Katz and members of City Council. My name is Emily Ternette for those of you who don't know me. I am the Communications and Program Assistant with the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities. The MLPD is a nonprofit human rights advocacy organization that works towards the full inclusion of persons with disabilities through lobbying, to change policy and legislation. I'm here today to speak on behalf of the MLPD about the proposed increase in bus fares, scheduled to be in place on January 1st, 2006.

The City of Winnipeg has shown some very positive steps in working with the disability community. You have adopted the universal design concept for all City buildings which will go a long way towards including people with disabilities as fully participating citizens in Winnipeg.

Handi-Transit has also been very amenable to meeting with our membership to work on issues that are of concern to consumers of the Handi-Transit system and we are also

encouraged to see an increase in the low-floor buses on the regular Transit system.

However, we are outraged at the regressive steps that the City has taken recently. It began with the Mayor attempting to dismantle the Access Advisory Committee, a Committee that consists of citizens with disabilities. Had this Committee been dissolved it would have significantly lessened citizen participation in our government especially for people with disabilities.

Now the City is once again entertaining a proposal by the Transit department for yet another increase in Transit fares and not the same proposal that is put forth every year at this time, a 5 cent increase. No, this year the Transit department has gotten really creative and developed a two-tier bus fare system. Those who are able to afford to purchase bus tickets in bulk or a bus pass will see a 5 cent increase. However, those who pay their bus fare with cash will be hit with a whopping 15 cent increase.

And to add insult to injury, the City has decided to play let's make a deal with university students and seniors by bringing the cash fare increase from 15 cents down to 10 cents per ride. University students are in the midst of making a further deal with Transit by negotiating, or reduced yearly bus pass fee which will be added to their tuition.

Our question is what makes students and seniors a more deserving sector of society to receive lower bus fares? The message you are leaving with the disability community is that there is no fair consideration being made when it comes to determining who will receive a break on bus fare increases.

As we have said previously, the reality is that the majority of people with disabilities live on a low or fixed income. There is no way that most of those individuals can even entertain the idea of buying a sheet of bus tickets or a bus pass. They are, for the most part living day to day financially and it is even more unreasonable to expect them to try to budget a 15 cent increase per bus fare in a month if they pay in cash.

If the disability community had seen a significant improvement in the Handi-Transit system over the past year, as well as easier access to low-floor buses, a bus fare increase might not be so difficult to imagine. However, despite some improvements Handi-Transit services are sadly lacking leaving many without rides to doctor's appointments or recreational activities.

If this proposed bus fare increase is passed by City Council today, the negative impact for people with disabilities living in Winnipeg will be enormous. Not only those living day-to-day financially will not be able to afford bus fare but mental and physical health costs will rise as people with disabilities become more isolated and less active in Winnipeg life. It has been well documented that all human beings do much better physically and emotionally if they are involved outside of their homes.

City Council must not vote for this bus fare increase today. It is your responsibility as City Councillors, who have been elected to govern our City, to make Winnipeg a fair and equal opportunity place to live. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much Ms. Ternette. Margoe Lavoie.

Ms. Margoe Lavoie: Good morning Mr. Speaker, Mr. Mayor and Councillors. I'm here this morning, hoping that I'm not wasting my time as there have been and many others made presentations regarding the bus fares. This morning I'm representing the Oblate, Manitoba Oblate Justice and Peace Committee. And I do not want to repeat many of the things that have been said just before me because I do agree with what has been said by Mr. Ternette and Ms. Ternette and so on, so forth, and also with Marianne.

The whole question of poverty is really linked to this question of bus fares. I hope that our City will be a City for people. Where when we look at issues we will look at how our decisions affect

people and the people who are from the grassroots first.

I think it was wrong to agree, for the EPC to decide that they were going with the proposed changes in bus fares. I would like to suggest that we leave the bus fares as they are now but take time to look at the whole question of transportation outside the box. Try to think creatively.

And I think some of the issues that we have to look at are mobility; mobility for all the citizens. When you are poor, and when you have limited, limited finances transportation is very important. And you need to go to appointments, and sometimes when you're poor, you have more appointments than not. And just thinking of a trip downtown, if there's a parent with two or three children who are above 4, and are going to a medical appointment for example, where sometimes you wait past your, the time that where you're supposed to go to an appointment, it means a fare times two. And it's really prohibitive when already you are taking off some of your money for food to provide yourself, to have a roof over your head that you start having to pay out of that money for food, for transportation.

We have to remember that the City is for all citizens, not only those who have, who are wealthy or have the means to pay these fares. Everyone should have equal access to the City and to all that is happening in the City.

There is the other area which has to do with environment, and this is where maybe we have to look at the use of cars in our City. Those who are in the suburbs and who are in better financial situations will use cars and it's easier for them to have access to the City. But on the other hand, it makes our City one that is not environmentally sustainable. We are not protecting our ecology.

So, I think one of the questions is to encourage ridership from all parts of the City, from all citizens, and they are different ways, you have to look at it from different perspectives. Some of the creative ideas have been to provide transfers that are good for the day, or else some bus passes, some days where you have passes where you don't have to pay, that during the day for those who cannot pay the fares that they are able to go to their businesses without having to pay, something like the Spirit bus you have downtown. Or for special days where there are special occasions, special events, that no one is excluded because they can't get there, because of the cost of bus fares.

So, all we are asking is that we start looking at the City from the perspective of all its people, as participation, participating in the life of the City. If we become exclusive, and only those who can afford can take part in the events, in the celebrations, we are not a City that includes everybody. We are not a City for everyone.

We cannot be a City for business only. We cannot be a City where we disregard the needs the environmental needs and we cannot be a City where we overlook the needs of people who do not have the means to move around. So with, I would ask you as you are thinking of voting today is my vote really for a people first and especially for those who are the most disadvantaged? It's a matter of crunches, I really believe so.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much Miss Lavoie, you've run out of time. Marlene Vinot. Not here? Not here. Carol Ellerbeck, Ellerback, sorry.

Ms. Carol Ellerback: Good morning and thank you very much Mr. Speaker, Your Worship and Councillors for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of Winnipeg Harvest. Winnipeg Harvest just released hunger statistics for 2005. I know that can sound like a lot of numbers but I'm asking you to listen closely for just one minute.

Across Canada reliance on food banks has actually gone down by 0.1% since last year. This however is not the case in our community. At Winnipeg Harvest, we are serving 6.5% more people than last year. Just short of 40,000 people every month. This is like feeding the entire City

of Brandon every month. Almost half of those who are hungry are children, 18,148 children every month to be exact. The depth of poverty in parts of Winnipeg is severe. In several neighbourhoods, just five minutes from where we are sitting here at City Hall there live among the poorest people in all of Canada.

I realize that you as City Councillors struggle to balance the budget each year. I appreciate that this is an extremely difficult task. I know how hard it is when gas prices are going up because of course it's also costing Winnipeg Harvest more to keep our nine trucks on the road this year, picking up food. Your job is not easy.

But I don't think we should be balancing the budget on the backs of those who are most vulnerable in our community. People who are struggling at the poverty line level and there are thousands of those people all around us, to them another 10 cent and 15 cent increase is substantial. That is triple the rate of inflation. Minimum wage increases are not triple the rate of inflation nor are disability cheques or social assistance cheques or pension cheques. A 5 cent transit fare increase matches inflation. Five cents not 10 or 15 cents, that's the increase we should be talking about here today, 5 cents.

I want to tell you about some of the students that we see lining up to get an emergency can of soup and macaroni and cheese. We have food banks on every major campus. We also supply emergency food to 29 Winnipeg schools and we have another eight schools on our waiting list. Why? Because children and teenagers and young adults are going to school hungry. That's the sad reality that we see at Winnipeg Harvest every single day.

Parents are struggling with increasing rents and heating bills and the only wiggle room that they have in their budget is the food money, so they take their grocery money to pay their other fixed bills. You're now adding more pressure on these households by slapping another 10 or 15 cent increase to do something as basic as ride the bus. They have no other option. They can't say forget it I'll drive instead. They usually don't own cars. We see people at the food bank who have walked for 30 and 40 minutes in cold weather, underdressed because they couldn't afford bus fare. People who are struggling to simply feed themselves and their families cannot afford the cheaper monthly bus pass because it's too much money upfront. They pay for one bus ride at a time.

I would like to take a moment to applaud Mayor Sam Katz for suggesting several months ago that a task force on poverty is needed. We believe this is very much overdue. The causes of poverty and hunger in our community are complex and we know it takes dedication and leadership for all of us to come to grips with this. Solutions begin with political will and a caring and compassionate heart. Winnipeg Harvest welcomes any chance to work with you in a constructive way.

But I would also ask each and every one of to you hold the bus fare increase to a nickel as has been done in previous years. I know this puts pressure on you to find savings elsewhere but I truly think that we can't punish our most vulnerable citizens by passing along the gasoline increases onto them. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much Ms. Ellerback. And the final presentation, this is on the Environmental Committee motion, is Michele Kading. Do I have the name right? I do.

Ms. Michele Kading: Hello everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the future of the Civic Environmental Committee. I have been proud to serve on this Committee since its inception in 2001. During this time, I have gladly volunteered my time and expertise along with the other members of the Committee to provide advice related to the many and often monumental environmental issues that you face as Councillors on a daily basis.

I do not envy you your position. You have each accepted the responsibility of ensuring the long-term economic, social and environmental health of our City. Regardless of your personal backgrounds

and expertise, each day you are called upon to make important decisions that require knowledge of a wide range of often very complex environmental subjects. Each of which could take a lifetime to fully understand. Unfortunately you don't have the luxury of having a lifetime to learn about each topic before making your decisions. This is where a citizens advisory committee composed of experts representing a wide range of environmental disciplines can help if it is used to maximum advantage.

By this I mean asking the Committee for its advice on a particular subject, policy or program before actually making your decisions and allowing the Committee sufficient time to bring in additional expertise if required. The environment, consisting of five apparently simple components, air, water, soil, plants and animals, quickly becomes so broad and complex when you begin to look at the interactions between these components, that there is no one person, an Environmental Coordinator or even eight people as our Committee, with decades of cumulative experience who can answer every question that you might have wished to have answered before making your decision. Now add the further complication of having to consider the social and economic implications of each decision. Our role as a Committee is somewhat simpler.

While always aware that you must consider the social and economic factors in your final decisions, the role of the Civic Environmental Committee has been to focus on its mandate to provide you with the best current scientific information about the environment that will help you make decisions that will not undermine the long-term health of the environment, the people, or the economy.

Unfortunately, Winnipeg has too many examples of past decisions that were made for short-term economic gain. The City is now literally paying the price for these unsustainable decisions. The City has allowed development on environmentally sensitive, erosion sensitive and flood prone lands along its rivers. As a result Councillor Swandel and the City must now face the potentially enormous costs related to eroding river banks in St. Norbert and elsewhere and the annual threats of flood damage to properties in now famous neighbourhoods like Scotia Street and Kingston Row.

The City is now recognizing that it can no longer afford to fix roads that are suffering from past decisions that have allowed unchecked urban sprawl without providing adequate public transit alternatives. As Councillor Steeves is aware, I recently checked out the weekday bus service in my neighbourhood, North Kildonan or sorry West Kildonan just north of the Chief Peguis Bridge. I was surprised to find that there is no viable service for commuters who work or attend school downtown. There are no buses heading downtown between 5:40 and 9:10 in the morning. If Riverbend residents finish work at 4:30 p.m. they would have to wait 2 hours to catch the first bus returning to Riverbend at 6:30 p.m. The alternatives would be to drive 10 minutes west to Garden City to catch a half hour bus ride to get to or from work or school. There appears to be no express bus on Main Street, one of the City's major arteries to bring commuters to and from the downtown area.

Despite this lack of Transit service the City has approved the development of hundreds of new homes in the area over the past decade. While the economic benefits of these developments are realized almost immediately the true price will be paid for years to come through deteriorating roads, traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emission and reduced air quality.

The Province is also paying the price for its past, its own decisions and the City's past unsustainable decisions. Decisions that have affected the quality and quantity of water in Lake Winnipeg, air quality and climate change. The economic implications of these decisions are now beginning to come to light. As we enter the decade of sustainability, the Premier has recognized the need to embrace the principles of sustainable development. And I was told yesterday that he has even been recognized by a business magazine

as one of the country's leading environmental politicians. The Environmental Committee can help Winnipeg keep pace with the Province and our Mayor to become a similar environmental leader.

This may take a leap of faith on your part but I urge you not to be afraid to embrace the environment in your daily decisions. I guarantee that if you apply the principles of sustainable development that the economy will not suffer, in fact it may even thrive, and the costs do not have to be prohibitive. You don't need to invest in new buses or light rail or even painting traffic lanes to improve Transit service in my neighbourhood. You need only to recognize the problem, re-schedule some buses with traffic, concrete traffic reduction targets in mind, designate a couple of express services, work with the local strip mall to provide safe and free park and ride facilities and enjoy your success.

As Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Lazarenko and Pagtakhan are already aware, I have been a strong advocate for sensitive lands in West Kildonan but I am also realistic and recognize that when development is done the principles of sustainable, sustainability firmly in mind that they can benefit the economy and respect residents' needs without degrading the environment. In my efforts I have not argued…

Mr. Speaker: Madam your time has expired so last sentence please.

Ms. Michele Kading: Last sentence please. Sorry, I didn't realize there was a time limit until I got here and it was too late to cut major content.

Mr. Speaker: Just a concluding sentence please.

Ms. Michele Kading: Before you cast your vote we have contributed between, I estimate between 700 and 1,000 hours of volunteer time. I ask you to think carefully about how your decision today on this recommendation will enhance Winnipeg's environment, society and economy. Will it move the City forward or will it set things back for years to come? The ultimate decision is yours. And I will leave a copy of my entire presentation with the clerk so you can read it if would you'd like later.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. Thank you. We move now to the report of the Executive Policy Committee of November 30th, Mayor Katz.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
DATED NOVEMBER 30, 2005

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce the report and move adoption of Consent agenda items 1 through 9.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor.

Councillor Clement: I would like to vote in opposition to number 6.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement wishes to be recorded in opposition to clause 6. Okay. Any others?

The approval of the Consent agenda of November 30th.

All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

The report of December 7th, Mayor Katz.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
DATED DECEMBER 7, 2005

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce the report and move adoption of Consent agenda items 1 through 6.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

We have the additional report, I believe. Oh I'm sorry this isn't EPC, sorry about that, wrong Committee.

Notice of Motion; moved by Councillor Benham, seconded by Councillor Smith. Councillor Benham did you wish to open on this motion?

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF MOTION

Moved by Councillor Benham,
Seconded by Councillor Smith,

WHEREAS sustainability is identified in Plan Winnipeg as the first of six principles the City of Winnipeg will adhere to in addressing the challenges that Winnipeg faces;

AND WHEREAS on July 18, 2001, City Council approved creation of the Civic Environmental Committee (CEC) to provide advice to Council and the administration, facilitate community consultation and education and monitor progress on environmental and sustainable development issues and opportunities;

AND WHEREAS on October 27, 2004, City Council approved in principle the CEC report Sustainable Winnipeg: A Comprehensive Environmental Strategy that identifies environmental challenges facing Winnipeg and recommends policy objectives and key strategies that the City of Winnipeg can take to address these challenges;

AND WHEREAS City Council has adopted the Administration document Embracing Sustainability: An Environmental Priority and Implementation Plan for the City of Winnipeg 2004 - 2006 developed in response to the CEC report, to which the Administration will be reporting back to Council in December 2005;

AND WHEREAS the CEC reports directly to the Mayor and Executive Policy Committee and that the Mayor's Action Plan for a new Winnipeg pledges that the Mayor will consult with the Civic Environmental Committee to consider priorities and how to act upon the CEC's Environmental Strategy;

AND WHEREAS this consultation between the Mayor and the CEC has yet to occur;

AND WHEREAS there is also a need to independently monitor and report on the City of Winnipeg's progress in achieving its environmental priorities and targets;

AND WHEREAS the Mayor has indicated a desire to reduce City of Winnipeg expenditures on external consultants and that the CEC is composed of volunteers;

AND WHEREAS the CEC's current mandate expires on December 31, 2005;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. City Council reaffirm its support for the Civic Environmental Committee.

2. City Council extend the existing mandate, policy assistant, budget and membership of the Civic Environmental Committee.

3. City Council co-operatively develop, as soon as possible, a renewed mandate, budget and membership for the Civic Environmental Committee that reflects a shift from developing environmental objectives and strategies to establishing priorities and plans for implementing these strategies and monitoring progress towards meeting the City's environmental objectives.

Councillor Benham: Yes thank you very much Mr. Speaker. Thank you Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the motion I have put forward with the support of Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Smith, to keep the Civic Environmental Committee. Something that I think should be self-evident.

What does the motion say Mr. Speaker? What are we asking members of Council to support today? Very, very simply, Councillors, members of Council will see and the members of the public will see as they read through the motion, we simply see that sustainability is identified in *Plan Winnipeg* as an important principle that we as Council are responsible for supporting.

It traces the history of the Civic Environmental Committee and the support it has had from this Council. Some of the tasks it's been assigned and what it's accomplished and I will return to

those accomplishments in a moment Mr. Speaker.

It notes that the Mayor said that he would consult with the Civic Environmental Committee as a whole and hasn't done that yet. And asks that the City Council extend the mandate of the Civic Environmental Committee with a renewed mandate, a budget, and new members and that that be done in such a way that it's co-operative with the volunteers, we've just met one of them, with the volunteers who have given at least 700 to a 1,000 volunteer hours, I suspect that's an underestimate.

Now today Mr. Speaker we have according to the latest media reports Katz promises new committee, Environment group to be revived. What a strange Alice through the looking glass logic that is Mr. Speaker that one kills the Environmental Committee, the Mayor kills the Environmental Committee, because he supports the idea of an Environmental Committee. Does anyone else have trouble following that logic Mr. Speaker? Because I do and I think the Councillors who support the Mayor should have a little bit of trouble with that as well.

It is a strange logic but we've heard it before Mr. Speaker. It comes from the same Mayor who professed a love for rapid transit while he was killing rapid transit. And from the same Mayor who professed a love for hearing from the citizens while he was killing three committees that heard from citizens. And now today Mr. Speaker, we hear that this Mayor wants to be advised by citizens on the environment but he is killing the Committee that already exists and already does that.

The Mayor reversed himself on the question of the other citizen committees and he can reverse himself on this issue simply by voting for the motion that is before us today, moved by me and seconded by Councillor Smith.

Why? What is the case for the other point of view? Why is the Mayor killing this Committee only to claim he will revive some future committee at some point in the future he will bring it back to life? Why not simply work with the Committee that already exists. Work with the volunteers who have given their time and if necessary reform or reconstitute the Committee or appoint new members? Why does it have to be killed?

I hope the Mayor will enter debate and participate in debate and answer that question. And also I hope he will distinguish between why he voted to save the three other citizen committees and why he is killing this citizen committee. What is the difference between a committee that represents people in wheelchairs and who want access to this committee, to this City, and people of visible minorities who want to make sure that this City treats all its citizens equally and members of a Civic Environmental Committee who want to make sure that City Councillors get the best advice possible on serious issues that are before us?

Were the Committee members consulted as to how they thought the Committee could be made more effective? No Mr. Speaker, despite a promise from the Mayor, and from the chair who represents him, that did not happen.

Mr. Speaker I'm reminded of a certain military organization that had a simple plan to test its own recruits. They were all issued a dog and told that the most important test they would face would be in how well they trained and bonded with that dog. For weeks they would spend every waking minute with the dog. They were encouraged to sleep with the dog as well. At the end of training, the recruit and dog stood in front of the commander and the real purpose was revealed. To prove his loyalty, the new officer would have to kill the dog. Without a moment's thought, the officer would reach over and ring the dog's neck.

Councillor Steeves was given the Civic Environmental Committee by the former Mayor Glen Murray. He was told he could prove himself fit for higher office around City Hall if he led this Committee to producing an environmental strategy, which the Committee did. Public hearings

into that strategy to hear from the public and to raise awareness and consciousness about environmental issues which the Committee did. And it's perhaps worth noting that Mayor Murray attended many of those sessions Mr. Speaker demonstrating his commitment as a Mayor to environmental issues. Getting an Environmental Coordinator position in the Winnipeg Public Service, which the Committee did. The Committee made Councillor Steeves look pretty good. If he did say so himself, as he did, frequently when accepting awards on behalf of the City for ideas and projects that were initiated by the Committee he so ably led.

But the prevailing winds have changed at City Hall Mr. Speaker and we now have a Mayor who says he is killing a Civic Environmental Committee because he supports a Civic Environmental Committee and Councillor Steeves gets the message and follows that twisted logic. He will kill his dog. And no matter how much he tries to rationalize that today with nice sounding words about some other dog at some other time, the fact is his dog will be dead and he will have killed it.

Which of the Committee members who have volunteered their time do Councillor Steeves and the Mayor not wish to get advice from? Who are they not prepared to serve with? Because these Committee members listed on our Committee website are experts in their field, as Miss Kading said. Miss Kading herself; Terry Willard with the International Institute of Sustainable Development; Tony Zienkiewicz representing labour; Bob Foster, wealth of expertise in engineering, public and private sector; Ken MacKinnon, Rodney McDonald, experts in creating green buildings and in doing things, building things differently in Winnipeg, great advice to have; Ken Klassen who consults all over Canada on these issues; the Committee's very capable assistant Kristine Koster. All told no thanks, we don't need you anymore, we know all the answers but we'll recreate something like this Committee in the future.

So the Mayor now claims he has a plan for a new, improved Civic Environment Committee. Where's the plan Sam? He has known for a year this Committee was going to end. He was notified in October by a motion passed at the Committee and sent to Executive Policy Committee that the Committee wanted to discuss its mandate with him and carry on a dialogue. The Mayor has never attended a Committee meeting nor has he ever met separately with the full Committee.

The Mayor and EPC have already made a big mistake when it came to citizen advisory committees, they've reversed their position. I offered him an opportunity at that time to clarify his position with regard to the Civic Environmental Committee. I thought he might see that like ripping a band-aid off quickly, it might be helpful for him to do this all at once and simply to agree that four citizen advisory committees should be maintained instead of the three we were discussing at that point. He replied to me, "I can tell you we have a keen interest in ensuring matters of sustainability and the environment remain a priority for Council and our civic administration." Huh? What does that mean Mr. Speaker? I have no idea. That letter was written on November 21st and since then the Mayor withdrew his motion axing the citizen committees from the Council agenda, from the November Council agenda and Councillor Smith and I put forward our Notice of Motion.

If the Mayor were at all sincere in his desire to have the City of Winnipeg have an environmental committee he would simply vote for this motion. If he had a better plan, he would simply put it forward. The fact that he doesn't have a better plan to put forward shows that this is simply stalling for time. He wants to kill off this Committee and I haven't heard a single good reason why.

I urge all Councillors to support this motion to maintain the Civic Environmental Committee, the important work it does, and the advice we receive as Councillors from knowledgeable volunteers. I urge all Councillors to join

me in supporting this motion unanimously. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Gerbasi on the motion.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Mayor for finally revealing the secret we've all been wanting to know for months. What is the future of the Environment Committee? Well at least we've gotten a hint from this morning's paper. Although Councillor Steeves has told us that EPC has been discussing this issue for months, the future of the Civic Environmental Committee has been a mystery even to members of the Committee itself and to some members of Council.

We have heard only this morning in the *Free Press* that the Mayor has said he will let this Committee die and re-establish a new one. Council has not been informed of any of the details such as what will be the new mandate of this Committee and what the membership will be.

It would have been more appreciated if the Committee members and Councillors would have been advised of this directly and in a timely matter. It would have also been appreciated if there was a review done of the Committee before the Committee is killed in this way so that Councillors and the public can know the reasoning behind this decision.

I'm really saddened by the lack of consideration shown to our citizen volunteers in the way that this has been handled. Members of the Committee who are all knowledgeable, well-respected, environmentally active citizens are being shown the door without so much as a thank you, without so much as an explanation or justification. In fact I think they're being treated very, very shabbily.

It was only a few weeks ago that the Mayor backed off his intention to scrap the other three citizen committees and I applaud him for reversing his position. The volunteers on those Committees are greatly relieved. But now we are seeing the same kind of lack of regard for volunteers only a few weeks later. I recall the history of the establishment of this Committee. When I was first elected in 1998 the environment was an issue that always seemed to be on the back burner of this Council.

This Committee was set up by the former Mayor, also known as the one who cannot be named. The idea was to raise the bar by setting up this Committee to shepherd forward a new environmental strategy for the City and to provide citizen input. There was a sunset clause put in place. It only makes sense to review a Committee's mandate after three or four years to reevaluate but where the heck is the review? Here it is in the last minute, the eleventh hour and no review has materialized; at least no public review.

We all know that members of the EPC have been talking about this for a long time but how can a Committee be properly reviewed in secret, behind closed doors, with no income, no input from Committee members, the public or Council as a whole. There hasn't been one piece of paper produced, not one tangible answer to explain why the membership of this Committee is being effectively fired. Don't our volunteers deserve more consideration and respect for their contribution?

The fact that Council has a number of political decisions that reflect, that has made a number of political decisions that reflect poorly on its willingness to act on environmental issues is not the fault of the Committee members. Council has chosen to largely to ignore the Committee and has gone in the direction that shows a lack of interest in our environmental strategy. Rapid transit was cancelled; hog farms were embraced; pesticide use continues unchecked; suburban sprawl continues; transit fares go up.

Since we have been given no explanation about why this Committee is being allowed to die, forgive me if I speculate. This has been a Committee that has brought forward ideas about environmental policy that have challenged us; challenged us to be innovative and to make some change. Obviously that is not what EPC wants to hear. Citizens raising

challenging issues like this are seen by some on this Council as an unnecessary annoyance.

Well frankly this Council needs those people. Why? Because the environment is not really a priority of this Council. I say, I say this based on the actions and decisions that have been made by this Council. The environment is an issue that really ought to be a top priority for every City in this day and age. It is not as if there is a shortage of issues to deal with. We have global warming; the high cost of nonrenewable resources; pesticides in our food and surroundings; pollution in our water; and then there was the impacts on our health of a car focused culture and a sedentary lifestyle.

There's so much more to do in Winnipeg. We are the Malathion capital of Canada with little effort being made to address pesticide use by private citizens. We throw out as much garbage as we like with no limits whatsoever unlike most cities. We are the only major city in Canada without a rapid transit system. We need a lot more than a committee to change the attitudes of this City Council. But I can see how this Committee might get a little discouraged by the choices that this Council keeps making. However it bothers me that they seem to be blamed for this sorry state of affairs.

We need to hear the voices of citizens who are concerned about these issues, not silence them further, and we should not replace the members with new members who will be quiet and not challenge Council to move forward in a significant way. I have no idea who the Mayor plans to appoint to this new phantom committee we just heard about in the paper this morning. Will it be, you know, representatives from Olywest or will it be activists who are trying to raise the bar and push the City to be a more forward thinking City?

This Council needs a serious kick in the pants to get environmental issues back on our radar screen. I'm not a big fan of the "do it for the children" argument. However this is one case where it is appropriate. It is our children and grandchildren that will inherit the mess we are leaving them. We have a responsibility to be conscious of the big picture of how our policies impact our environment and we have a duty to be working to preserve a safe and healthy environment. News flash, this is the only planet we have, so we better get to work on keeping it livable.

I urge Council to keep the focus on environmental issues by strengthening and reaffirming the mandate for a strong citizen environmental committee and appointing people who will speak up; people with knowledge, people with, who will raise meaningful suggestions for change.

By supporting the motion put forward today by Councillor Benham and Smith, this will achieve the continuation of such an environmental committee. In the last whereas the motion asks City Council to cooperatively develop as soon as possible a renewed mandate budgeted membership for the Civic Environmental Committee. Isn't that really what the Mayor just announced in the *Free Press* that he wants to do anyway? This leaves open plenty of room for the reinvention of the Committee and building on what is there now.

So I urge Council to support this very reasonable motion to keep a meaningful committee going and move forward with some important environmental objectives. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Steeves on the motion.

Councillor Steeves: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Regrettably I have to distance myself from some of the quotes from Councillor Benham in his opening comments. Comments like I was to prove myself fit for higher office. I don't know how Councillor Benham would purport to have that information. And I can assure you it didn't happen and it wasn't part of the thinking when this Environment Committee was struck.

There were further comments about me saying things like the Committee makes me look pretty good and all those sorts of

things. I can assure you that I've always spoke respectfully about the Committee and I am not sure I appreciate these quotes being implied to me when I don't believe I made them or that they didn't happen for other people who have been attributed to them like former Mayor Glen Murray. I don't think that's appropriate. I will not get into comparing this Committee with dogs.

Councillor Gerbasi alluded to the fact that people in the Committee were going to be dismissed without so much as a thank you. That too is a complete fabrication. If members of the Committee have ever, ever leave in any way we often have a dinner or we celebrate their involvement in the Committee and we've done that with every member of the Committee who has been on the Committee and who has ever existed and we've done, we've thanked them appropriately with a gift. That's offensive.

I want to distance myself specifically from the delegations that spoke to begin with. Not from Michele Kading, who I think as a member of the Committee spoke very articulate, was very articulate in her comments. The two members, Ms. Whiteman and Ms. Cerilli have never been members of the Committee, they do not speak on behalf of the Committee and the tone of disrespect that they lodged at this Council is not represented or supported by the Committee.

In fact the members of the Committee have always been and continue to be very respectful of Council and have done their utmost of the course of the last four years to work with people on Council not against them.

The comments about abolishing, eliminating and killing, ridiculous Mr. Speaker. The mandate of this Committee expires as per the normal course at the end of this month. No questions. It has to expire. It's what's written. Whatever exists beyond that will have to come forward as a pro-active motion from this Council, or some other form that might be agreed to by Council. I'm not certain. So we talk about anybody killing or abolishing this Committee that is absolutely not accurate and it contradicts the motion on the floor today.

Clause no. 3 which reads: "develop as soon as possible a renewed, mandate, budget, membership." New, different. Why is this motion killing the Committee? If the Mayor talking about something new is killing the Committee why is this motion a call for something new also not killing the Committee? The argument makes no sense.

There has been a lot said about the make-up of the Committee. There are exceedingly well educated competent people. Obviously that's the case. This motion, that we are arguing today, talks about I have to acknowledge, I think the intent is okay from Councillor Benham. Councillor Benham although I'd never agree with his methods, I believe his heart is actually in the right place but I never agree with how he goes about trying to form consensus of Council and I think this is another graphic example of that.

I am certain that when Councillor Benham stands up to make his concluding remarks he will stand up and say that he has spoken to virtually nobody around this Council chamber about support of this motion. I can virtually guarantee that and I look forward to his comments. I wonder if he's spoken to Councillors here today about supporting this motion. Has he taken them through the process and talked about why or is he just showing up on Councillor floor again, blustering about how much greater he is than everybody else and imploring us to support his motion that has precious little homework and legwork behind it.

It calls for us to extend the existing mandate. That can't happen. This Committee needs a new mandate, not an existing mandate. We have no commitment from the Policy Assistant as to whether or not she's going to stay and it says so in the budget that she has to.

The membership of the Committee should be changed. We've talked about this at Committee and I think there's actually agreement at the Civic Environment

Committee that the membership should change. We should evolve into something different. We have consensus on that and it's not represented here.

This Committee has existed in very difficult circumstances over the course of the last four years. Because the dragons that we tried to slay from time to time have been exceedingly difficult and I don't blame any particular Council on that. It's just the nature of the beast. When this Committee was struck under former Mayor Glen Murray, we embarked on a process of trying to get our strategy through; we tried to establish a new mandate for the sustainability of the City of Winnipeg. I can assure you that it's been anything but easy.

The wisdom of this Committee and the reason that this Committee has been in my humble estimation so successful, and I don't take credit for that personally, but the reason it's been so successful is that it's always understood that the goals that we are trying to espouse are only as realistic as the Council members that we can persuade to support them. I think the Committee understands that. I don't believe the movers of this motion understand that. I don't think they get that reality.

This motion is useless if people don't support it. This motion is useless if you haven't done the homework of talking to people and getting them to support it. It is counterproductive to stand up here and throw a motion on the table and say you should support this, if you haven't even taken the time to talk to people about why it's important. Standing up here is too late.

The Mayor and Executive Policy Committee has been considering this matter for a very long time now. I've been relaying to the Committee that this has been happening. We brought in membership from the Committee about a month ago to speak directly to the Mayor. I think the Mayor was quite impressed and he can give his own comments on his meeting, his reflections on the comments made by those people on the Committee.

The Mayor I think was probably surprised at the reasonableness, at the level headedness and at the articulate nature of the arguments advanced by Terry Willard and Ken MacKinnon and Rodney McDonald. These comments and this nature is not representative of the Committee itself. We've always tried to take the highroad and to achieve goals in a real sense and not fall prey to the bluster and to the political grandstanding that has become the debate as of late.

I can tell you that you'll see, you won't see me on issues of sustainability offering up lectures on how much holier I am than thou. I just don't do that. My personal journey on issues of sustainability has been that when I arrived here at City Hall, I honestly wasn't educated on issues of sustainability. I grew into the role by virtue of my being placed as chairman of this Committee. I learned as I went. I developed, expertise is probably too strong a word, but I developed a body of knowledge that I thought I could partake

Councillor Clement: Move extension.

Councillor Steeves: I could partake to other people in appropriate situations. I think that's the process that people on Council go through.

That's why I don't stand up and say, you must do this because I know better than you. I don't do that. I think it lacks respect. And I think what should be done here is that we should be continuing to work as a Council to develop each others expertise of this area and if we feel that somebody is maybe not as far along as we think they should be, we should work with that person to legitimately educate and inform. That's always been what we have done with this Committee. We don't beat people over the head. We don't call them down. We don't say that we're better than you because you don't think the way that we do. That is not what we've ever done and we will never do that Mr. Speaker.

I don't know what's going to happen exactly with the Mayor's vision that he is going to bring to the Civic Environment Committee before the meeting next

Monday and that's where the discussion will start. But I can tell you this. I am less concerned about the make up of a perspective Committee than I am with the idea that the new Committee will enjoy the ownership of the new Mayor.

When we were all elected to Council, how many of us slavishly picked up the initiatives of the former Councillor? Probably none. We began our own initiatives. It is absolutely essential that at the end of the day, whatever Committee materializes whatever manifestation it takes, that it enjoy the stamp of ownership and the stamp of approval of the current Mayor, EPC, and Council. We need something new.

The Committee thinks that, I think that, and I think this Council should agree with that. We don't need this motion. Don't vote for it. When the new Committee comes forward, the new idea comes forward, support that.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Thank you. I'm here to support the Notice of Motion and I will speak to why I feel it is important.

We cannot deny that climate change is occurring. We cannot deny that global warming is prevalent. That there has been increased greenhouse gases. Several years ago we passed the Kyoto Protocol here in this Council because we were concerned. This is why we need to continue to work on the Environment Committee. It takes time to establish a new Committee and I applaud the Mayor for looking at strengthening the Committee because, I applaud the Mayor for looking at strengthening the Committee because I feel that it is important to have a strong Committee. We need to account for our work.

While we supported the Kyoto Protocol, I don't think any of us know what impact that that has had on how we do our business in Council. It has been pointed out Federally during this election campaign that confirming and signing of Kyoto Protocol does not mean that things happen. And I think it's important that we establish targets, that we develop a strategy, and that we make financial commitments to make this done because our planet is in crisis. We need to make changes or the health of our planet that we are handing our children will be akin to them getting a bowl of porridge in a dirty toilet bowl. A graphic description, yes! A graphic description, yes! But our problem is grave and the future of our planet is at stake.

This is not the time for divisiveness. We need to be united as a Council or we will lose this fight for our children. Let's not drop the ball even for a moment. This is why I want the Committee to continue until we establish the new Committee and I'm looking forward to the increased mandate. I think some of the things that we have been missing has been lack of accountability for our good words, targets, strategies, timelines, commitments and financial backing for what we're doing.

I think those are things that have been lacking and I'm looking forward to seeing what the Mayor has to say about that. I'm looking forward to seeing a new strengthened Committee and I believe that the Committee that we have working for us has been working very well within the limited mandate that we have given them but we haven't given them any of those things.

But I don't think that we should drop the ball even for a moment while we're planning a new Committee because I believe the problem of our planet is just that bad. And I'm not prone to using very graphic descriptions on Council but I felt it was important to say what I said because I think this is a serious problem for all of us.

All the good work that we can do with increasing the minimum wage, in solving the problem of homelessness, in getting better housing for our citizens and fixing our streets; all of it means nothing if our children can't survive because they can't live on this place, they can't drive the new highways, they can't get on the new rapid transit system. They can't do anything of those things because they can't breathe.

So I really feel that it's important to do something about this and to do something about this quickly and I would ask us to all unite, to see that we do do something and that it not become a product of political gamesmanship when he said, she said, kind of politicking because all of our kids are going to suffer if we don't get together on this. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Lazarenko.

Councillor Lazarenko: Thank you Mr. Speaker, how you can tell what time of the year this is. I firstly would like to while I have the opportunity, to those who are watching on Cablevision, I'd like to say (speaking Ukrainian) and also in English, a Merry Christmas to one and all and Happy Hanukah.

We're getting into a new year, and how you can tell Mr. Speaker. Comments that are being made here is very unfair. This motion that is before us, those that have spoken have convinced me of which way I'll be voting. And I can tell you in part I will be supporting this motion, 1 and 3, but not number 2 because therefore be it resolved and I'm just going to give you a reason why.

It's so unfair to attack the present Mayor. It is not this Mayor that is killing this Committee. Simple common sense that tells you this. This Mayor is not killing this Committee. The former Mayor is killing it because of the motion of Council that this Committee dissolves as of the 31st of December period. It's all over. The ballgame is over. So I don't know what the Mayor intends to do. Mayor Katz, I assume that he wants to; he's got a record to say that he's in support as well as this motion.

On this motion by Councillor Benham and I support therefore it be resolved that number 1, City Council reaffirm its support for this Civic Environment Committee. Yes, absolutely.

Number 2, that I will not be supporting is City Council extend existing mandate policy assistance, budget and membership of the Civic Environment Committee. We can't do that because it dies as of the 31st of this month, just a matter of about a week to two weeks from now.

But I will be supporting number 3. City Council cooperatively develop as soon as possible a renewed mandate, budget and membership for the Civic Environment Committee that reflects a shift from developing environment objectives and strategies to establishing priorities and plans for implementing these strategies and monitoring progress towards meeting the City's environment objective. Why not Councillor Benham, you're right on with that one. And I assume and I'm positive that this will be happening right after the new year.

But Council has made a ruling and this ruling stays. It's here with us. We have to abide by it, 31st of December, Councillors, it's, the Committee is out. So it's not fair to attack and not even know what is coming, like the reason I had said a few words in Ukrainian of Christmas and New Years and also Christmas to and New Year to everyone who is within the viewing of this cable network and I mean it because this is the time of the year that we should be working as to an objective to work together.

Don't set an example. How you can tell some of the speeches being made here today that certain members are not on EPC anymore. That's the way it works. That's the way people are. They will be taking a role that they think is right and they'll be objective to proceed and say we have to do this right now. But you have to weigh the facts and say do the right thing.

Each member of this Committee that was appointed knew very well that their mandate expires December 31. But then to use methods on this floor of Council which was so unfair, to say that this Mayor and EPC are killing this Committee is incorrect and I want that to be, to be known. That is so unfair.

So I will, Mr. Speaker, I'll be supporting part of the motion of Councillor Benham, just number 1 and 3 but number 2 which in all essence is exactly what we are

mandated to do because the former Council with the former Mayor when they, or some former members of Council but this Council with the former Mayor, Council, Mayor Murray had presented this as a clause to Council with that stipulation that this Committee be dissolved as of the 31st of December.

So that's in the past thing. You can't live yesterday. You have to start living tomorrow and this is something I'd like to see. That we work together in cooperation to see that this is going to be worked properly, the new mandate will be put into place hopefully as soon as possible and maybe sometime in January or February. I'll have to hear what the Mayor has to say, to say on this but I'll be supporting in part on this motion. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start just by thanking Councillor Steeves for the words that he stated at the beginning of his speech. It was good to see this issue get properly grounded. It was a little embarrassing to sit here and listen to some of the derogatory comments that were made on this floor in bringing this motion forward. The rudeness and insulting behaviour must stop on this floor. We continually seem to be addressing an issue like this on the monthly basis where the decorum sort of goes down the tubes so far that somebody has to stand up and defend themselves. And it's not appropriate for the floor of Council I don't believe.

I'd like to tell you a little story. For many years of my life I worked with troubled youths and from time to time we'd have, the troubled youth would come to our home and had some particularly offensive behaviour that you just couldn't change. It was almost like they didn't recognize that they had the behaviour. But one of the things that we used to do, or I used to do was to videotape them and to play the tape back to them and upon watching the tape often they would realize, oh my God, is that me? They didn't realize that the behaviour even existed. It was a really effective tool and I would tell you I would recommend to everybody to get the copy of the tape from Shaw and watch ourselves on the floor of this Council and see how we behave from time to time. It's time that we stop it.

Pardon me? Pardon me?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: I guess Robby Burns maybe said it best when he said "ah the gift the Lord could give us to see ourselves as others see us."

Mr. Speaker, you know, I started this looking at this, at this motion that, that was put forward and my initial desire was to support this motion. Perhaps most particularly in the matter that Councillor Lazarenko stated it. That nobody here argues with the intent of the motion. It's a very well-intended motion. It's the mechanism that's somewhat troubling.

And then I tried, you know I went through a whole series of thoughts of how do you get this motion brought forward in a proper fashion? How do you get the concept to the right place at the right time? Could it be done by a motion to refer it to EPC when it's dealing with the Civic Environment Committee's mandate and renewal or possible change in mandates? Would that be appropriate? Then that didn't allow for debate on the floor Council. Would it be appropriate to have it referred with instructions which would allow for debate? But at the end of the day it really just came down to the fact that we were going to be sitting here having this debate.

What I wanted to see was I wanted to see it get back to the Executive Policy Committee and I wanted to see the intent of the motion be there with the Mayor and members of Executive Policy Committee when they look at how a future Committee might be shaped.

And the one whereas that was missing in the preamble to the motion was out of the reporting structure for the current Committee. And in the reporting structure for the current Committee it said the

Environmental Committee would report to Council through the Executive Policy Committee and where appropriate through other Standing Committees. This reporting structure most appropriately addresses the need to coordinate many complex and cross cutting environmental issues across Council, Committees and individual departmental roles.

So even in the establishment of the Committee, the former Mayor, who I assume that this on the floor of Council and publicly has been presented by another Councillor in this process, even then they saw the importance of this going through Executive Policy Committee and the Mayor's office and other Standing Committees in order to have the mandate properly shaped. So I don't think this motion really does the job but the job can still be done. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Yes Mr. Speaker. You know the Mayor's record on the environment I think is pretty, pretty feeble, you know. He appointed Councillor Lubosch as Secretary of Urban Environmental Strategies. Have we heard anything from Councillor Lubosch? Have we had the report to EPC? Is he doing anything? Has the Mayor taken up any of his ideas? When are we going to hear from him? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

You know, we've also had on this Committee we've had people talking about volunteers. These are more than volunteers; more than activists. These are people who are doing consulting work, who are experts and here we go ahead you know we go ahead all the time and increase the number of consultants we're hiring. You know, here we have consultants working for us. It makes sense to keep the Environment Committee. It's no different, it's not difficult.

Now we've heard from, we've heard from Councillor what's his name? Steeves, you know, you know Steeves doesn't say anything, ever. You know, he gets up and gives a history, you know words and you know basically what is he saying? He makes a few comments. A few comments that should be addressed. He talks about the fact that the mover and seconder of this motion did not go ahead and talk it up with the other Councillors before this meeting and that's what we should be doing.

What do we have a Council meeting for? It's to exchange ideas, debate clauses and to pass things for the good of the City. I don't have to go ahead and spend my time finding, especially finding Councillor Steeves because he's traveling all over the world! He's you know, he's hardly ever here! So it's hard to talk to him; very difficult to talk to him.

Look at the Environment Committee is established; is doing a good job. All we have to do is support this motion. And I'm going to remind the Mayor you know, I am from British Columbia and we used to have a Premier called W.A.C. Bennett and he would make some disastrous moves and then he'd get reaction and then he'd say, I've had a second look and just reverse himself. And it's not, it's not a weakness of character to reverse oneself. And I do expect the Mayor to do this because it's the sensible thing to do. Support this motion.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Any further speakers to the motion? Councillor Wyatt. Councillor Lubosch. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I rise, I've had a chance to look at the motion and I understand the intent of the motion. I realize where it's coming from and why it exists. I think it's here because of a concern and a potential void with regards to where our policy direction will go with regards to the environment and with regards to how we formulate overall City policy in the context of the environment.

And I think it's crucial that a Committee like this continue. I was of interest, like everybody else, reading it in today's paper the development that there may be some sort of motion coming forward. It would have been nice to have that here today or prior to this debate so we

wouldn't have to have this discussion, there would be no need for this motion.

And I think that's the essence of this motion, putting all personalities aside, debates aside and shots (In audible) at this time of year and Harry (foreign language) responding to you, Merry Christmas, and you know, I think Mr. Speaker this is here you know because of concerns and genuine concerns with the future of the environment and how our City policy develops around that.

I just I, and just to give an example of that, I think it's interesting that today at this very Council meeting we had a copy of the Fleet Management Annual Report of 2004 brought forward in front of us here, delivered a hard copy to everyone and I think this is a good example of why we need an Environment Committee actually, to work with an agency like this because I will draw your attention to the report whereby in the cover letter it does refer to the fact that the agency is assessing, evaluating, hybrid gas/electric vehicles. But there's really not a lot of detail and there's clearly a lot more work that this body needs to do. On page 9 there is all of three lines about it saying "the agency has an ongoing evaluation into hybrid gas/electric vehicles whereby light duty sedans are currently being assessed for fuel mileage. The evaluation will expand to SUV and other hybrid applications in the future."

To me it's good to see them going in that direction but I think there could have been, there should be greater emphasis from an organization like this which on an annual basis is purchasing or leasing vehicles for the City and an aggressive agenda to go towards hybrid alternative fuels with our vehicles Mr. Speaker. And I think this is an example and that's why a Committee like the Environment Committee if it was given the authority could liaise with the various departments and have an environmental strategy that is required of the various departments to come forward so we know what their targets are and where they're going and what they're doing. I think this is an excellent example Mr. Speaker, of why this Committee is important.

I think the motion is, I agree with every Speaker. We shouldn't have to have a motion like this here today. You know it shouldn't be necessary. But the fact that it's here today because there's a vacuum. And there's a vacuum and a concern that the environmental issues will not be addressed timely and that the ball will be dropped and the good work done by Councillor Steeves that that will be left sitting on the shelf to gather dust. I'm not saying that will happen but I'm saying that's the concern.

And I think it's a genuine concern and it's not hard, it's not easy Mr. Speaker to implement environmental strategies because it's like any other large organization, the City has its habits and the City has its existing policies and to adopt new policies or to move away and sometimes it's a little more costly upfront towards an environmental agenda takes a lot of hard work and energy. But that's why we had a Committee and that's why I think we must keep a Committee.

So I'll be supporting the motion because of the intent of the motion is to keep this issue on the front burner. I think it's important. I hope that message has been heard today by members of EPC and the Mayor. And I think we have to ensure that an environmental strategy is no different than a fiscal strategy for the City. The two should go hand in hand.

A fiscal strategy balancing the books and ensuring that we are accountable to the taxpayers, well so should the environmental strategy. In today's day and age we have no choice. I would put to you Mr. Speaker. We have absolutely no choice but to adopt an aggressive environment strategy. Either we adopt it ourselves or we're going to be dragged along kicking and screaming by others who will require us to do it in the future.

So we might as well get ahead of the ball and ensure that we do it and we could become the leading City in the nation if that's the will. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Lubosch.

Councillor Lubosch: Thank you Mr. Speaker. There's been a lot said this morning about the mechanism by which this debate is evolving and the last time I checked we are City Council. We are Councillors and the Mayor and this is a Council meeting. And the job we do, after we get elected, is we make motions pertaining to policy or other initiatives and we debate them here and we vote on them and we're accountable to the electorate every four years for those votes. So for those of you who find this process a little bit unpleasant or uncomfortable, that's life and that's the life you chose.

Thank you. Councillor Benham for the record did come to speak to me on this matter and in fact I consulted him on this motion as well and we both agreed that the Civic Environment Committee although somewhat murky in its ability to get out its message and to get out its policy objectives because of some of the stalemate around here and the consternation that is created politically in order to get some of those initiatives moving along by and large has done an excellent job of highlighting important environmental issues for our City.

And I would applaud their political champion, Councillor Steeves, for the work that he has done. I can be sure that it has been very challenging for him at times to advocate the position of this Committee at the Executive Policy Committee level or at the Provincial level or whatever other levels of government he might be championing our initiatives.

By and large I think the Committee has been a good thing. I haven't had an opportunity to chair it. The former Mayor made certain of that but that's politics Mr. Speaker and I accept that as well. And certainly I haven't had the opportunity to participate in more than either an observer or an ad hoc Council member at this time but I've accepted that as well.

And yes I accepted an appointment by Mayor Katz to be aware of environmental issues and to some degree I suppose my own research has afforded me the ability to do that although I can tell you that as a non-EPC member I heard about the hog vote the same time every other non-EPC member did.

And this brings into, into I think, a better focus for Councillor Smith who may not have been paying attention and anybody else who may not have been paying attention, my environmental record. I was very strong and firm and resilient on my stand dealing with environmental tobacco smoke, whether it's indoors or outdoors, I've never changed my position there. I have also been very firm on my stand when it comes to urban sprawl or the proliferation of commercial development which contributes to urban sprawl. And my record stands to be tested there.

And as for the hog plant Mr. Speaker, although I didn't have a lot of time to digest the information that was put before us, and although I did take the information to task and challenged it on the floor, at the end of the day, in spite of one member's remark prior to the Council meeting that I should vote for the hog plant and get my career back on track and I won't tell you who that member is because I'm sure they'd be terribly embarrassed if that information came to light, I stood my ground Mr. Speaker and at the expense of my political career and perhaps my popularity around this chamber, I voted against a hog plant for which I had precious little information and the more I learn about recognize is a very poor return on investment for our ratepayers for the tax dollar that's being invested whether it's a City tax dollar or Provincial tax dollar it really doesn't matter because there really is only one taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker the Civic Environment Committee does not need to be disbanded in order to change its mandate. The members of the Committee have put in thousands of hours and they are experts beyond that which I will ever profess or achieve or aspire to be. There's no way that I can go out and get four or five PhD's or Masters in Architecture or a Masters in Engineering and try to assimilate the kind of knowledge that these folks have

brought to the table at our requests and our disposal.

So I would be arrogant, extremely arrogant to think that I would ever know more than that group of people. No matter how much knowledge I might be able to assimilate over a short period of time. I'm not a genius. I'm not a computer. I'm just an average guy from North Kildonan trying to do his job. And these folks, they're trying to do not just their jobs but the value added. They're trying to put back in society what they believe in and what they think is right and I'm not going to stand in their way.

And in fact if a mandate needs to be changed it is as simple as having a Committee meeting and determining what your next course of action is going to be whether it's an environmental policy for the City of Winnipeg or whether it's a strategic participation in the environment hearings for the hog plant, or whether it's participation in a new development, a formidable development like Waverly West, this group has the flexibility and the dynamics and the skills and the knowledge to be able to participate in those kinds of discussions probably in a much more meaningful way than any one of us can as an individual because they bring to the table a number of different expertise, a number of different ways of looking at an issue.

And so I'm going to support Councillor Benham's motion and I think it's an excellent one. I don't think it's a dangerous one or one that we need to run away from and I would, I would personally put on record Mr. Speaker that Councillor Steeves is in an enviable position. He is not only a member of the Executive Policy Committee which has tremendous influence. It's referred to in the media as the Mayor's powerful Executive Policy Committee. It has tremendous influence. He has also risen to the top of the cream at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and has tremendous influence on the national level and he also has the respect and admiration of the members of the Civic Environment Committee, who I dare say have worked very hard on all of our behalf and he's done a good job of leading them. So I would be very surprised if he, if he voted to terminate this particular Committee in favour of essentially reinventing the wheel.

And with that Mr. Speaker I'll close my remarks and urge every member of Council to have a sober second thought and support the very sensible motion by Councillors Benham and Smith. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The nice thing about living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada is that we live in a democracy. And in a democracy you have freedom of speech. Whether it's accurate or not isn't really important. You have the right to say whatever you and want I notice liberty is taken on many occasions.

I think on five occasions we've heard the comment "killing the Committee". As is pointed out here before, there is nobody killing any Committee. As a matter of fact, previously in 2001 and I wasn't there but Councillor Gerbasi was so she might be aware of it, why they put in a sunset clause. Why they decided the mandate should be renewed. And what I find every interesting when they use the word killing you think they're referring to Charles Manson or something. There is no intention whatsoever to kill anything. It's not a word used by anybody other than Councillor Benham because it's not a word that is appropriate or is accurate.

What have I decided over a month ago, and it's unfortunate that no one decided to communicate, two things. Number one, I have attended a Civic Environment Committee meeting contrary to what was said here. As well as over a month ago I had the opportunity to meet with the chair and some members of the Committee and it was a very good meeting. And after leaving that there was no doubt in my mind that in the new year we should have a Committee when this one goes into the sunset, a new one should be brought up. I've already said that. I had

every intention of doing that which is why I don't understand why the motion is here.

What I found interesting is how Councillor Benham waxed so eloquently about the expertise on this Committee and he's right, there is a great deal of expertise. As a matter of fact, when we had the final presentation of the *Rapid Transit Report* we had one of these experts here who implored us to not do it and yet I noticed that both Councillor Benham and Councillor Gerbasi ignored the expertise. According to what Councillor Lubosch just said that would be very arrogant. So I find it very interesting when they don't concur with what the experts say they go off on their own way.

It's, the whole purpose here is to do what's right for our City, for our future, for our children. We all care about the environment and I can state to you emphatically that we have every intention of continuing with the Civic Environment Committee.

Some of you who have read the media already know that there are potential members who don't want to be part of that Committee anymore. So it's rather interesting how much time we've spent on something that is important when we know that we have every intention of having a Committee and continuing with the work that's been done. And that's all I will say on this subject. Thank you very much. I will not be supporting the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mayor Katz. Councillor Benham closing debate. Just before you start Councillor I'm going to just ask your indulgence not to see the clock. We'll finish the debate and vote on this and then we will adjourn for lunch. Agreed? Councillor Benham closing debate.

Councillor Benham: Thank you Mr. Speaker and also just on a brief point of procedure, I would call for a recorded vote clause by clause on the motion. Thank you.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker and I thank all Councillors who participated, all members of Council who participated in the debate. I think it has been a useful one and I think it has been a good one in terms of letting the public know what is important and in terms of letting the public know that there does appear to be a consensus that it's a good thing to have a Civic Environmental Committee. That's a very good thing to know Mr. Speaker and I'm glad we've come to that. And I support as I say, all Councillors who spoke I think had something to contribute to the debate. Of course I agree with some things that were said and disagree with others but I certainly appreciate all of them participating in the debate.

Let's start with the, just very briefly, Councillor Lubosch's comments that passing motions, introducing motions and debating them in front of the public openly is what this place is all about. I'm not afraid of that and I hope nobody at Council is.

Dealing with some of the things that Councillor Steeves had to say and I took very careful notes of Councillor Steeves so that I would quote him correctly. He said "it has to expire", referring to the Committee, "it's what's written. We have to have a motion from Council to extend it." Well Councillor Steeves, that's actually what this is. It's a motion from Council to extend it. So by your own words we have in fact, it's a motion, it's a motion before Council that with the support…

Mr. Speaker: Councillors to the chair!

Councillor Benham: Thank you Mr. Speaker. It is a motion I would point out to Councillor Steeves that with the support of all Councilors would extend the mandate so the notion that it is, that it is written that this Committee must die is indeed wrong.

He said "there was precious little homework or legwork done on this motion". What an insult Mr. Speaker. What an insult. Councillor Steeves has just delivered a final insult to all the injury to his Committee members because this motion was written by Committee members. And Councillor Steeves in the heat of the moment has forgotten that,

wants to blame Councillor Smith and I for not doing homework. In fact, homework was done. Legwork was done by the Councillors who sit on that Committee, working with the Committee members in order to ensure that we would have a motion that represented consensus from Committee members Mr. Speaker.

Councillor Steeves: Point of Order Mr. Speaker.

(Point of Order)

Councillor Steeves: Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker: What is your Point of Order?

Councillor Steeves: This motion was not written by the Committee.

Mr. Speaker: A dispute over the facts is not a Point of Order. Councillor Benham resume debate please.

Councillor Benham: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that a dispute over the facts can be so easily solved because we can all simply go back to our agendas which are still in the Clerks Decision Making Information System and you can see that motion making its way through the Civic Environmental Committee on to Executive Policy Committee where Councillor Steeves was supposed to introduce it and defend it. So it's rather shocking. It proves Mr. Speaker my point…

Councillor Steeves: Point of Order again Mr. Speaker.

Councillor Benham: that Councillor Steeves is out of…

Councillor Steeves: Point of Order

(Point of Order)

Mr. Speaker: What is your Point of Order?

Councillor Steeves: Mr. Speaker I just want to be clear. The implication is being made that this is the exact same motion that came from the Civic Environmental Committee.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Benham sit down please.

Councillor Steeves: I would submit that is patently not true. And I would submit the words newly constituted representative body which we discussed at length at the Environment Committee do not appear in the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor but again it's a dispute over the facts and that doesn't constitute a Point of Order. Councillor Benham concluding debate please.

Councillor Benham: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm shocked that Councillor Steeves for discussion about decorum would continue to want to interrupt me and heckle me just to throw me off but I will undertake to send to all members of Council the resolutions that were put forward to Committee and they can compare it word for word with the resolution that Councillor Smith and I put forward. They will see it's based on that wording with some adjustment for the fact that it became a Council motion.

The question about legwork and homework Mr. Speaker should be turned on Councillor Steeves because I would also be happy to table for consideration of all Councillors the email that has gone back and forth between him and me with frequent jokes and putting aside of my concerns but never with a straight answer okay, what's your plan. What will you Councillor Steeves as chair of this Committee and what will the Mayor be putting forward when the mandate does expire as we all agreed it does? What is your plan? He doesn't have one. He hasn't put one forward. Nor has the Mayor. Every Councillor who is sitting here is being asked to buy a pig in a poke. A few paragraphs in a newspaper instead of a resolution that has been introduced on the floor of this chamber. Instead of a resolution that will take definitive action.

So there you have it Mr. Speaker. Air, nothingness, as proposed by Councillor Steeves and the Mayor and a resolution proposed by Councillor Smith and myself that would have real effect. Which is it that Councillors will vote for? I'd certainly like to know.

The Committee can only do what Council will allow. The Council can only do what the Mayor tells it to do. Councillors can only vote for the things the Mayor tells them to vote for. On all of these Mr. Speaker, I have a profound philosophical difference with Councillor Steeves and I support Lubosch which is that all of us were elected to be independent City Councillors, exercise our independent judgment on the issues and vote on behalf of the best interests of the citizens we represent and indeed the City as a whole.

Finally Mr. Speaker, Councillor Steeves has contradicted himself again by saying that when the new idea comes forward, support that, but he also said that by the time an idea gets here it's too late. Well Mr. Speaker we have no paper and no proposal before us. I suggest that we vote for the motion before us, not the air that is not before us. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor Benham. Debate is closed. We will vote on the three component parts of the resolution individually. A recorded vote has been asked for on each. That's in order. On part one of the motion, all in favour of part one, please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Lazarenko, Benham, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Smith, Swandel, Thomas, Wyatt.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Clement, De Smedt, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 8, Nays 8.

Mr. Speaker: The part 1 is Lost. On part 2 all in favour please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Benham, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Smith, Thomas, Wyatt.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Lazarenko, Clement, De Smedt, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Swandel, Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 6, Nays 10.

Mr. Speaker: Part 2 is Lost.

On part 3, all in favour please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Lazarenko, Benham, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Smith, Thomas, Wyatt.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Clement, De Smedt, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Swandel, Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 7, Nays 9.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is Lost.

So the hour being 12 o'clock if Council would recess till 1:30 and members know that lunch is being put on. See you there.

Reconvened meeting of Winnipeg City Council of December 14, 2005 at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Councillors, I'm going to call the meeting back to order. We will resume our agenda. We're at the point of Executive Committee By-laws. Mayor Katz.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move the following By-laws be read a first time, By-law No. 231/2005, By-law No. 235/2005 and By-law No. 236/2005.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 231/2005, 235/2005 and 236/2005.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker I move that By-laws No. 231/2005, 235/2005 and 236/2005 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 231/2005, 235/2005 and 236/2005.

Mayor Katz: And Mr. Speaker I move that the rules be suspended and By-laws numbered 231/2005, 235/2005 and 236/2005 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Speaker: Executive Committee questions? Councillor Magnifico, Councillor Benham. Councillor Magnifico.

Councillor Magnifico: Thank you Mr. Speaker. You know, I listened to this Council for the last couple of sessions and how important Transit increases are to everyone here and they are and they should be. The nickels and dimes that we are trying to increase Transit affect a lot of people in this City and it has to be a consideration every time we try and balance whether Transit is something that we should increase as far as service or decrease, keep the price the same. It's always a juggling act. It's a very important issue.

But Mr. Speaker this morning, I was rudely and abruptly awakened by headlines that read something, something else about, about the City of Winnipeg and what they do to citizens. Something to the effect of small businesses getting taxed again. And I cannot believe that we at City Hall would do to our business community what that headline intimated. That we would raise business taxes by 20, 30, 50, 100 percent or more, must be a mistake. No city in its right mind would treat its businesses in this manner.

Mr. Speaker: Now ask the, now Councillor Magnifico your question please.

Councillor Magnifico: I'm just getting to the part where the gobbledygook that comes from public service trying to rationalize these increases with a formula or passing the buck to the Province; Mr. Speaker the buck stops here. And I would like to know, I would like to be ensured, that the Mayor checks that these ridiculous increases being proposed will be halted in one manner or another before it's too late. Will he be doing that?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Councillor Magnifico thank you very much for that question. Mr. Speaker I can tell you that I was rather surprised this morning as well when I saw reports, and I repeat reports, of increased business taxes anywhere from 40 to potentially 100 and 200 percent. It's no secret that I campaigned to phase out the business taxes.

As a matter of fact up until approximately nine days ago the information from the department was that the average increase for business taxes in the downtown would be approximately 10% and outside would be approximately 12%. Going through this this morning I guess maybe the keyword was average.

I can tell you right now, through you Mr. Speaker to Councillor Magnifico, I have asked for a briefing by the department. I do not believe that it is reasonable to expect businesses to suddenly have a 100% or a 50% increase. I intend to get to the bottom of it and as soon as we have the exact information, I'm happy to share that with Councillor Magnifico and the rest of Council.

I would like to remind everybody that these were notices sent out to businesses on the T.I.P.P. program and these are based on last year's procedure, keeping in mind that we do not look to the mill rate till sometime in March so there could be changes on this.

But when I do have a full report Mr. Speaker I will gladly let everybody know exactly what the situation is and I can tell you that if what is being reported is accurate, it's something that I will not stand by idly and let happen.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Magnifico.

Councillor Magnifico: Mr. Speaker I appreciate the comments from the Mayor. I just want to, for the record, indicate that the information that I've received, I would like to know if it is accurate or not. Forty-five percent of the businesses that were sent out was at 10% or a greater decrease, which would intimate that their approximate rental value would have decreased in the last four years when our property value in Winnipeg has soared through the roof. Is he aware of that and could he explain that to me?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker the question refers, there is a comment from the administration and I'll read it, "That out of 1,600 notices mailed, 55% were for businesses with a 10% or greater increase in their T.I.P.P. payments, 45% were for businesses with a 10% or greater decrease". That is what has been said. That is still maintained by the department.

Obviously I can certainly see potential increases because of the value of the land and of buildings appreciating. There are areas where I could, maybe a potential decrease. Forty-five percent? I'm a little surprised but you know what once again there will be a briefing which I will have after Council today and these will be; this will be one of the questions that I definitely ask.

Mr. Speaker: Final Supplementary Councillor Magnifico.

Councillor Magnifico: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Mayor thank you again for that and just for the record again, I would like to, as you indicated these were people on T.I.P.P.s that were sent these notices. Are you aware that if it was allowed to stand for some reason, which you've indicated it probably wouldn't, in May or June when the new bills comes out there is a lot of people out there that would have received a bill and wished they were on T.I.P.P.s. Are you aware of that?

Mayor Katz: That logic Mr. Speaker obviously it would be accurate following the rumoured reports of this morning. But as I've already said and I guess I will just repeat it again. If this is reality it's something that the Mayor and Council will have to address. On many occasions I have said it's the small business that's the economic engine of the cities. It creates employment. It generates revenue. Our job is not to put business out of business or have them move to other municipalities. So we will have to take action once we verify the facts.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Benham.

Councillor Benham: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker and if I may do double duty. I did refer to a document earlier without tabling it. I would to remedy that and table the following document for Councillor Steeves. It's the minutes of the Civic Environmental Committee and contains the motion I referred to earlier in debate.

Mr. Speaker a question to the Mayor following up Councillor Magnifico's question. Mr. Speaker some, and to the

Mayor, some small businesses are reeling as Councillor Magnifico said because of increases in the business tax caused by increases in their net rental value.

In view of the fact that the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce proposed a business tax reduction that would benefit small business owners all over Winnipeg, will the Mayor consider scrapping his plan in the Budget last year, which benefits only downtown business owners like himself and adopt the Chamber of Commerce plan for the benefit of all Winnipeggers?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker I'm very disappointed that Councillor Benham isn't aware of the fact that that actually takes place in the following year. That was the motion that was supported, a 2% decrease in the downtown, the heart of our City and then a year goes by with the status quo and following that a 2% decrease across the City. That's exactly what we have every intention of doing. That was passed by this Council.

And I would also like to address the issue of assessed rental value. Part of the problem that exists today that the assessments are no longer being based on 10% of the value, they are now being based on the fair market rental value and that they are not taking vacancy into consideration which obviously makes everything increase.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Benham.

Councillor Benham: Yes, thank you very much Mr. Speaker and I appreciate the Mayor's words but I was aware of what he had done. There was a 2% decrease. When we say 2% in fact it's a 20% decrease in taxes, two percentage points to be fair, but that's the common language. And Mr. Speaker it is in fact contrary to the Chamber of Commerce plan.

Will the Mayor agree to having the Winnipeg Public Service, that is our administration, study the Chamber of Commerce plan and report back on the costs and benefits for all Winnipeggers compared to costs and benefits reducing business tax only for downtown business owners?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker I have been to many Council meetings as well as Committee meetings where I have seen Councillor Benham and others come forward and represent smaller groups who are very important to our municipality.

I am very sorry to hear that Councillor Benham does not believe that the downtown is very important. I am sorry to hear that Councillor Benham doesn't believe that the downtown, downtown has played a major role in the expansion of the City. I'm sorry to hear that he does not believe that the downtown is in need of help.

I do, and I believe the citizens of Winnipeg do, and that's where we started. When you want to do something to cut taxes it's not always easy to do it across the board because you don't have significant revenues to do that, so you have to start somewhere.

We took a very pragmatic approach with a business case with logic and we started in the downtown. And as Councillor Benham already knows quite often he's used the words "downtown first". I'm just trying to live by his words.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary Councillor Benham.

Councillor Benham: Thank you Mr. Speaker and I'm flattered that the Mayor will be living by my words and certainly I will; I am a supporter of downtown too. I'm simply asking in my third supplementary question if the Mayor will take a look at the plan put forward in good faith by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce which would reduce business taxes across the City for all business owners. Will the Mayor look at that plan and ask the administration to comment on it?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker we have looked at that plan and we've looked at many other plans and as a result we came up with the plan for the City of Winnipeg. It's being implemented and I think we should just let it go the course and I think we will accomplish our goal in the near future. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm also on the business tax issue. Evidently Mr. Speaker, the City Assessor was directed by the Municipal Board to create a new formula dealing with business tax. At least that's the information that I have. I don't know whether that's accurate or not but that's what I've been told.

If that's the case and there is a new formula, I don't know who has seen it, but I know that I have not only not seen it, I was never briefed on it. As chairman of Fiscal Issues for the last year, it was never raised in my presence. I don't believe that Councillor O'Shaughnessy has seen this in the past four or five weeks. At least if he has he certainly hasn't said anything about it.

And I guess my question is, the first question I've got is when will the Mayor endeavour to have us briefed on what knowledge is available on the subject?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker I understand that the Municipal Board has made some changes. I alluded to the first one, is that what takes place now is based on fair market value, not based upon the 10%, and they do not take the vacancy factor into consideration.

In addition to that it's also based on your utilities. So when utilities go up as well, and we all know gas went up, if you are paying more, the assessment is also going to go up. And I would be happy to get a further briefing this afternoon and share what other information I can garner with Councillor Clement.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor.

Councillor Clement: Yes. The simplicity of business tax in the past was you'd, if there was a total assessment increase at, in an assessment year, and you multiplied that by the mill rate that spit out the new number and we've been leaving the percentage at 9.75 for quite sometime now.

I guess my question is, is that if this formula and I've got no way to know because I've got absolutely no information, but if this formula is creating a situation where our revenues are greater than what they've been, is the Mayor amenable to the 9.75 number being adjusted similar to the way that we lower the mill rate when there has been a change in assessment?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Mr. Speaker once I've had an opportunity to have a full and complete briefing on this matter, I am open to that idea and others in order for us to resolve this very serious matter. So the answer is yes.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary.

Councillor Clement: No I don't have any more.

Mr. Speaker: Any other questions? Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Still along the same vein, I would just like to ask through you Mr. Speaker to the Mayor, if he could inform us who would have been responsible for representing the City at the Municipal Board meetings for this new funding formula, or alleged new funding formula was developed?

Mr. Speaker: Mayor Katz.

Mayor Katz: Well I guess number one, I'm not sure it's a, when there is a change from the Municipal Board, okay that's number one, I believe it would go straight to our Assessment department and potentially the director of the Assessment department. I'm not 100% sure of that

and I will be happy to find that out for you and report back to you Councillor Swandel.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary? No. Any further questions? If not we move on to the Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS DATED DECEMBER 1, 2005

Mr. Speaker: And the operative clause we'll be dealing with here is the Executive Policy Committee recommendation because there is one here.

Councillor Clement: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: I've been advised by the clerk and solicitor that the motion you'll be moving, I'm assuming Councillor Clement, is...

Councillor Clement: Well I'm going to move that the, I guess the Minutes of the...

Mr. Speaker: Report of December 1st.

Councillor Clement: Yeah, and that clause 1 be received as information, I guess, because…

Mr. Speaker: No you just, you just move the Executive Policy Committee recommendation.

Councillor Clement: Okay, if that's what you want me to do then I'll do that, Mr. Speaker, and I will introduce it.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

Item No. 1 – 2006 Transit Fare Increase File TT-2

Councillor Clement: Your Welcome. This topic of course comes up year after year Mr. Speaker and it's never a joyous occasion for those who support it or those who choose to not support a Transit increase. And the arguments that we hear, most years, are pretty much the same as the year before as well. And they're genuine arguments and the people who make them believe that their comments are true to form and in some cases they may be and in some cases they may not but they have every right to come and make recommendation and of course we accept that.

The reality however is that the costs of operating Transit increase every year. Some of that is wage driven. Some of that is simply the cost of doing business. In this last year, we all know that there were petroleum issues and while some of those costs have certainly gone down they haven't receded to where they were. The other thing that happens is that when you're, when fuel is up, and the price per barrel of oil is up, petroleum-based products are also increased Mr. Speaker, which is things like tires that the buses run on and we go through a lot of tires.

The bottom line is, is that there are increases and the increases are far greater on a year-to-year basis than the nickel that we've been bumping Transit fares. I know that it's not always explained in great detail but the reality is is that the taxpayers through their municipal tax share, are in fact supporting Transit far greater than the nickel increase is supporting Transit Mr. Speaker, in most cases. And so, I guess you can look at fairness in a number of different ways.

The other thing I guess that I would like to say about this, when this came forward, because I've heard a lot of comments that have been directed at members of Executive Policy Committee and in particular the Mayor, people can say what they want and like it was said earlier, it's a democracy so people can stand here and they can make comments. Whether they're accurate or not doesn't seem to matter, in some cases. And however the reality is, is that this report was an administrative report. It wasn't changed in any way, shape or form by Executive Policy Committee. I'm certainly not going to tell you that they never saw it, because they saw it. But the report that went to Public Works went there direct from the administration. There was no change to any of it.

Certainly when budgets are being created, directors are given envelopes, that's how it's always been done and so Mr. Wardrop was certainly looking at all of his options when he brought this report forward and felt that it was fair, and, of course, some other folks haven't thought that it was necessarily fair. But, and it was going to raise $1.69 million dollars. But that wasn't the increase in Transit costs, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't even close to the increase in Transit costs for '06. So I think we have to keep at least that in mind.

As far as the fares themselves, there has been things said about fares in other cities. I can only go by the charts that we see from our own people. But the, the ridership issue as an example, people have talked about ridership being affected. I don't know how that works Mr. Speaker. I've heard for years that that was an issue, never ever seen specific numbers on that. I'm sure that somebody probably has them. But, I have been made aware by people at Transit that over the last couple of years, that ridership in fact, notwithstanding that we raised the rates by a nickel the last two years, that ridership in fact did not go down. In fact, it increased last year. I don't know what you can read into that and maybe nothing. But, I think that it's at least important to know that, that that is the feeling within the Transit administration because they chase these numbers.

As far as the regular cash fare goes, Winnipeg is lower than other cities in cash fares and that's all documented in your computers. The price for children, cash fares for children are basically in the middle of what they are across the country. Students are basically in the middle as well and seniors are about the bottom third of what everybody pays across the country. And it can be argued that there are better transit systems in other cities. I'm not going to dispute that that may be the case. I'm just talking about where we fit in the whole scheme of things, so that everybody can at least understand that where we are.

The increase in the cash fare was seen by the Transit administration and I'm only going by the comments that they made to me, when the report initially came out, they felt that if the cash fares were increased across the board, their feeling was that people would buy passes, take advantage of the ticket prices by purchasing tickets and in their view possibly increase ridership. That's what they believed when they were trying to put this together. It doesn't mean that they were right or that everybody else agrees with their position, but that's what they thought and that was their best advice to us.

We've moved off of that, in part, at Executive Policy Committee, and the cash fare for students and the cash fare for seniors was reduced at Executive Policy Committee from the $2 recommendation down to $1.65. That was done because we heard people, we heard what they said. That means that the total revenue is less than $1.69 million and that we would have to find some of that money in other areas which means that it would be more heavily subsidized by the taxpayers, including the people that take buses, they're taxpayers too. But that's where it would come from. And something else would have to give to allow that to happen.

And that's what was decided at Executive Policy Committee and that's what you have in front of you. So, I'm sure that there will be an animated debate on the issue. There generally is and I'm looking forward to hearing it Mr. Speaker. With that, I will move that the EPC recommendation and I would urge the majority of the Council chamber to do the same.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Gerbasi on the clause.

Councillor Gerbasi: I'm just going to defer to Councillor Lubosch who wanted to do some procedural thing, didn't you? I'll go after.

Mr. Speaker: What's happening?

Councillor Lubosch: We're trading spots.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Councillor Lubosch on the clause.

Councillor Lubosch: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of collaboration and in an attempt at achieving some consensus, I would like to move the entire clause back to Executive Policy Committee without instructions. The reason being that at the same meeting at Public Works where this clause was, the original clause was defeated, another clause was supported by the Committee unanimously and that is for a task force to be struck with one or possibly more members of the Public Works Committee and the director of Transit, to look at alternatives to raising Transit fares and ways and means of increasing Transit ridership.

And we were hoping that this Committee would have an opportunity to do this work for a couple of months at least, and then bring the entire matter back to Council very early in the new year, possibly January. So this will buy us a little time to do the Committee work and see if there isn't a more creative solution to this dilemma.

Mr. Speaker: Motion is for referral back to Public Works.

Councillor Lubosch: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Councillor Clement you can speak against that if you wish. It's non-debatable other than the procedural matter.

Councillor Clement: Yeah and I will suggest that that's not an appropriate way to go notwithstanding the spirit that it's brought in. I voted on that as well, but not to, not see this go forward while that is being reviewed. That was to review the ongoing process, within Transit, and to try and see whether there is any ideas how things can change and that type of thing. And that was meant to be a Committee that would deal with that into the future. And hopefully, bring back some positive things that may reflect some change but it wasn't intended or at least it certainly wasn't presented as a, an ad hoc Committee, to regurgitate this issue in the short-term.

I sat in the meeting, I heard the motion, and I voted for it. But it had nothing to do with this clause whatsoever Mr. Speaker. They were stand-alone issues. They were voted on separately. And it's up to Council whether they wish to refer this back of course, and if Council prefers to do that, then I am just a, I'm just one vote here but I don't think that that would be the appropriate thing.

And the cost is, there is a cost to it as well and of course we don't know the exact cost of that because if the fares are increased today they are effective January 1 and if you lay it over then you know you don't have the January, February timeframe, that type of thing, to get that increase. And you know although you can guess at the numbers you don't really know what those numbers are and that's not the way to do business I don't think, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. On the motion to refer the clause back to public works, sorry?

Councillor Lubosch: Recorded vote please.

Mr. Speaker: Yeah fine. All in favour of referral motion please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Benham, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Smith, Thomas and Wyatt.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Lazarenko, Clement, De Smedt, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Swandel, Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 6, Nays 10.

Mr. Speaker: The referral motion is Lost.

Councillor Lubosch since you've been warmed up.

Councillor Lubosch: I'm warm Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Speak to the clause followed by you.

Councillor Lubosch: Mr. Speaker I'm very concerned that really, the effort here to once again stick it to the Transit user, is not just coming at a bad time of year for a lot of people, not just without, without regard for them as taxpayers, ratepayers and fee payers, but quite seriously, Mr. Speaker it makes bad business sense. And I'll tell you why.

Since 1982, we have been raising Transit rates in our City. We have been raising Transit rates at the cash box. We have been raising our tickets, we've been raising our bus passes and you only have to look at the data, which I asked the Transit department to provide, and in 1982, as a comparison, at the cash box, the adult revenue is $15,886,000 dollars. Now, in 2004, at the cash box, it's $7,299,000. Now, you can suggest that while tickets took the place of cash and so did monthly bus passes but while tickets have gone up from a $1,700,000 to $6,400,000, the revenue from monthly bus passes has actually dropped from $26,882,000 down to $7,147,000.

The same experience, right across the board, with child and student fares, where the cash has dropped from 1982 levels, $8,721,000, I mean that was, that was kids putting in a quarter, a fraction of what they're putting into the cash box now Mr. Speaker. Now it's dropped from $8,700,000 down to $1,200,000 and tickets have only gone up from $1.4 million to $2.1 million. And these are in current dollars. This isn't even taking into consideration the difference in the net present value of money between 1982 and 2004.

And it goes on. Seniors, the cash fare has gone from $3,868,000 down to $433,000 dollars Mr. Speaker. And tickets have stayed almost the same at $1.2 million compared to $1.4 million between the years 1982 and 2004. In fact the total revenue that Transit is earning with cash and tickets and monthly passes and Super Passes and weekday passes, and every other kind of pass, has dropped from $59,868,000 down to $38,618,000. That's about a 35% drop in revenue over this period of time. And that's, again, that's using a static value on the dollar.

So, I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker if we don't need to challenge ourselves a little bit around here to find a more creative way to get people back on the buses. I see nothing but significant marketing challenges for even a new bus rapid transit system with these kinds of numbers. People just aren't interested in taking the bus at these rates or, with the product that's being offered. The fact that you can't go downtown to work from West Kildonan and certainly not very conveniently from North Kildonan and many other suburban communities into the downtown, during business hours, and not even at 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning but during business hours, suggests that the service is being stretched to a point of exceedingly and exponentially diminishing returns.

And in the words of our former Transit director, the new one hasn't, Mr. Wardrop, hasn't been there long enough to have this kind of rapport and candor with members of Council and I'm sure he will be developing that, but the previous director told us very clearly that without putting more buses on the road, without adding routes, without adding more, more service, the growth of Winnipeg, especially the vast geography in which it's spreading out, it's a relatively small number of people for a major city, is stretching Transit thinner and thinner and thinner.

Now the arguments that have been advanced is that we've got rising fuel costs and we've got inflation and other expenses that need to be met and that we certainly can't ask the ratepayer to support public transit when the ratepayer might not be using public transit. That argument is really quite, quite difficult to express very logically Mr. Speaker when the ratepayer is already being asked to

pay for health care, other amenities, library, swimming pools, parks, police departments, fire departments, paramedic departments, roads, bridges, Dutch Elm Disease programs. All sorts of things that the ratepayer may not, may not tangibly use personally in their experience as a city dweller and yet we've all agreed that they're important programs and that we should pay for them and that we should, we should use them and benefit from them.

Well public transit is one of those areas Mr. Speaker. We, at the same meeting where we defeated, at the Public Works meeting where we defeated this Transit increase, we also heard from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and the Manitoba Medical Association about the Active Transportation Study which is now circulating the various Standing Committees of Council for their input.

An Active Transportation places an extremely high, a premium priority on public transportation as a means of promoting health, not just among seniors but anybody who doesn't get enough exercise during the day and they do recommend we should get at least an hour of exercise and physical activity a day, otherwise we stand the risk, this generation and the next generation coming up, of not, not outliving our parents. It's a confounding dilemma that we've consumed and languished ourselves into Mr. Speaker. Where we are becoming such an unhealthy quality that we are not going to exceed the life expectancy of our parents because we're not active enough.

So Active Transportation is trying to promote that we use public transit in order to get out and walk, and walk to bus stops, walk from bus stops, use bicycles and those sorts of things, things that don't cost a lot of money but that have tremendous public, social and environmental benefit and public transit could be a leader in all of this.

I find it extremely ironic, if not embarrassing that while the Premier is being held up on the world stage as being the greenest Premier, no pun intended here. He's a very experienced politician and certainly he has a lot of experience in matters of the environment and he is being heralded as a friend to business, an even greater friend to the environment and an example to follow for other world leaders. Here in Manitoba, while our City is unfortunately a reluctant laggard and unwilling to do anything different or anything new.

In the case of public transit, yes there has been a marginal increase Councillor Clement between the years 2003, 2004 of the difference between $38,618,000 and $37,772,000 is $846,000 dollars. And I'm not sure what we can attribute that to but if you look at the total revenue of Transit from 1982, where in 1982 it was $59,868,000 down to 2004 $38,618,000 million, there has been a bit of horse trading back and forth. And maybe a promotion can account for it or maybe we didn't have a Transit increase for several months in those years and ridership was increased as a direct correlation of that.

But my big concern here Mr. Speaker is that while other countries; in England, in Australia, countries that I've researched through my office, have been using public transit as a way of advancing other policy objectives; cross policy objectives; health promotion; independent living and the environment, we are stuck on an ideology here that if you don't use it, then you shouldn't have to pay for it and that those who pay for it should ultimately be using it.

Well, the fact is we've been working very creatively to offer all kinds of tax concessions and tax freezes and minus 2% tax rates to the property owners and business owners in this City, and I dare say that the Transit users don't use all the amenities that some of these groups use. In fact, there is a broad, if you look at consumption patterns, there is a broad cross-section of consumption and we're not all going to use the same amenities that our City or any other level of government has to offer but that doesn't mean that we should be holding out on trying to improve the service.

And I think that if our experience has shown that over 20 years increasing the rates has done nothing but diminish the interest that the public has in Transit and has done nothing but reduce the number of the people that use Transit and has certainly damaged the bottom line, it hasn't helped it any, I think we need to put our creative hats on and do something a little different and stop beating our head against the wall trying to make a million dollars out of another nickel.

And my suggestion would be and it was, to send this back and let some creative minds have a look at it and come back with something that might work because this certainly isn't going to work, and I'm not going to support it. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Councillor Gerbasi.

Councillor Gerbasi: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. While I appreciate EPC's prerogative to float ideas forward in the public and then change their minds the process has left citizens wondering what will come at them next, particularly those who are most vulnerable in our society.

First it was the walked-on motions regarding the citizen committees. Citizens were up in arms; they were upset, angry and insulted and fearful that their voices would no longer have a place at City Hall. They phoned, emailed, wrote letters and came to City Hall to protest. Once it was clear that the decision was ill thought out it was withdrawn thankfully.

Then came this proposed elimination of a reduced cash fare. This heartless move would have meant a 45 cent increase for seniors and students for the cash fare. Those who could least afford it were being asked to shoulder the biggest share of the burden. Those who are living day to day financially who must decide between transportation or their food budget were being told to ante up 30% more each time they rode the bus. This was referred to as a trial balloon that didn't go very high.

My question is, how many more of these painful trial balloons are citizens going to have to endure? Are they going to keep coming until our most vulnerable citizens are burnt out and exhausted from having to fight City Hall every few weeks? That is why, this is why we need better consultation with citizens and not these last minute, poorly thought out ideas that get people worked up, frightened and angry.

It really is quite absurd that EPC creates this fear by bringing up these motions and reports without consultation in a short timeframe. Then EPC portrays the flip-flop as a benevolent sign that they're truly listening to people. Perhaps before they cause citizens to be worried sick and be angry, they could think these ideas through a little more carefully.

Another thing is that it really surprised me that this proposal got as far as it did. Recognizing it did come from the administration, I realize that. It says a lot that we even have a conversation about it, about whether or not to eliminate the reduced cash fare and whether to impose these kind of excessive increases on those who can least afford it. In my seven years on Council and on many of those years on EPC the idea of eliminating the reduced cash fare never once came up as a serious suggestion and Councillor Clement has acknowledged that EPC certainly viewed this report before it came out, which is normal process. So it never would have seen the light of day in the past. And the fact that this is happening at all shows to me that there is a very different attitude and climate at City Hall.

Rather than an inclusive consultative approach where a broad range of citizens interests are looked at the focus has become very narrow. We aren't running a widget factory. The business sector is a very important part of our community. We all acknowledge that but it's not the only voice that should be heard.

The specific increases being proposed now with the change, with the reduction from the original proposal, are still a lot to ask of Transit riders. Increasing the regular cash fare from $1.85 to $2.00 is triple the increase that those who buy passes and tickets are getting. Even the regular cash fare is up 10 cents rather

than 5 cents. Why? Often people who pay cash do so because they can't afford passes or tickets. It's unfair to charge these people more. People with excess cash can throw in a toonie if they wish. But why should other cash fare riders have to pay a larger increase then everyone else? It simply makes no sense.

I would like to clarify the position that I have taken over the years on Transit increases in general. I've supported a strategy of targeted discounts for seniors, students, post-secondary passes and the reduced cash fare. I have usually voted for increases to regular fares that were not above the rate of inflation. But last year when the BRT project was cancelled, I could not justify increasing fares at all. Without commitment to service improvements such as rapid transit it is just too much to ask of the Transit riders.

The proposed increases this year have been justified by comparing Winnipeg's fares with other comparable cities. Well that's like charging the same price for a burger as you charge for filet mignon. It's absurd to compare Winnipeg's Transit system with places like Vancouver and Ottawa that have extensive rapid transit systems from trolley cars to bus rapid transit to the Sky Train. These other cities are choosing right now, today, to invest more in their transit systems to improve the speed and reliability of their service. Vancouver, Ottawa and Edmonton are spending 100% of their new Federal gas tax money on investing in their transit system. Calgary is spending 50% and Montreal and Quebec are spending a minimum of 25%.

In Winnipeg we are spending 10% only because we are required to. We're forced to. That may buy a few buses or fix up a few transit stops but it's not going to be the kind of investment that's really needed to change our Transit system in a big way. It's a matter of priorities, as the Mayor often says and I would like to know when our Transit system will be more of a priority to this Council. I guess that's what it really comes down to and we heard from the students today, that represented 50,000 of them represented today by their President on behalf of all the student organizations, but they're discouraged about what the City is doing.

Increasing fares without significantly investing in the quality of service is not going to help ridership numbers. Speaking of ridership, why has there been absolutely no analysis provided in the administrative report about what impact the proposed fare increases will have on ridership? We need to look at the factors that increase ridership and fares are one of those factors. It's wrong for us making this decision in the absence of more meaningful information about the effect on ridership.

I'm pleased to hear that an ad hoc Committee has been struck at Public Works to look at our fare structure and look at creative options and perhaps new deep discounts and what would make the most sense and what would pay off for the City and I think that's excellent and I really encourage that, that the chair of that Committee support that, and that that happens because that's very exciting. We really need to look at some new alternative approaches as Councillor Lubosch has mentioned. But we should be basing our decision on evidence of what makes sense for the City and what's going to work to increase ridership.

Another issue, it's been discussed is the rising cost of fuel and we must pay for it somehow. And of course we have to. But the question is how? Obviously the Province needs to pay more for operating and capital investment in the Transit system. The Mayor and Councillors must continue to raise this issue with them.

But in the meantime, my values tell me that we would be better to hold the line on fares and do away with business tax cuts that were given out last year and will be given out again this year. Last year's business tax cut was not based on need and was not targeted to the smaller businesses that needed it most. I appreciate it was in the downtown but a suggestion was made then that it be targeted to the smallest businesses in the downtown, those who need it the most. If we are going to cut business taxes that's what we should be doing first which is

what the Chamber of Commerce recommended. But now Council is charging people who can least afford to pay more and giving a break to others many of whom didn't ask for it and don't need it as much.

In closing, although the decision to reverse the initial draconian measure is an improvement, the proposed increase remains a lot to ask of Transit riders especially when there was a lack of commitment to true investment in system improvements. Not just prettying up a few bus stops or putting in technology that we already passed in budgets from a year ago, that we already agreed to do, but dealing with significant improvements in the system such as rapid transit, bus rapid transit which the Mayor supported the report that came forward on.

But we need to act on it and we need to put money in our Capital Budget to make it happen. And when we start investing in our system then I'm prepared to consider inflationary increases. Then that's, along with the appropriate targeted discounts so we can protect those who are most vulnerable. But only then, only when we're prepared to make that investment. Only when we're prepared to act like other cities in Canada, to act like a real city in Canada, only then can we compare our system and our rates to other cities in Canada, and only then can we ask anything of all the Transit riders. And we certainly have a responsibility to protect those who are the most vulnerable in our society and that's why I speak against this increase today. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Benham.

Councillor Benham: Thank you Mr. Speaker and I commend both Councillors Gerbasi and Councillor Lubosch for their comments. I will vote against this. I campaigned against any increase in Transit fares when I ran in June of 2004. It was clearly in my brochure, I'm happy to distribute that to Councillors again but I've done that before and I see no reason to change that. I've had a good discussion with the Mayor and I'm going to get back to that about the nature of campaign promises and the nature of what we take on as elected leaders and as representatives of the people who sent us here. And what we should do in terms of getting new information and that sort of thing.

But there is no new information here Mr. Speaker and in fact the report falls very short on a number of important points. Councillor Gerbasi has mentioned some of them and the whole context falls short on a number of important points and particularly with regard to bus rapid transit.

If Mr. Speaker this resolution whereby accompanied by a resolution pledging, pledging and in fact putting $5.5 million dollars into the 2006 Capital Budget earmarked to start building bus rapid transit, no funny fooling, if that is what we had before us, along with the request for a fare increase then Mr. Speaker I would have to reconsider even though I made an election promise, I would say that's a significant difference. We are now investing in this system for the Transit users and it is at least worthy of consideration.

But more money for less service, having turned down the one opportunity we had to create better service. No Mr. Speaker, I have no hesitation in rejecting that. But in rejecting it I will take account of some of the process that has been recounted here. Councillor Clement has said that this was an administration report and was brought forward and so on. Councillor Gerbasi has pointed out that it's pretty rare for those reports to go forward unless there is some real agreement already on Executive Policy Committee and in essence things are to some extent a done deal when people are being heard before Executive Policy Committee.

I would like to believe sincerely Mr. Speaker, that what I saw last Wednesday was in fact a good use of the process. That it wasn't in fact designed to be diversionary or anything else and so I will take it at face value what I heard and saw which I thought was quite a good process at Executive Policy Committee. I don't agree with the result and I'm not going to

support it but I thought the process was one of genuine engagement on the part of all, unfortunately not all members were there but on the part of all the members who were there, including the Mayor, I think there was some genuine dialogue.

I give Councillor Pagtakhan credit for raising issues regarding previous statements by Councillors regarding questions what he called the "are you aware" questions. Are you aware there is a deficit? Challenges to Councillors how would you deal with it then? What is your policy? That, Mr. Speaker, to me, represents, to me there were two themes at the Executive Policy Committee both of them representing the very best of what we can be as Councillors and what the process here at City Council can be.

The first part challenging each other which I don't think we should be afraid to do. Councillor Lubosch made that point earlier today in debate. Councillor Pagtakhan certainly not afraid in any way to challenge me on my views and I'm happy to see that and the Mayor as well.

And at the same time with that challenge comes some collegiality; comes some necessity for consensus or at least some agreement on the part of everybody, that jointly, as the board of directors of the corporation of the City of Winnipeg, we face a financial problem. Jointly we're going to have to solve it. Yes there are Executive Policy Committee members who have to, who are charged with coming up with budgetary solutions and charged with making proposals. But at the same time it is the responsibility of all Councillors to acknowledge those problems and to work co-operatively on solutions or to come forward with their own solutions and present them and see where the votes land.

So, I and Councillor Magnifico was part of that, we had a discussion about the nature of business models because I was talking about business models and he challenged me and I think in a good way. Councillor O'Shaughnessy is the one who proposed the compromise motion and Councillor De Smedt, to his credit, talked about Winnipeg Transit being a public service; talked about the fact that we couldn't possibly expect it to make a profit; and talked about the need for compassion and caring for the Winnipeggers for whom there really is a big difference between $1.55 and $2 for a single ride on Transit. So I think all of that discussion was good Mr. Speaker and I want to commend the Councillors who took part in it. All Councillors, all members of Council including the Mayor.

So we've agreed and Councillor De Smedt also made a point that we all agree. This is going to be a public subsidy so it's a question of where do we draw the line? How much comes from the City of Winnipeg taxpayers, mostly property taxpayers, to subsidize this service which unfortunately a good many of them do not use and I agree with, that that's not necessarily a part of the argument but it's something that they feel strongly about. How much will come from Winnipeg taxpayers? How much will come from the Province of Manitoba, which I think we can all agree is a key issue and how much must be paid by the users themselves?

And we had a discussion about that and of course, the Mayor will acknowledge it turns out that Nick Ternette had the best figures in the room given his study of this issue and we know that the users are being asked to pay at least 58%, according to the most recent figures, and that that is growing. Is that a situation we want to see continue Mr. Speaker? Do we want to see a system where users are asked to pay an increasing percentage, or do we want to acknowledge that this is a public service that we have a responsibility to support, and do we want to work together to call on the Province to provide us with more money? Well yes Mr. Speaker I was invited to do that by the Mayor, to join that crusade. I'm happy to offer support on that and I've already been doing that with political parties in the Legislature.

And I'm happy to work on improving current service, not as a substitute for bus rapid transit but in addition to bus rapid transit as a means of bringing riders back and increasing ridership. I think that's the

most important issue for us here Mr. Speaker because this is not about making a profit, it's about providing the best service for the most Winnipeggers that we can, for the highest number of Winnipeggers that we can.

We do have evidence and I thank Councillor Lubosch for his figures on revenues. We also have figures about ridership that show that despite a few hiccups, in fact we've had a steady decline while we increase revenues. Is there a causal relationship? Well I believe there is Mr. Speaker and I think it's so apparent that it would be incumbent on those who say there is not a causal relationship to prove it.

So finally, and Mr. Speaker just to touch briefly on some of the comments made by others including our delegations, I'm very concerned about the 50,000 students who feel that we have abandoned them; 50,000, 50,000 post-secondary students who live in every ward that is represented here. I'd like any Councillor to stand up and say they don't have any post-secondary students in their ward because of course they would be wrong. Post-secondary students are located all over Winnipeg and serving them and serving them better is in fact a very good way to develop life-long ridership habits. We should be doing that. We should be encouraging the universal bus pass for all post-secondary students Mr. Speaker. We should be saying "you are target customers. We value you. We want your business. We want you to be supporters of Winnipeg Transit throughout."

This is not the way to do it Mr. Speaker, and therefore I will be voting against this resolution. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Lazarenko.

Councillor Lazarenko: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I as being one member of the Committee that was dealing with this some time ago, the, and I did not support the recommendation that came from the administration. It went to the Executive Policy Committee. What we have here is the amendment from the Executive Policy Committee, they did not concur with the recommendation from our Committee, is not to, not to increase. Amends were made and I think they cushioned this a bit and I welcome that on their move.

I will be opposed to number 1a because of the increase of cash fares would be 8.1% and senior cash fares will be increased from $1.55 to $1.65 that's an increase of 29%. When Council dealt with this this March, it was included with the current estimates for a 5 cent fare increase to regular and reduced cash fares along with reported increases in ticket and passes. The only one who voted against that proposal was Councillor Smith. All members of Council agreed on a 5 cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, we are in serious trouble here with our Transit department. We cannot continue and operate in such a fashion to suit everybody because we can't afford it. The price of operation is skyrocketing to a point of no return. And I would suggest that we should put the pressure on the Province to help us if not let them take the Transit over. Take over the operation of Transit. You operate it and see what the delegation will do when they go before the Province to say we don't want any increases.

Because it's coming to the point that each and every year we have to increase the fares. Now, it's a proposal, the proposal here before us now and it's not going to stop next year there will be another proposal to increase the fares. We just can't. The fuel cost is so high and the operation, you take a look at the benefits we pay to our operators. And someone has to, we have to get that money from somewhere and the only people we can get it from is from the, from the users and that is the City of Winnipeg riders.

City of Winnipeg consists of two-thirds of the population of the Province of Manitoba. The benefits that do come in from this one, one department which is the Transit department that the Province takes in on revenue, for every, every kilometre that bus travels, the Province takes some form of taxes from it. The operator, for every hour that operator gets paid the Province takes its share of

personal income tax. To give you an example, a person who is paying their share of income tax, the Provincial share will be $20. Not to say what the Federal got but the Provincial government gets $20 and we get 44 cents. Now where the hell is the equality in this Mr. Speaker?

We're talking about a major capital city of the Province. Not to say the other capital cities of other provinces what are their revenues? How much are they getting revenue from the Provincial government? Such as Alberta? Take a look at the cities they have there. And we compare the cost of operating transit in Alberta. No it's this way.

And so Mr. Speaker the only alternative is to ask the Province. We should take a lead role. The Mayor should be calling a seminar with the Cabinet of the Province, the Provincial government and ourselves, and we put the, put this on a table and say "look, can you help us because if not we can't." If they refuse then okay we may cut some routes because you see some of the routes that the buses are going through, huge buses going with one or two people, one or two passengers in there. And it costs so much in the operating and the Province will say no, well then you take it, like we did with Hydro. You take over the operation and it will be your responsibility because we are not getting any place, will not be able to continue operating Transit in the fashion like what we did before.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about having a communicating line open to the Province, we've had different people appointed from this Council, to talk to the Province and report to us. Not one time did any of the people that were appointed from members of Council to talk with the Provincial government, whole table talks, ever came and said well here's what, this is some, at least some report. This has not happened.

I have spoken personally to the Premier. I asked him for a meeting and he said "yes, I'm willing to listen and talk. See what you have to say and I'll give you my opinion." But it never, it never arrived because either the Premier was too busy or he was not interested. We have 31 MLA's in the, from the Provincial government, 31 MLA's that represent the citizens of Winnipeg; the majority of the house. And I've been saying this so many times and some of the MLA's with their smart remarks and said "listen, that's your bloody problem. You took on that mandate to operate and provide transportation to the citizens of Winnipeg." And they have decreased their share of funding to us. So what are the alternatives we have then we have to go and be, from our Committee, goes to the Executive Policy Committee, Transit fare increases. How else can we operate? There has to be an increase.

But my message to them and to anybody, would be no. The citizens of Winnipeg cannot pay. Every person that gets on that Transit bus, especially in the morning, on the peak hours, that person is going out to work and the Province are sitting there like bankers and they make sure that they are getting their share of revenue from that individual person, each and every person. This is where I have said before, 22 cents out of $40 dollars they take in, where is the fairness? And two-thirds of the population, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to find out there is something wrong. Absolutely without a question, there is something wrong with that formula.

And members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly who used to sit in these chambers starting back from the 70s, former Premier Gary Filmon was the chair of Public Works. He used to rant and rave in here we have to get after the Provincial government to give, we want our share. We want our share. When they got over to the big house, sometimes I wish it would have been a different big house than the one on Broadway, they got over there and then all of a sudden their tune was changed. Everyone who left these chambers to go as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, everyone, we can't. We can't because we have to dig into our pockets. You have, that's your responsibility. What changes people?

Mr. Speaker even some members in these chambers get on EPC and you play

a different role. That's their mandate. That's their responsibility. You have to play a different role even if you don't like it. I'm glad I wasn't on EPC and I'm very glad I'm not there now. Mr. Mayor with all respect I'd love to work with you on EPC but the mandate, as the responsibilities that are there, you just can't because always you have to keep going ahead. We need more money. We have to do this. We have to increase the taxes. We have to increase business tax. We have to increase the property tax. We have to increase every other utility whatever, like waterworks, how much have we increased the waterworks within the last 15 years? What are the people paying now compared to what they paid before about 300% if not more.

Transit fares Mr. Speaker have increased so much within the last 15 years, it's hard to even imagine what people were paying before when they were going to go to work or they were going to a concert or to visit someone, what the cost was. But look at what we've done; the buses that we've been buying; the routes that we've introduced into new subdivisions; the revenue that goes to service those subdivisions. The Province and the Feds get more money than we do.

And I'm saying Mr. Speaker, I don't think I've ever said this before but I'm willing to say look the Province here, you take this headache. You take this because you can afford it. You've got revenue coming out, you know more than us. We have only two source of revenue and that is our business tax and our property taxes and that is it. We don't have any other and we're squeezed to a pinch that we just can't and what happens we are all on the same wave length but we bicker against one another, we complain about EPC, we complain about the Mayor but what can you do? The thing is we have to get together and go to the Legislative Assembly members and say "look, we need your help."

Talk to the Premier. He's, I think he is a common sense human being. He will listen. I think it's a problem we've got. We just can't. So Mr. Speaker I don't want to dwell on this much longer because I think this in itself, we're just like they say, try and fight your way out of a wet paper bag. You know it's this is basically what it is and you know we just, you know, target one another. We complain and we do all, and those who are taking in the biggest revenues sit back, just like the school division. We collect the taxes for them and they're sitting back they say, that's your bloody responsibility not ours. And we have to go, we take the lumps because people call us they say "you jackasses what did you raise my taxes for? My taxes went up by 7 or 8%." No our taxes stayed zero. "I got my tax bill I got 8% more to pay." We get the lumps and they get the glory because the Winnipeg Charter, the Winnipeg Charter, Mr. Speaker, that's our headache.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Maybe we should give MLA's some autobins Harry and even the odds. Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Thank you. Mr. Speaker I'm going to ask this clause be referred back and I would like to give my reasons for doing so. I believe this, I think I have three minutes to do that? Thank you.

I believe that the report provided to us today is light on the data required for Council to make an informed decision. I don't know from looking at this five page report here what the total budget is that is required to operate the system. We don't know the share of the budget now achieved from the fare box, particularly as it compares to other municipalities. We don't know what the shortfall is. We're quite aware that it is anticipated that we're going to get $1.69 million in additional revenue but what is the bottom line? What's the revenue that we need? We don't have that. We don't know what the additional impact is as the additional $2.5 million dollars that the Province gave us in revenue for Transit operations, we have no idea what the impact was on that budget.

We need an opportunity to ask questions of the administration. They're not allowed to come on to the Council floor and I would hope that the Mayor would use his prerogative to give us a, all a Council

seminar so that we could ask our questions and get the necessary information so that we can make an informed decision.

Some of the questions that we have, not only with regard to the data that's not there, is what happened to the additional $2.5 million dollars that we got from the Province this year for Transit operations? It's well documented in the, in the Provincial budget. What happened to it?

The additional revenue that, that with the passing of the NDP budget amendment, at the Federal level, it was an additional $426 million dollars, I believe, country-wide for Transit operations. What is our share of that money and when is it coming to us? That's somehow going to have a positive effect on our need to get more revenue from the citizens.

In the signing of the tri-lateral agreement between us and the Province and the Feds with regard to the sharing of the Federal gas revenues, 10% of our Provincial portion is supposed to be going towards transit infrastructure. What impact does that have on the bottom line? I feel all these questions need to be answered in order for me to say whether I believe that this 15 cents in some cases and up to 40 cents in other cases is justified.

And I don't believe I have that information and for those reasons I'm requesting that this be referred back and I'm hoping that the Mayor will see fit as is his purview to call a Council seminar on this matter. And I ask for a recorded vote on this. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. We just had a referral vote a few minutes back but I'll take it again.

Councillor Thomas: But this is on different…

Mr. Speaker: It's all the same but it's in order so Councillor Clement you have the opportunity to speak against a referral again if you wish.

Councillor Clement: Mr. Speaker we've already had one referral motion in the chamber today and I suggested that we shouldn't do that. I'm going to just simply suggest we shouldn't do this one either.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour of the motion to refer please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

Councillors Benham, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Smith and Thomas.

Nays

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Lazarenko, Clement, De Smedt, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Swandel, Wyatt, Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 5, Nays 11.

Mr. Speaker: The referral motion is lost. Did you wish to speak to the clause Councillor Thomas?

Councillor Thomas: Yes I do. I'm shocked and appalled that Council doesn't want to have the necessary information that is needed for us to make an informed decision as a Council but sad to say that doesn't surprise me as much as one would think it would.

I have to just say that I'm, I'm disappointed in that decision but now let's deal with why it's unfair. The people who have the least ability to pay and have the least options are going to be the one who are hurt by this and we don't even know if we need the money. So why would we do this to the most vulnerable citizens when we don't know what the Province is giving us, we don't know what the Feds are giving us, either for infrastructure or for our ongoing operations. We know that it's anticipated that we're going to get an additional $1.69 million dollars in revenue, that's a guesstimate. But we don't know what the bottom line is for the operation of

our Transit system. And so why would we do this?

The people who are going to be most affected by this are the people who can't afford to buy bus passes. The people who can't afford to buy tickets in groups of tens. And the people who just last year were given a reduction because it was acknowledged that, that they were vulnerable and their incomes were lower than most. I respect that Winnipeg Harvest has come here today talking about families and children and how they're very vulnerable in here. But my ward has the highest population of seniors in the City and I'm about to tell you why I think it's patently unfair that we do this to seniors.

Seniors, while the average person and there is all sorts of people who say increase the minimum wage. If you're on minimum wage and you're making 40 hours a week you're living on over $10,000 a year. Shockingly, that's not very much. But you know what you're living on as a senior? Half that amount. Half that amount and that's what you're living on.

If you combine the OAS and the GIS supplement together, you have people that have, coming into their homes, something like $450 dollars a month. And they have to pay their gas bill, most of them don't have mortgages anymore, thank goodness, but they have to pay their gas bill; they have to pay their taxes; they have to pay for their water bill; and if they get to go out, they're not going to put aside $40 for a monthly bus pass because they don't get to go out every day on that amount of money. They don't know how many times a month they'll get to go out.

But one of the things they do know is that they can't afford to put aside $12 plus dollars to buy a ticket to buy a series of ten bus tickets. They're happy if they can pull together the $1.45 that they need to take the bus downtown to do some shopping and to get the bus back. And it's not just that they're doing shopping, they're going to doctors appointments, they're, they're trying to get out and socialize with their grandchildren, and they're going to be hurt the hardest by this increase and they can least afford it out of any of the groups here today. And I'm not saying that families with children have it well because they don't. I'm not saying people on minimum wage have it well because they don't. I'm not saying that people on social assistance have it well because they don't. But you get more money on social assistance than you get if you're a senior living off the OAS and GIS supplement on your pension. And I don't think very much of social assistance rates.

So what are these people going to do? Are you going to have people try to walk places because they don't feel that they can afford to take the bus and slipping on our slippery sidewalks which we're not ploughing as well as we should and having heart attacks because they've walked too far, farther than they can afford to walk trying to walk home with two bags load of groceries because they can't afford to take the bus back if they spent all their money on groceries.

That's a significant increase that that will have on those people who are counting their pennies, counting their pennies. And my heart goes out to them in the Christmas season this is a Grinch of a Christmas present I'll tell you.

I know that other people have spoken about how difficult this is with families so I'm not going to repeat that. But I just say that I'm very disappointed that we, that we have this clause here today without the rationale for the increase. This is a blank page. I'm waving it around because that's what we got is a blank page. All it says is how much money we're going to be getting. It doesn't show how much money we need. It doesn't show where that money is going to go when we get it. It's just saying that's how much money we need and how we're going to get it is stick it to the most vulnerable by charging them the highest rates and I can't go for that.

But if someone would have given me a good argument; would have shown me data instead of a blank page; would have shown me reasons why we need the money; would have explained what

happened to the Provincial, additional $2.5 million dollars and why that wasn't enough; would have explained what happened to our share of the $426 million that we were getting from the Federal government and from the additional money that we just received, that we just signed an agreement for, for transit infrastructure, how much was that, $10, $12 million? Surely, if that is what we're getting in this year, surely we could absorb $1.6 million. But I don't know! I don't know because it's not there! So this clause does not have my support.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. No one ever likes to have to debate this every year. We seem to, it's as an annual habit or a regular affair here on Council. And I guess you know, having the honour now I've served under two Mayors or working with two Mayors I should say, it's interesting what politics of course, how when there is one Mayor in office, how certain members of Council think this is plausible and doable and it goes up 5 cents and votes for it, and then under a different Mayor the votes, that it's completely unacceptable and that 5 cent increase is impossible to stomach. But, that's politics I suppose Mr. Speaker.

I guess I liken these debates to what it must, what it was like in Parliament before the, before Canada Post existed. Used to be I think it was called the Canadian Postal Service or something to that effect and it was a department of the government and they would have their debates, all of Parliament, their debates about the postage stamp and whether or not we should raise the price of a postage stamp. And could you imagine that in Parliament debating one cent or a fraction of a cent or whatever it would end up being, we're going to raise the postage rate, and all of Parliament would be up in an uproar. Could you imagine hundreds of members debating about an increase of a postal cent and how ridiculous that absolutely was. And indeed it was and they went on to create Canada Post, a crown corporation, which was mandated to come up with their own business plans and to ensure that they were sustainable and operate on a not-for-profit basis and sure enough, that's what they're doing.

And I think our Transit system, I think we have to if anything this debate signifies Mr. Speaker, is we can do a better job and there may be as a different model with regards to running our Transit system. As was pointed out, I'll give it an advertisement in the Rapid Transit Task Force calling for a Transit and Regional Street Transportation Authority which would have the authority and the a, in my mind the ability to deal with these issues maybe subject to the Public Utilities Board. But nevertheless be able to make the case on a business basis of the riders they want to attract, how they wish to market, and how they want to basically put what kind of structure they want to put in place with their fares for riders.

So I think, I'm hoping that with the 90-day extension of work that's going on by the administration that that's part of the recommendations coming back. Because, because I think the previous speaker is quite right the report before us today is quite thin. There is not a lot of information with regards to the sustainability or what exactly the Transit department needs.

I will note though Mr. Speaker that if you were to look, I had the Councillor Wyatt research department going full tilt here and they were able to dig up some information from last year's report. Thank goodness for computers. And based on just some very quick research here it's interesting to note Mr. Speaker, that the average fare comparison in 2003 and we're always a year behind with these I suppose, 2003 Winnipeg was roughly in the middle of the pack starting to get high with regards to average fares and with Toronto and Mississauga and Vancouver quite high. But Hamilton was still before us with an average fare.

With this change, with the change in 2004 and I'm assuming that this is before we had calculated now what we're doing with regards to this increase, we have already exceeded Hamilton. Hamilton is behind us now on their average fares and we've

now gone beyond Hamilton. The only cities that the average fare comparison used by Transit that are ahead of us are Toronto, Vancouver and Mississauga. That's in the average fare comparison.

So there is a disturbing trend that we are maybe as we often compare ourselves with our property taxes, exactly where we are when it comes to our property taxes in the nation, specifically western Canada, we have well, in the case of western Canada, we have already out-priced ourselves with regards to Transit fares compared to other Canadian, western Canadian cities.

What I find also interesting is that though the report does not, this report before us today does not have this information, last year's report did, and that was the monthly average. And the monthly average has basically gone up as well. And we are already leading the pack with regards to our monthly charges on average with regards to this, of the other cities. It might be said that the cash fares are still higher in some cities in Canada, but by the looks of it, from what I can see, they have made a strategic decision that to try to attract riders and keep riders, they are discounting or reducing their rates with regards to monthly passes because we are at the high end. Only by the looks of it, only Toronto is, and Mississauga doesn't have a monthly pass, but only Toronto is ahead of us with our monthly pass, with the monthly pass charges, average monthly pass charges when you take in all the different categories.

So I would say Mr. Speaker that, that I think it's hard for us as a Council, to be making these decisions on raising fares when the whole picture is not before us. And I do agree with previous speakers as well with regards to their comments about the Provincial government. I find it hard to believe that actually our, the Premier was recognized as one of the most green Premiers in all of Canada. I mean, maybe because we have hydro electricity here we're automatically a green province. But you can guarantee that if we had huge coal reserves like they have down in North Dakota I'd highly doubt that we would be embracing Kyoto and jumping all over it. But he was also, also on that list he was named as a green Premier, was Arnold Schwarzenegger and General Electric, which is one of the major polluters in the last 50 years in North America. So you can take that for what you see it.

Frankly, if the Province was serious about coming to the table on Transit, they would have increased the subsidy to Transit without taking it back in another hand somewhere else, Mr. Speaker. It's easy to be able to come forward and give us more money in one hand and then take it back in somewhere else out of another pocket and that's what exactly happened this year, as we all know.

And we also know Mr. Speaker that with regards to rapid transit, there doesn't seem to be a lot of movement at the Provincial level. I suppose it's hard for us to point fingers because of what we've done here. But nevertheless, the leadership, if there has, is there was leadership there on that file, we would be doing far more on rapid transit today in the City of Winnipeg if there was leadership from the Provincial government.

Mr. Speaker I, because of the lack of information before us in the report today I, I feel that I cannot support the clause. But I would hope that with the recommendations in *Rapid Transit Task Force Report* we will hopefully be seen, this is one of the last debates here with regards to the fare increase because this is something Mr. Speaker which, which an independent authority operating our Transit system and regional roads hopefully, taking the politics out of regional road decisions as well, would do a far better job. As was, as been the case with the great Canadian Postal service. So thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Yes Mr. Speaker. You know I've read a lot about the Transit fare proposed hike. I've had a lot of emails, a lot of telephone calls and I've read a lot of newspaper articles. And let

me tell you this, the one that really stands out in my mind is the one that appeared in the *Winnipeg Sun* with holy, I couldn't believe it, Tom Broadbeck. He said "raising prices drives away bus riders." And we've known this for a long time. You know I've advocated for example a number of years ago, why don't we just have no tickets, no cash, just free transit?

But he goes on to say, this is interesting, he says "the problem with Transit is they have no long-term goals. They tread water every year. They face cost pressures so they raise prices. They lose some volume as a result against slightly and overall revenue. They can pay the bills from year to year but it's a losing strategy." And it really is.

You know it doesn't make any sense when we do something as a result and it's not working and we keep on doing it. It's insanity to go ahead and do something and you know the results are going to be. And you're not happy with those results but you keep on and in some sort of drug state and keep on doing this year after year.

You know, we you look at the comparison of average fares, look at Montreal, 102. What are we 1.34. It's quite a difference. The fact is there's only three cities in this comparison that are higher than us. You know, it just doesn't make any sense.

But let me tell you this. With the amount that we pay to have cars be the modus of transportation in this City, is incredible. We build roads at a tremendous cost. We have to maintain them so we go ahead and we fix potholes and we clean snow off of them. We, you know, in the autumn we clean them. We spend a fortune for car owners, for people that have cars. Many people in my ward do not have a car and they're paying for this. They're paying for this and not receiving the benefit. They do not have a car.

So you know it seems to me transportation is a vital thing for quality of life. I want people, for example, from my area to go shopping in Transcona. As I told in earlier debates, I never go to Transcona because it's too awkward, too hard to get to. It's easier to go to London, England than it is to go to Transcona.

So what I'm saying is, you know we should, we should try to in effect make people mobile in this City. So that if they see a, you know, a rug sale in Transcona, they can go there. Business is gained. Business is gained from when, when citizens are mobile. Quality of life is better. People can go out to events, Transcona, what's your fair? Hi Neighbour Days. I've never been out there. I think countless Winnipeggers have never been there but they might go if it was reasonable to get there.

So I'm saying to you, what we've been doing year after year does not work. Let's change course. You know, we can afford at this time to do so and I think we should do it. It's you know, I hate to see us always, in effect, take, well I think we're taking advantage of low income people, of immigrants, of people who are finding it very hard on fixed incomes.

It's not a good system what we're doing. We've cut back service. We've cut, you know raised Transit fares and in effect we're killing our Transit system. If this continues I can see in the future a diminished Transit system. We don't want to go that route. We should change now and we should oppose this Transit hike. It's just abysmal.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Mayor Katz on the clause.

Mayor Katz: Thank you Mr. Speaker. First of all Mr. Speaker let me commend and thank Councillor Lubosch. I like the idea of going forward and trying to find an answer. I can't tell you how many people have said to me a dollar would be a fair, a reasonable fare, free would be even better. And if with the help of any Councillors here and administration, there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow that you can all find, I would be very happy but in the meantime, and I encourage them to do so, I will deal with reality.

We have $107 million dollar Transit budget. Fifty-eight percent is picked up

by ridership; 42% by the taxpayers. Those are the ratepayers. Everybody is paying for Transit.

In addition to that we have Handi-Transit; $8 million dollar budget. Ninety percent is picked up by the taxpayer, 10% by the users and the demand is growing and growing and growing for reasons we all know.

The City now subsidized Transit to the tune of $34 million dollars. We received $19 million dollars from the Province. It's no secret. I think many Councillors here have referred to the fact that our Transit grants have gone up insignificantly over the last 13 years. It actually decreased one year and it increased slightly last year. And I think it's up to each and every one of us to make sure we do everything we can to see that Transit grant increased.

And I can tell you I've already had my meeting and maybe I had my meeting and Councillor Lazarenko because they cancelled yours to meet with me, but I don't know that to be correct. But I have had the meeting. What I think a lot of people seem to forget here is number one we're looking at a situation where we need revenue.

We spend more money today servicing our debt than we do on our roads and our bridges and contrary to what was said the increase we are looking at is not 29%. The recommendation was 29% from $1.55 to $2 dollars. It was those heartless people at EPC who decided it should only be a 6.5% increase. So that's what it is $1.55 to $1.65.

I've heard a great deal of talk about students and seniors and yet no one points out and whether or not it's available today or not it will be, but you can purchase tickets and as a senior you pay 93 cents. As a student you pay $1.25. There is a reference to students, 50,000 of them, who use our Transit on a regular basis; who need our Transit to go to school; who need the Transit for their part-time or their full-time jobs and yet no one mentioned that a few years ago when the University of Manitoba had the opportunity to get the U-pass, it was voted down by the Students' Association. Someone just forgot all about that and that was the question I was hoping to ask Mr. Speaker later on.

But here's what's really happening today. I've heard comments from several Councillors and what I don't understand, and I think I'm starting to understand that I'm going to use the term "politics before principles." I heard Councillor Gerbasi talk about the increase and yet as I look at the record 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, voted for an increase every single year that Councillor Gerbasi was on EPC. But there was a clarification that now because there's no plan for BRT, cannot support it. There was no plan for BRT back then either.

I heard Councillor Thomas so eloquently talk about the counting pennies I think, and yet Councillor Thomas, every single year since 1999, you've supported that increase in Transit fares. Never once did you vote against an increase. I say politics before principles.

But even more to the point Mr. Speaker, the facts because we get all sorts of numbers, the facts are that the ridership went down drastically but yet in 2003, 2004, 2005 with a nickel increase, ridership has increased and from 2003 to '05 approximately by 1.7 million. That's the increase.

And what nobody seems to address here which I can't comprehend you want to talk about Transit then talk about Transit. Talk about the fact that we need quality service. We need quality service for those people. Drop by the depot with the bus drivers. They'll tell you we need quality service. They'll give you all the suggestions there are. You don't have to pay consultants they'll give it to you for free. And yet Mr. Speaker, I have seen no action on it whatsoever.

You know what rapid transit is wonderful. Does that mean we ignore our Transit service which we've done for years and years and years? And Mr. Speaker, I must read some very wise comments. So, "the increase, although very

regrettable, is the same as the rate of inflation. I hate to have to stand up here and make excuses but we charge rates for lots of things. Things aren't free. It goes up with inflation so we have to increase it slightly. I'm sorry. It's not kindergarten. It's the big world of government and it's not fun. Sometimes you have to keep up with inflation or cut services and that's the reality. Costs are going up massively. We're spending more massively and nobody wants to cut services so we are in a hole. The only choice we have is to dig ourselves deeper further into the hole. I'd like to hear some positive suggestions of where people think we're going to get that money." I'd like to claim these as my words but I give credit to Councillor Gerbasi. Those are your words, November 26, 2003.

I'd also like to quote these words: "well the options available to us are if we don't increase fares, then we decrease costs. We increase the head times, the length of time the customers have to wait for a bus. That does nothing except reduce the number of users because it reduces efficiency and in our cold winters I don't think that's an option. The other things we can do is decease the length of time the Transit operates. Instead of midnight, make it, make the last bus 11 p.m. Well what does that do? That strands low income shift users who get off at midnight. It's not really an option either in these cold winters. What are they left with? Walk home or take a taxi. That's not providing service. Decrease the number of routes. Well that leaves us in the same option. Cold winters, less service, how is that an option?

We seem to be getting out of the business of Transit. Or reduced access or reduce Handi-Transit, who wants to do this? To reduce the number of people who access the Handi-Transit system anybody here want to do that? Well, are there any other options? I haven't heard it. Those who have criticized it haven't offered an alternative whatsoever. I'd be delighted if I didn't have to raise rates. I'd be delighted if there was some way to reduce the service costs without impacting on people but there isn't." I wish those were my words; once again Councillor Lillian Thomas, November the 23, 2003.

Mr. Speaker: Extension has been moved. Councillor Thomas are you on your feet for some reason?

Councillor Thomas: Yes I'm rising on a point of Personal Privilege under 40 Section 1 with regard to the honours and rights and prerogatives and privileges of a Council member with regard to, statements with regard to my voting record. I think I made it very clear when I moved a motion for referral that this was a, that there was inadequate information brought forward and when the choice was made by, by the Mayor, not to when I asked him at Executive Policy Committee and not today when I asked Council as a whole to, to put this matter back so that I could put my questions and get my questions answered, that there was no other option available for me to vote against this because it hadn't met my criteria with regard to due diligence and if there's going to be statements made with regard to my voting record, I feel I have a, I feel I have an, have, must have the right to explain that there is major differences with regards to…

Mr. Speaker: Order Councillor. Order Councillor. You've gone, the rights, your rights have not been abused. There is no question of privilege. It's again a dispute over facts and it's debate, so that's, I can't accept that as a question of privilege. Mayor Katz you have, you have the extension.

Mayor Katz: Thank you. And I intend to address that issue. There have been at least on two occasions where Councillor Lubosch had genuine concerns and wanted it referred back to the Transit department. The same people voted against that recommendation. And I'll address that issue.

There was a meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works. The administration was there. They sat through the entire meeting. They were there to answer all and any questions. Would you like to know how many

questions were asked of the administration Mr. Speaker? Not one question. Once again, politics before principles. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Mayor Katz. Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would state for the purposes of Councillor Thomas' concerns there is a fair bit of detail that appears in our Operating Budget document page 166 as to the plan of Transit and its spending and expending goals and direction, on page 161 of the Financial Statements. Councillor Swandel was, brought those to my attention. Not that I didn't know they were there but just for the purposes of people's completeness. If that changes Councillor Thomas' position that the information isn't available. I just throw that, I just throw that to the group.

And again, while I am loathe to vote for anything that will keep Councillor Smith out of Transcona maybe we could suggest if Councillor Smith could stomach the additional fares and perhaps Councillor Wyatt would buy him the first mint julep at the Hi Neighbour Festival we'd be okay.

There, this model of funding Transit and I've been here for I guess just over five years now and I've been here as a non-EPC Councillor working with Glen Murray, an EPC Councillor working with Glen Murray and then an EPC Councillor working with Sam Katz and I, I voted for the Transit fare increase every single time. I didn't see any, any reason not to and the arguments have remained exactly the same on a year to year basis. The only thing as the Mayor alluded to that has changed at all has been the people espousing the different arguments depending exactly upon who's been on EPC at any given time.

The Mayor is exactly correct. You could simply move one Councillor into another chair and they could read from Councillor Gerbasi or Councillor Thomas' former Hansard comments. It doesn't really make any difference. Or so it wouldn't appear. That's why, I guess I have always tried to remain fairly consistent in what I've tried to do because I don't mind telling you and I've said this before, I've always seen the method in which we fund Transit, maybe ironically or maybe surprisingly, as one of the most transparent and fair methods that we have in the City of Winnipeg. I know this is a bit more this time through and I understand that but generally speaking we've been sticking to about a nickel a year in terms of, in terms of ridership. I don't think that's unreasonable given the cost of running the service and I don't quite understand year after year how people can stand up and say we think that's unreasonable or we think that's unfair.

In fact, I'd take it a step further and maybe suggest that it wouldn't be bad if we funded more departments, not less, on that type of model. If we know costs are increasing and we know the cost of the right-hand service is increasing maybe we could offset that cost by a regular increase to the people that are using them. Certainly as the Mayor has stated, not at all, not at all enough money to cover off the actual costs, we certainly are subsidizing the service to the very, very largest extent.

But I've always seen it as a process with some integrity and a lot of transparency that people should be able to understand. I don't quite understand always why people latch on to this as an attack on anybody. I would hold up this process as one of the more transparent that we have in our civic government. Little concerned about the comments from Councillor Gerbasi about the report, oh boy, that's frustrating; the great concern that we cause by sending this report out causing all sorts of constituent fatigue because they've got to come down here and yell and scream at us.

And I acknowledge Councillor Benham's comments to the contrary that it was a good process. For heavens sakes Mr. Speaker this is the same Councillor who, who came after me essentially, and I hope accuse is not too strong a word, but accused us of scrubbing the Humane Society report, that wasn't what the

administration wrote, this has clearly been augmented. This has clearly been altered. You're not letting us see what the administration wants.

And what do we do when administration comes through with a report and puts it on the table? We're accused of well you can't scare the hell out of people like this. That's not fair to them. Oh sometimes it's very difficult Mr. Speaker to discern exactly what people want and when you try to give it to them, they turn around and say they want the exact opposite of what you gave them last time they complained about it. It's a very, very tough way to do business. It really, really is. And I guess a funny way to do business.

Administration came forward with a new report asking for new revenue primarily for one reason and again this has been alluded to, I'm almost the last speaker. They're looking for ways to augment service. They're looking for ways to make the service better for the citizens that we represent and the citizens that we serve. There's no hidden agenda here. There's no attack on the poor. We're not trying to do anything clandestine or underhanded. We're trying to provide a better service.

I see Councillor Thomas standing up.

Mr. Speaker: Are you on your feet for some reason Councillor Thomas?

Councillor Thomas: Yes I'm going to wait until he's finished speaking. It has to do with…

Mr. Speaker: Then please sit down, only one member on the floor at the time.

Councilor Thomas: Fine.

Councillor Steeves: I should say for the purpose of the record I like that red jacket.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: There's a couple myths here that purvey it as well Mr. Speaker. The first is that we're not providing a good service to the citizens we represent. I'm not a regular bus taker but do take the bus on occasion primarily for the purposes of seeing what the service is like. To me it seems like a very solid service. And the ridership statistics, if you compare the City of Winnipeg on a per capita basis versus places of like size our ridership is actually quite high.

And I think it drives our Transit administration a little bit crazy when over and over and over again, their political masters if I could use that term, continually berate the service and call it sub-par. The truth is the service is doing quite well in terms of comparisons to other cities.

To me the price of riding the bus seems reasonable. When we look at other cities in Canada and we're high in some areas, we're low in some areas but overall I think everybody in this chamber we would agree our fares are competitive. They're pretty similar to most other cities. We're not an out-layer one way or the other. We're pretty competitive.

We have had some challenges in the past with the Province in terms of funding and there has been some progress in the last couple of years I want to acknowledge that. I'm a little bit reticent when I see the Province held up as a champion in this specific area and I would perhaps give some credit in the area of environmental initiatives. Although I had to resist a lot of urges Mr. Speaker when I heard about the Premier's singling out because I know that one of the programs for which the Province has been singled out has been what, their wonderful initiatives under the wastewater treatment stuff they are doing to the City of Winnipeg and guess who's paying for that Mr. Speaker.

We also heard from some of the students and they are at first glance I guess one of the more sympathetic groups that we deal with and I understand that. I also understand that in the course of time all costs at the University are going up. I know at Law School the students themselves in referendum voted to double their own tuition. Why? They wanted better service.

I also do want to note…

Councillor Clement: Move extension.

Councillor Steeves: I also do want to note for the purposes of the record that for several years through the Civic Environmental Committee, we have been requesting that the Universities, both of them, go to referendums with their student populations to implement exactly what this Ms. Aziz was doing; (ringing) Oh, I apologize; was alluding to in terms of the universal transit bus pass. Regrettably the Universities have told us that they're not interested in doing that. If they would go to their student populations and work to get that through, that would make any reduction that we could ever deal with look like chump change.

Incredibly the student bodies themselves if they would follow the lead of other student bodies across Canada they could do for their student populations in terms of Transit fares what we couldn't do in a billion years. What we do need is a leadership at that level.

I want to end with this. We continually think of our Transit service as a method of social assistance. It may be to a certain extent but that is very perilous if we begin to think of it that way because I've said this before. What's going to wind up happening if we start shortchanging our service in terms of revenue, we're going to be cutting off our nose to spite our face because the service for the people in this City who most need it is going to decline. End of story.

If you're truly interested in helping people of more modest means and I've said this before, the way to do it is to fund a robust Transit service at the level that it deserves. And then, through Provincial mechanism, minimum wage legislation, social assistance amounts, give people more money to pay for the cost that actually exists so the money will exist on the demand side and the Transit system will be robust enough to support it on the other side. That's what we should do.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Thomas you wanted to rise on something?

Councillor Thomas: I'm rising on a Point of Personal Privilege again. I don't know why Councillors past and present of St. Vital feel the need to comment on my apparel but that's not the Point of Privilege that I rose on.

In speaking the Mayor made reference to comments and why didn't I call on the administration at the Standing Committee of Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and I felt the need to, to answer that concern.

Mr. Speaker: Sorry, Councillor. I'm sorry, Councillor. You're out of order. Please sit. Councillor Thomas, Councillor Thomas, you have no Point of Privilege, it's a matter of debate and you are out of order.

Councillor Thomas: It has to do with some suggesting that I had a right to do it. And I was …

Mr. Speaker: Councillor, you are out of order. Please sit down.

Councillor Thomas: Well that's why I couldn't answer my question, get my questions answered because it's ruled out of order at Committee…

Mr. Speaker: Well too bad Councillor. You know how to debate in this chamber and you're out of order and I don't want to hear anymore of that. Councillor Pagtakhan.

Councillor Pagtakhan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say that I took the time to call the director of Transit and have several lengthy discussions with him and, sorry, and to get the information I was looking for because this is a very important issue for me and I can tell you, Mr. Speaker that costs are going up all around us. Particularly with Transit's operating budget their material costs are going up; salaries are going up; the cost of fuel is going up; $3.6 million dollars that is more than last year.

This recommendation that originally came from Winnipeg Transit calls for a subsidy, a subsidy in excess of 50%. The motion that was tabled at EPC yesterday, the

recommendation that is coming forward today, is a bit more sensitive and it's not asking us to absorb all of that. It's actually, it's being more sensitive by targeting discounts to seniors, targeting discounts for students and at yet at the same time encouraging more ridership for people by reducing bus ticket prices and bus passes as well. So I think it's a good recommendation that's coming out of EPC and I will be supporting it.

I also wanted to say that a couple of years back I worked with the Executive, the former Executive Director of Winnipeg Harvest, Mr. David Northcott, to provide him with an operating line item from out Budget in the order of I believe $25,000 dollars to, for the simple reason to provide some of their users and clientele with bus tickets. And so I was really surprised to see them here today and not acknowledge that we, at the City Council here that we supported that and I wanted to put it on the record to remind Council here today we are being very sensitive to our social society by providing that subsidy to Winnipeg Harvest as well as for seniors and for students. Thanks Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker and I'll try to be as short as I can. Just to remind members of Council this is Council accepted policy, *The Direction to the Future on Transit,* okay. We did have this marvelous study that Councillor Wyatt and other Councillors participated in that brought a lot of some other suggestions and analyzing rapid transit. There was a lot of congruence within the two reports in fact they've accentuated some of the areas that were perhaps missed; in this one Portage Avenue, Main Street and a few other issues related to upgrades.

I bring it up because I think Transit continues to be important to all of us. I'm committed to try and articulate what I think are proper, the proper support functions that this Council ought to take.
You know the debate that's happened every year here really slams the department in many respects. You don't know the signals that you're sending out there in terms of, it's not just about the rates, it's about gee the service is poor, we've got to upgrade it. We know that we don't have a perfect Transit system. But, you know, this is flat land country, remember? It's easy to get around. It really is.

We don't have a congestion problem except there is the odd pockets we know that; Pembina Highway coming northbound. It's going to get worse if Waverly West comes in, there's no doubt about it. We know that. And so I guess the point that I would make is that we are going to continue to have to invest in our Transit system and there is going to be a requisite balance between public subsidy and the user pay principle through the cash box or through ticket fares.

Sort of a long winded way of saying that I support what Executive Policy Committee had reconciled. Not fully happy about it because contained within this book I think is a very appropriate protocol of deciding between cash fare and reduced fare balance. We're close to it. We're slightly above on the reduced cash fare going from $1.55 to $1.65, slightly above what's been in the protocol, but actually for the last four or five years we were at the 5 cent we were slightly below it, if you actually go back and talk to the Transit department and do the numbers.

So we've always been pretty close and it was really a protocol that was analyzed from a national perspective and what seemed to encourage people to use it and to recognize those social issues that you can't completely specify and identify the irritants to them and you know to the economic pockets of poverty and students needs and uses throughout a full day.

Especially to say that I do think we do have on balance a policy that makes sense. What's at issue, and always has been, is how much public subsidy would be. It's aggravated by level and declining funding from our Provincial government. They don't seem to be engaged enough with this and that's an unfortunate you know result of what's happened over the years.

But if you want to bring your social conscience I think into alignment, I will just read out of this summary about indirect costing, it will make some of my colleagues around here happy. "A complicating characteristic of urban transportation is that users do not directly pay for all of the costs incurred by their travel. These costs include the capital cost of urban transportation and infrastructure, the operation and maintenance of transportation facilities, air water and noise pollution created by vehicle transport, ambulance and health system costs resulting for maximums in the cost of traffic police." Gee, I sound like the green team, don't I?

But you know there is some sensibility here. "Many of these external costs are born by the general population not the users alone." We know that. And as a driver of a vehicle, you are expected, you are being subsidized as well. We know that. None of us have ever argued that I have an hierarchal right to be the only one to drive a car and not have some sort of subsidy because you are subsidized, we all are subsidized.

"Many of these external costs are born by the general population. There is this results in travel behaviours that have implications well beyond the transportation sector." We bought into this. Some of it leads to many of the arguments that have been made by the delegations, particularly those in the Environmental Committee and I think we can buy them.

I don't know how we reconcile the imbalance of the subsidy versus the service we provide but we do have some warning signals. Some of the service provisions need to be upgraded. There's absolutely no doubt. We've known that and we'll get there. It's going to take some time and we're hopeful when we get to the end of the gas tax model and we get Bill is it C-66, I believe, where we're going to get some additional money for Transit from the Federal authorities will be helpful.

But sufficient to say we've got to be careful of the signals and messages we're sending out there to each other and to our department who are trying to do, and I think do by and large, a very good job in this City. It's not perfect. I'd rather have more heated shelters. I'd rather the shelters be clean before they're heated but how do you keep them clean? In the last couple of days when you swish by the bus and you know you swish the sand and salt all over it. You can't do that. We live in an imperfect world. People have blinders to some of the imperfections around us when you go back and forth to work everyday. We realize that.

So let's concentrate on the important. How in the future can we improve our Transit system within our fiscal discipline that we tried to maintain that makes some sense? And we've been able to do that on the 5 cent increase and Councillor Steeves is very accurate that on balance this allowed us to do it without exercising everybody. This is a bit of an anomaly this year but I'm happy with it because if the cash fare protocol goes up to $2, it is 15 cents. But we're also saying to people you can get five tickets at a fare discount.

I think the opportunities are there for people to use Transit at a reasonable rate and it won't be very often that somebody is caught out out of pocket. Go and buy the reduced tickets and you will be able to help use the system. It's an imperfect solution.

So I'm hoping that in the future, and I'm quite pleased to offer to the Mayor and others, to keep moving ahead on this Transit analysis because I think there is a way of doing it in-house without having to spend another $200k on the consultant and bring some common sense to what we're trying to do.

But I'm really disappointed about some of the messaging that's going on here. I don't think we're that bad. I think we have a reasonable service. We need to find our way through it. And hopefully, if we do this next stage of analyzing how we can look at ridership, the various cohorts that are using it, what the pricing ought to be in relation to the subsidy that this study group will include and I would offer this to you, Your Worship, that it ought to include the Province and get them on board.

They ought to sit on committee with us. They have to. If they don't, we are going to continually have this ridiculous fight.

You know, to finish off, you know this is the Christmas season. We ought to kind of just lighten up and laugh a little bit here. What goes on and this debate on Transit, every year, strikes me as something that's called conspicuous sophistication. You know you can all leave here today and go to your little constituencies that support you or that you get involved in, whether it's the environment people, the transit people, the social policy people, the right wingers that want to axe the tax and be sophisticated and say, well, how are you really dealing with the Transit?

And Mr. Mayor you know I think this City ought to have it years ahead of an award. You know we got the Order of Buffalo, we've got the Order of Canada. We need to have an award here in the City of Winnipeg and if you can stand up every year, it would be better than the Junos or the Lincoln Centre tributes and say will I have an award of Conspicuous Sophistication. Just think of that. Councillor Steeves, LLAD, MA, DA, CS, Conspicuous Sophistication. Or it could be you know if you've heard these arguments that go on here time in and time again, you know the redundancy and the punditry, it could be conspicuous redundantly and punditry crap. After your name would be fine.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement closing debate.

Councillor Clement: Not sure quite how to follow that. Mr. Speaker as always we've had an animated debate in the true democratic sense and to be honest with you, given the time of day and the time of year, I'm not sure that going over any of the points is going to serve a lot of purpose. I'm pretty sure that none of the 16 people in this chamber were swayed by each other. I think that they're going to vote on this exactly the way that they were going to vote on it about two hours ago. And so I will move that the question be put and I would request a recorded vote.

Mr. Speaker: Debate is closed. There was a recorded vote requested earlier which will happen. There is also a request to separate, have separate votes on parts 1a. and part b which will also happen.

So, first of all, on recommendation 1a. All in favour of the recommendation please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Clement, De Smedt, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Swandel, Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie.

Nays

Councillors Lazarenko, Benham, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Smith, Thomas, Wyatt.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 9, Nays 7.

Mr. Speaker: 1a is carried.

On 1b. All in favour of 1b please rise.

A RECORDED VOTE was taken the result being as follows:

Yeas

His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Lazarenko, Clement, De Smedt, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Steeves, Swandel, Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie.

Nays

Councillors Benham, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Smith, Thomas, Wyatt.

City Clerk: The vote Mr. Speaker, Yeas 10, Nays 6.
Mr. Speaker: That part is carried.

Clause 2.

All in favour? Opposed? Carried. The clause is carried.

Public Works By-laws. Councillor Clement.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Clement: Mr. Speaker I'll move that By-law No. 228/2005 be read at first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 228/2005.

Councillor Clement: I'll move that By-law No. 228/2005 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried?

Clerk: By-law No. 228/2005.

Councillor Clement: I'll move that the rule be suspended and By-law No. 228/2005 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Speaker: Public Works questions? Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. In light of the gas tax arrangement that has been finalized and the monies flowing, in the last Capital Budget, the decision was made to cut $5 million dollars out of approximately $60, $61 million dollars normally budgeted for, for infrastructure renewal.

My question would be with the new gas tax money flowing is that $5 million dollars going to be restored and if so, is it going to be $5 million on and above the gas tax money or is it going to be after deducting the gas tax money? In other words what will be the net?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Yes thank you Mr. Speaker. I believe that that question would be more specifically put to the chairman of Fiscal Issues than myself because at the present time there is no Budget, either Current or Capital, that has been brought forward or finalized and so the question as far as I'm concerned can't be answered in the short term.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: In light of the rules of the gas tax, what is your opinion as chairman of Public Works?

Councillor Clement: In light of the?

Councillor Wyatt: The gas tax rules that there cannot be claw backs. What is your opinion as chairman of Public Works?

Councillor Clement: I'm not exactly sure to answer that Mr. Speaker. The gas tax rules are a, are strange frankly, given that everybody that was involved in this process for a number of years was after the money for roads and bridges and subsequently the money has had to be funneled through other types of initiatives to meet the wording of the Federal government. I'm not sure when that money gets funneled back through, my understanding, at least my view is that it should be used for roads and bridges, if that's what you're asking?

Mr. Speaker: Final Supplementary Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: That wasn't really what I was asking. Maybe I can narrow it down. What is your opinion with regards to the $5 million dollar claw back and the gas tax money? In your opinion should we not be restoring the $5 million dollars plus the gas tax money or do you want to deduct that off of the new gas tax money?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: The trouble with the question is, is that my answer would be speculative Mr. Speaker. Without seeing all of the relevant information associated with the Budget that is going to come before Executive Policy Committee, it's really difficult to answer a singular question.

I mean it seems like a fairly simple thing to do but in isolation of all of the other information it's something that I don't, I'm not prepared to move forward on it at this time. So there isn't, I can't answer it in the short term because I don't know all of the other, all of the other information Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Any other questions? Councillor Wyatt. Oh sorry, Councillor Thomas. Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Yes, I'd like to take this opportunity to ask the chair of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure and Renewal and Public Works the questions that I didn't get answered at the Committee. And they have to do with questions with regard to the clause that we just passed which was on Transit fare increase.

Can you tell me what the, what the share of, of our share of the passing of the NDP budget amendment, the additional $426 million I believe that's the correct figure, I may not be correct in that exact figure, that's been given country-wide to Transit operation. Do you know what the portion is that's coming to the City of Winnipeg for Transit operations?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I believe that the, I'm not sure frankly whether the money is directed at current or capital investment in Transit, but I would suspect that it is capital related, number one. And number two the amount I believe is a tad over $14 million dollars in each of the next two years.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Yes. Do you know we received according to the statements that I've gotten from the Province do you know what impact that additional $2.5 million dollars from the Province for Transit operation had on our bottom line with regard to the total budget?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: Well, as the former chairman of Fiscal Issues, I frankly don't believe we got an extra $2.5 million dollars for Transit. The way that they did their numbers it shows that we did. Of course the way that they did their numbers it showed that we got an extra $6 million in capital. But of course the way that they did that Mr. Speaker was they told us that we had received $3 million dollars a year for the previous six years, which wasn't accurate.

We in fact had received $4.5 million dollars for four years. It was still $18 million dollars but $3 million worked better for them. And then what they did was they magically rolled in the tri-partite agreement to that $3 million dollars and then they said they were going to give us $9 million dollars a year for six years which was the $54 million dollars. And by the time they were done they'd rolled that money into existing money that we already had and basically beat us out of a million and half dollars at the same time.

Now Mr. Smith had a different way of course of looking at the numbers and the other thing that they do really, really neat over there in the Province is that their year ends in the middle of the year and so it's offset by six months and so many times they make statements about future money that we haven't even got yet. So it's very difficult to answer the question.

I'm sorry I can't be more direct than that but certainly if it was absolutely dedicated to Transit we would have done that but you might recall Councillor Thomas that in that same fell swoop when they did that last year they created something called the Manitoba Fund. And that was a pretty neat thing that they did because of course we were after a New Deal and we were after gasoline tax and frankly given that we only get 7 cents on the dollar we were with the angels on that one and, but the

fact remains is that the Province dipped into that gas tax took it and said we're going to give Manitoba this much money and here's how much we are going to give to Winnipeg, which was $29 million dollars and they said where it was going to go, which included that $2.5 million dollars and then they took $29 million dollars worth of grants away on the other side.

So you know it all depends on how you want to do the math. But I really, I thank you so much for giving me the opportunity at Christmas for that question so that I could give you those answers.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary for Councillor Thomas.

Councillor Thomas: Yes thank you. You can now see Council why I wanted to have a Council seminar on this matter. I think we need to talk about more of a …

Mr. Speaker: Question Councillor?

Councillor Thomas: Yes and my final supplementary question with regard to that is would the chair of the Committee be able to tell us what the shortfall is? I'm well aware of the fact that we are receiving with this an additional $1.69 million dollars but I don't know what the bottom line is and how much we actually need with all these monies that are coming in from various places for it towards operating and infrastructure, how much we actually need for our bottom line this year because that wasn't in the report.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: That's a very difficult question to answer because I don't know the difference between what 1.69 was and what we did today. But I don't think that it was more than a few hundred thousand dollars that we changed things.

As far as a current budget goes the fact that we made this decision today doesn't mean that we are going to go back to Transit and say find that $300,000 necessarily. We may give them I'm assuming the same amount of money to operate with and find it somewhere else. That discussion hasn't taken place yet I can assure you and we haven't made a decision on that specific issue but there is no question that there is a difference between 1.69 and what we've just passed.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Back in July we had a serious storm that hit the City and at that time there was a great deal of damage that was done to trees. I believe in September it was asked of Public Works, at that time I believe Mr. Speaker was the chair of the Committee, if we could get some information on, as to what the cost of clean-up on the forestry end of things was from that event. And if there would have been any reduction in the cost of clean-up if we had a proper ongoing pruning program here in this City or the deficit in pruning was greatly reduced. I wonder if Councillor Clement could respond to that and maybe provide a timeframe as to when we may be able to get some of that information?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I think that's a hypothetical question but the cost was certainly a few million dollars. There's no question about that. One I suppose could debate all day that when God chose to huff and puff that night that had we done some regular pruning that maybe 17 branches would have fallen instead of 22. But I don't know how anybody in God's green acre administratively is going to be able to tell you the difference between how many actually came down and how many would have if we would have spent a little bit more money on pruning Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Likewise there was a request at Council a short time ago on the report on upgrading gravel back lanes. Could the chair, the current chair endeavour to bring us a report back on where that project may be at?

Councillor Clement: I'd be happy to request that. I, I'm not familiar with that particular initiative in the works but I'm sure Public Works must have a report on it and I will endeavour to get it to you.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary Councillor? You're done. Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you, thank you. I thought you were going to go longer than that. You're almost good for, re-elected there almost Bill. (laughter) Yeah.

Last, I, just on the, on the New Deal again, would you be prepared to hold a meeting of your Standing Committee inviting all members of Council to describe exactly how the funding will work and exactly how the projects will be selected for renewal of our existing infrastructure. Where and when and how and what? And that transparent process through your Standing Committee that that would be organized.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I don't' think Mr. Speaker that I'd have any trouble with calling a special meeting, or maybe the Mayor would prefer to call it a seminar, I think it's the same thing, to have a, some discussion on that once there's actually been some discussion on it and somebody's landed somewhere.

Those issues are all part of the ongoing Budget discussions. There has only been one capital budget discussion and we, I'm not even sure that we know the exact number to be honest with you. I think that it's a combined number. We didn't use it in '05 but I believe that it is a combined number in '05 and '06 of about $22 something million dollars over all.

Of course we've already put some first charges against some of that as you might recall. We've either done that or we've moved other projects back because earlier today we dealt with $1.581 million dollars for Redwood Bridge and back in September we approved a further $919,000 and the two of them just magically add up to $2.5 million dollars and so that project is a first charge against capital. And I'm assuming that given that that's a bridge that it's going to be a first charge against that money.

But beyond that there hasn't been any discussion but once there is a plan than I certainly don't have any problem with having a seminar on it and I'm sure the Mayor would.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Yes. Would you be prepared to give us an idea of how soon we could have a, and I guess I asked regarding a Committee meeting because at least that's open to the public and this is definitely something that is of great concern to the public versus a Council seminar which is behind closed doors, how soon we could have a Committee meeting to discuss this and have a look at this?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement.

Councillor Clement: I suspect that once Executive Policy Committee Mr. Speaker brings forward a Budget document that subsequent to that we would be able to arrange a meeting. Prior to that it would make absolutely no sense because we'd have no information to bring forward.

Councillor Wyatt: If I'm understanding correctly, you have, we have absolutely no information, the administration with regards to how much money we are getting from the New Deal for this City and no idea where it is going?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement, very…

Councillor Clement: That's not what I said Mr. Speaker. In fact I just finished saying in the last five minutes that the amount I think was in the $22 million dollar range less the $2.5 million dollars for Redwood which would obviously come out of that number.

What I'm saying is, is that Executive Policy Committee is directed to do the Budget. That's what the flow of information is around here. And once

they, there is a Budget and those, those issues have been put down on paper in some way that can show how the money can flow and where, then it would be appropriate at that time to have a meeting to discuss which issues and I'll give you an i.e…

Mr. Speaker: I'm sorry, you're out of time Councillor so quit responding.

Councillor Clement: Oh I'm sorry I guess my answers were too long Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Well there was only a few seconds left so. Time for questions is over. We now move to the Standing Committee on Fiscal Issues. Councillor O'Shaughnessy.

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FISCAL ISSUES DATED DECEMBER 6, 2005

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to move the report of the Standing Committee on Fiscal Issues dated December 6th and I move the adoption of Consent agenda, items 1 to 3.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor, oh Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Item 2.

Mr. Speaker: Clause 2 stood down. Any other discussion?

Councillor O'Shaughnessy had moved 1 and 3 by Consent?

All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clause 2.

Item No. 2 - Deficit Avoidance - Commitment Reserve, the Waterworks System, Sewage Disposal Fund, Solid Waste Disposal Fund, Fleet Management Agency and Idea Bank Reserve Fund
File FE-5

Mr. Speaker: Councillor O'Shaughnessy introducing the clause.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: I think I prefer if I might for the expediency of Council to wait to hear what Councillor Wyatt has to say or question and then I'd be pleased to comment at that time.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt on the clause.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I set, I pulled this off the Consent agenda not, I intend on voting for the clause but rather to have an opportunity just to speak to it Mr. Speaker and to say that I think this is very much symbolic of what we're doing here again of the fact that and I realize that the new chairman is new and therefore was not involved with the writing of the Budget and on EPC at the time. And so I want my comments to be considered in that context of with that the Budget that was passed earlier this year clearly it may have been a balanced budget but it was a balanced budget in name only.

We have now, we are taking out of our reserves again to balance a budget which it says in the report is, was $17 million dollars in the red. Apparently with the snowfalls that we've been having it's actually closer to $18.5 million dollars in the red. From the latest information that I have, with the total we've been raiding reserves, we, we, with this motion here which I'm sure we have to do because if we don't we don't balance the budget, we'll have 4.4 million dollars in funds being transferred out of other reserve funds that were set up for very good reasons to go into General, the General Reserve Fund.

Previous to that we had transferred $3.3 million basically emptying the entire Snow Clearing Reserve Account. And as well, of that, of that to try to get to $18.5 million, the departments were asked to either cut their expenses or try to find improved revenues of a total of $5.2 million dollars which is quite a bit.

And we were able to find about a $2.1 million dollars of adjusted taxes, tax roll adjustments to the Budget and… So Mr. Speaker, I think the point is I'm hoping that in the new year that with regards to

the Budget work being done now, which I assume is well underway that we pass a truly balanced budget.

For too many years now we have had to go in and try to balance the Budget at the end of the year because of the Budget not being written to ensure that it was balanced. And I would say that we may be living up to the letter of the law that we are set down with, with regards to our requirements of the passing balanced budgets by the Provincial government but we certainly aren't living up to the spirit of the law.

And in fact we are raiding reserves that we're playing this, this shell game and fooling ourselves if we think that we can continue to do this forever or over periods of time. And so I think Mr. Speaker we're going to have to make some very tough decisions with our budgets coming up here including our taxes and our tax revenues if we want to start to ensure that we'd start delivering balanced budgets.

If we had simply kept up with the rate of inflation Mr. Speaker in the last 15 years this City would have another $127 million dollars to the better in revenues coming in. It's simply keeping up with the rate of inflation, not above it, not below it, but at it.

Having said that I think it should be brought to everybody's attention that this is not the right way to do business. This is not a way for us to run our fiscal house to be raiding the reserves right before Christmas because we did not write a properly balanced Budget. And that's exactly what we are doing to balance the Budget.

And I'm hoping that under the leadership of a new chairman and his great abilities we can see that this will change and a, and a, we'll have a new fresh wind coming through and we will see what we can do. And I'm prepared to work with the chairman as well to achieve those goals and I'm sure many of us here are prepared to do that you know for the good of the City. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Clement on the clause.

Councillor Clement: Yes, thank you Mr. Speaker. It's always wonderful to get up and ask a question in this chamber so I thought I would take the opportunity. Everybody knows of course that the chairman of Fiscal Issues doesn't do the Budget that the Executive Policy Committee does it.

And, but my question is to, my question is to the chairman of Fiscal Issues, other than the $3.3 million dollars that was moved out of the appropriate reserve which is why it was created to subsidize snow and years of aplenty type of thing that was done before you became the chairman, what, can you tell me what reserve that you have raided in the last 4 weeks?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Any other debate on the clause?

Councillor Clement: He didn't answer.

Mr. Speaker: It's not a question it's a debate on the clause.

Councillor Clement: Well I want him to answer me though when he's going to speak. That's why I'm looking at him.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Any other debate on the clause? Councillor O'Shaughnessy closing debate on the clause.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I'll start with the easier one first. This clause takes money from no real reserves. The Idea Bank is not a reserve. Its mandate is finished and this money is either left in or repaid from departments that the money was let to to work on these new ideas.

The Commitment Reserve will amount to something less than $100,000 dollars and it's the 19 or the 2004 Budget year end where monies from that Budget weren't spent within all the departments and the monies were put into the Commitment Reserve to let them spend them in 2005 because the goods weren't delivered,

whatever, that were ordered. All the goods have arrived or in some cases the purchases have been aborted for some reason and there is just about $100,000 dollars left there. It automatically goes into General Revenue at this point anyway there is no second year. And you know perfectly well your answer to your questions probably better than I do but those are the only two, the only two reserves we are talking about in this clause.

Now, in the other clause that went through by, what's that fancy word here, not acquiescence but by Consent, I'm too old I'm past the age of consent I guess. There is a bunch of reserves in there that may be used should a disaster occur between now and year end but the motion in there is typical of every year that because you can't pass that motion in January to deal with a 2005 problem you have to allow for the possibility.

Now, the winds are blowing as gently as ever and Councillor Wyatt mentioned a figure, a deficit figure of $16 or $17 million. That was an earlier figure. There are newer figures out which I had sent to all members of Council showing it's much smaller now and we're not at year end. We may well, we may possibly have no deficit whatsoever by year end.

However, if I can jump in with both feet, I too agree that the Budget of last year was not optimum. And the reason, I'm not taking a knock on EPC but we had the first year of a new mayoralty regime and that's a lot more than the one politician, that's a lot of new staff, and they were dealing, here I go with the feed-in, something I've felt for years I want to say, they were dealing with the Glen Murray financial voodoo hangover. I think that there have been some really questionable monies in our Budgets for the past seven years and I'm taking it personally as my job with the help of a more seasoned Mayor and administration to recommend to EPC I hope much more solid figures for '06 then they were going to have to deal with from 1999 on.

And I could use the help Russ and everybody else who wants to help. And the best way you help is everybody is going to want more when they see the Budget. When you want more bring the revenue with it or take one of the expenses out so you are putting something that's neutral into the Budget. Or just say "don't care, raise everybody's taxes." But please don't bring voodoo, don't bring increased expenses without saying I want taxes raised or I want expenses withdrawn from the Budget to balance it. And I would ask that everybody support this clause as this is the clause that will enable us to balance this year's Budget at year end without raiding any reserves.

Councillor Steeves: Question on the clause.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Fiscal Issues By-laws Councillor.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FISCAL ISSUES
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move the following By-laws be read a first time No. 232/2005, 233/2005 and 234/2005.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 232/2005, 233/2005 and 234/2005.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: I would like to move that By-laws No. 232 to 234, both inclusive, all of '05 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws Numbered 232/2005, 233/2005 and 234/2005.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: I'd move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 232/2005 to 234/2005 both inclusive, be read a third time and that the same be passed and ordered to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Questions Fiscal Issues? Councillor Thomas.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FISCAL ISSUES
QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Thomas: Yes. I'm continuing on my quest to find money for the Transit department and my questions will have to do with that.

We just recently signed a tri-lateral agreement between us and the Province and the Federal government with regard to sharing of the Federal gasoline tax and my understanding is that 10% of the Provincial portion will be going towards Transit infrastructure. Ten percent of the portion that over and above the rest that gets divided on per capita basis, that 10% goes towards Transit infrastructure.

And my question is with regard to how much money is that and how will it be divided, divided up? What is our, how much money and what's our share?

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: Thank you Councillor. First of all there is no Provincial portion. I think you caught your change of words, all Federal money.

Councillor Thomas: Yes, yeah.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: And it's given through the Province and none of it is to go to the Province. Although a lot of it will do Provincial highway road repairs.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Councillor Thomas: I mean the Federal money coming to us.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: The 10% is exactly correct and it will come in the last three years of the agreement, which will be '07, '08 and '09, and I'll have to defer to someone else here, I really at the top of my head cannot come up with that amount for Transit but will be willing to take anybody else's...

Mr. Speaker: Take it under advisement.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: I'll take it under advisement. I will get you the answer to that hopefully by the end of the day, tomorrow for sure.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor?

Councillor Thomas: Thank you. Yeah, it, perhaps you could tell me with regard to the money for Transit operation that was included in the NDP amendment to the Budget that passed Federally and I believe it was about $426 million country-wide and I just wanted to know what our City share was of that, of that money for Transit operations and when that might be coming to us?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor O'Shaughnessy.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: In reverse order. When? Who knows? We're waiting for some Federal money that was approved two and three years ago. So when it flows has zero bearing on their announcement. They like to announce them at least four times before actually giving out any money.

And the other portion, personally I am strongly under the impression none of the money is for operations. Every bit of it is for capital. There is no money for bus driver salaries or any, or gasoline, diesel or otherwise. It's strictly for capital infrastructure which could be rolling stock, paving of diamond lanes, whatever, but zero.

And what that amount of money, Councillor Clement gave an amount when he was answering an earlier question and he would know better than I. I'm not sure of that amount. I'm having enough trouble trying to deal with '05 and '06. I'm not into that yet and a plan for how the money from the 10% and from Bill C66 and whatnot, is being worked on within Transit and hopefully that will be shared with us rather soon.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary.

Councillor Thomas: Are you aware, since I can't do a preamble, are you

aware that, that there was money coming for operations to Toronto and that they have received that money and they had a whole announcement on how much that money was and this was the reason that I wanted to know what, what our portion might be?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor O'Shaughnessy.

Councillor O'Shaughnessy: I'm aware of this issue. Toronto has more seats than Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Metro Toronto alone has over 50 seats in Parliament and that's why they may get a little different deal. Aside from the fact that Mr. Layton a former Toronto, Metro Toronto Councillor, had a lot to do with putting that package together.

Mr. Speaker: Any other questions? If not we move on to Downtown Development. Councillor Magnifico.

**REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
DATED APRIL 4, 2005**

Councillor Magnifico: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce the report of April 4th, 2005 and move adoption of the Consent agenda, item number 3.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

By-laws.

**STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS**

Councillor Magnifico: I would like to move that By-law No. 230/2005 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 230/2005.

Councillor Magnifico: I would move that By-law No. 230/2005 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 230/2005.

Councillor Magnifico: I would move that the rule be suspended and By-law No. 230/2005 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Property and Development. Councillor De Smedt.

**REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT
DATED NOVEMBER 29, 2005**

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you very much, as chair I am very pleased, yes to advance the report of November 29th, and as Consent clauses 1 to 35.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed. Carried.

**REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT
DATED DECEMBER 8, 2005**

Councillor De Smedt: I'd be pleased to move the report of December 8th, 2005.

Mr. Speaker: Suspension of the rule to deal with the report of December 8th, 2005.

All in favour? Opposed. Carried.

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you. And just, it's on the table in front of you colleagues, there's just, I'm moving the clause and there has been an amendment by EPC which is really an editorial amendment to make the report correct. I move it.

Mr. Speaker: On the clause.

All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Councillor De Smedt: By-laws.

Mr. Speaker: By-laws.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor De Smedt: I'd like to move that the following By-laws be read a second time, By-law No. 163/2005 and 179/2005.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 163/2005 and 179/2005.

Councillor De Smedt: I would move that By-law, I'm sorry, 163/2005, 179/2005 be read a third time and that the same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Additional By-laws.

Councillor De Smedt: I would move that the following By-laws be read a first time, 220/2005 to 227/2005 both inclusive.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws numbered 220/2005 to 227/2005 both inclusive.

Councillor De Smedt: I would move that By-laws numbered 220/2005 to 227/2005, both inclusive, be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-laws No. 220/2005 to 227/2005 both inclusive.

Councillor De Smedt: I would move that the rule be suspended and By-laws No. 220/2005 to 227/2005 both inclusive, be read a third time and that the same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Questions for Property and Development? None. We move on to the Committee on Protection. Oh sorry, Councillor Wyatt.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT QUESTION PERIOD

Councillor Wyatt: Just a quick question to the chair through you Mr. Speaker. Is, is the, is it true or is it not true that the idea of having a special levy, impost fee, has been dropped or is that actually still under work, underway?

There is some confusion of whether or not there was an administrative report being worked on, an initiative being lead to study having an impost fee on new developments both for commercial developments and residential developments and it's, and I'm hearing from the development community that that might of, that whole initiative might have been dropped now. Is that the case or is that true, or is that not true?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I think I can indicate to the Councillor that there is a requirement to keep gathering more information and more analysis so that the thought hasn't been dropped absolutely but clearly as the evidence is coming forward we were not in a position to, to make any judgment on it.

So there is still an analysis being done at a high level by the administration and when this report would be coming forth I really don't know. I mean this is within the remit of Executive Policy Committee and the Mayor to conclude whether we have sufficient evidence that would justify us preceding in any particular direction and then to bring it to Council for their consideration.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary.

Councillor Wyatt: So is it fair to say in light of the fact that there is no, there is no longer a timeframe, as there was a timeframe indicated previously in this

Council chamber, that the matter is, the matter of the impost levies and impost fees is basically been filed until further notice?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: No I cannot confirm that Councillor Wyatt. It has not been filed. There is still further investigation required and it will take more time before I think we could arrive in a position that would make sense for people to understand and so that we could also then have further consultation with the industry.

So, I think there is no secret that the Mayor has communicated with the industry that for now until we can get some more evidence and analyze this evidence that we're not immediately coming forward. So it's not been filed to answer your question directly.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: So in other words there is no timeframe tied now to the fact that, that this concept which was going to be geared towards raising extra revenues for regional infrastructure, that this thought or concept there is no timeframe tied on whenever this would come back to Council. If there is a timeframe what is it?

Councillor De Smedt: I cannot answer that question Councillor Wyatt. I don't know what the timeframe is likely to be. The administration have instructions to continue to pursue the analysis and they, and they will do that in an in-depth way and until they're ready I can't give you the answer, okay? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. No further questions? Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Thank you Mr. Speaker, through you to the chair of Property and Development. I, in the back of the report, the addendum report that we received on the acquisition of lands to do with the rapid transit project. It appears that there is a drawing that shows a rapid transit corridor on it.

To my understanding that we haven't done any detailed design work on a rapid transit corridor, that I'm curious if this is in fact a case of a rapid transit corridor is going. I assume that it is going further than this and there would be some indication somewhere where that corridor would be running, in its entirety.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Well let me just address this issue. This is an indication of where the proposed routing of the corridor, when it gets designed in its fullness would, would connect from the downtown coming down migrating along the, that area from as it crosses the river, the Assiniboine River, and into the Fort Rouge Yards. So I don't have that detail.

I know that Public Works and Transit would have some preliminary analysis of where this corridor would be and it's in, as you know in a Policy Plate in *Plan Winnipeg.* It's that thin line and, but if you need further details then you would have to go to the department and then extrapolate that.

But this is, if you recall the discussion we've always had on Phase 1 of the plan which is the southwest transit corridor, Phase 1 of Phase 1 if I can put it that way, is this section that gets us through from the downtown to around Jubilee; $40 million bucks or so.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Swandel.

Councillor Swandel: Are you aware that where this corridor is currently running there is a couple of parcels of land, large parcels of land that aren't currently owned by the City of Winnipeg?

Councillor De Smedt: I'm sorry, could you be more explicit, I'm not sure…

Councillor Swandel: On the…

Councillor De Smedt: how to take your question.

Councillor Swandel: Well I didn't want to provide much of a preamble. Are you

aware that the, there is two properties, I guess one would be Quinton's Cleaners, the other would be, would be the Dodge dealership on Pembina Highway, just on the north side of the railroad track that are currently not owned by the City of Winnipeg and we are clearly showing on this diagram a rapid transit corridor running through them.

Councillor De Smedt: As you know, Councillor Swandel the concept plan shows a thin line in *Plan Winnipeg.* It's further identified in other documentation and yes, what we're saying is part of the puzzle for our BRT in Phase 1 is that we have not accumulated this land yet.

And I would suspect that property owners who get *Plan Winnipeg* and who live in the City all these years are quite understanding that they may have a line running through their property. If they have questions presumably they would ask the administration and see what that means.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary.

Councillor Swandel: Are we in the practice of acquiring lands and creating easements based on speculation and no, no solid design?

Councillor De Smedt: I think there is sufficient design that's been understood how we are going to get from the downtown down to the Jubilee corner. I mean there is only so many areas you can go through and the most consistent one to cross over Osborne Street is adjacent to that particular rail line and then what this is showing is essentially a tunnel going under the tracks; a tunnel!

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you Mr. Speaker, in light of the last question that I had with regards to the impost levy, I think it is fair to say that one of the greatest challenges we as a City have right now is not just our existing infrastructure and existing infrastructure renewal but rather new infrastructure in that we are living on borrowed time of the investments made 20, 30, 40 years ago when major infrastructure developments, whether it be improvements to regional street networks and to Lagimodiere or Kenaston or what have you, that these investments which have allowed us to grow as a City up until now are being stretched to the limit. And if we wish to grow and continue to grow we need more money for new infrastructure, new regional street systems to be able to handle the traffic.

So my question is this. The impost levy, the impost fee concept was to begin to address that, to target funding towards regional infrastructure that is necessary, whether it be Transit or new infrastructure such as roads and with that now having indefinitely, I won't use the word filed, that's still being worked on or studied, are there other options or initiatives being explored right now to consider funding that unfunded liability and growing cost, growing burden on the City?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Well Councillor I know you're disappointed that we haven't got the impost fee ready to go today. To tell you the truth I'm a little disappointed as well but you know there is no reason that we would want to come forward if we don't have a common sense approach to this that we have buy-in.

Are there other options being considered? I'm sure you know that the Mayor has spoken very articulately about our need for additional revenue. No question that we are all committed and I think collegially, we are committed to this.

And there is no secret that actually when we were discussing the New Deal with the previous Mayor together, that New Deal 1 collapsed because it didn't really make any sense and New Deal 2 had two major components of it that were the anchors to any New Deal; that other two levels of government have to buy into at some state of our life. One percent of GST sharing and one percent of PST sharing gives us $99 million dollars a year.

And I think the Mayor has spoken well about this. The Big City Mayors have

spoken about it. If we don't find in this country a way to allow all municipalities to have growth revenues, we're all going down the tubes.

When will it come upon the Federal government to share? And when will it come upon this Provincial government to start sharing more on a growth revenue basis? I don't know. But if they don't, I would expect within 15 years, maybe even less, we're going down the tubes because we cannot continue to increase taxation. Unless you favour tolls; do you want to have a pass and have toll roads down Regent, Nairn, and Watt Street, Portage Avenue, Main Street, out to the airport? Tell me how you're going to work it and how are you going to continue to have more bridges?

You just did the Transit study. You're proposing to get out to the northeast, out to Transcona, through a marvelous area by the highline, another bridge. This City needs another bridge like a hole in the head, frankly. But I know if we are going to have a proper transit system you may have to have a bridge. But think of it, another bridge? And we can't even maintain the ones we have.

And for those of you that weren't around the other day we did listen to Councillor Thomas about the Redwood Bridge. We just passed it today. Extra appropriation to complete it properly and to inhibit it properly not only for aesthetic reasons but so that we can continue to invest in infrastructure in a sensible way and not do it in a haphazard or cheap approach as we have done unfortunately in some circumstances. Not totally because I don't want to strike a hit against the Pubic Works department. We've been living under very tight fiscal circumstances you know probably since '96, '97.

Do I think we did too many infrastructure projects in the '80's and early '90's? Probably yes. But you know it's made the City function. I was astounded when I was out of country for awhile and I came back and I found the Bishop Grandin Bridge. Nowhere as a member of the public had I any understanding that was going to happen. But you know it's turned out to be a wonderful investment because it's connected our communities. It's connected St. Vital. It's made things flow.

But these things cost and we're still paying for that because we have to further connect to the west and get up into the Charleswood Parkway and my friend Councillor Clement is out of here so he can't hit me, but I mean these things have to work.

So we face huge challenges. You see the Budget and the proposed capital projects and those that are slipping and those that are needing and those that will continue to mount. We've talked about impost fees and more regional things. Of course they are essential. I would predict Waverley West will create some problems for us. On the other hand it creates some opportunities.

So let's focus on the positive and look at those opportunities and then find a way how we can identify. Part of our problem has been is not identifying soon enough those inter-regional connections that are needed and if we could do that early on then would make some sense.

And I can't predict what may or may not happen as you grow our joint venture operation in Transcona, in north Transcona, and you also have a plan for south Transcona. I'm sure, already Regent and Nairn… Well I've used the time Mr. Speaker. You know Regent and Nairn is already chopper block in some points, we know that. But I can't help you until there is a plan of how we mitigate that.

So thanks for your interesting questions. It's really a Public Works issue but for planning perspective it falls within the remit of Planning and Property and Planning but we all work together. We have to.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the fact, I know you work very hard behind the scenes with regards to the impost or whatever you want to call it

concept and then, and I'm sorry to hear it's not where it's at. But, you know, I think it still leaves, you had quoted it or you stated it quite well, this still leaves the whole issue outstanding with regards to what do we do from here?

And would you be prepared to lead an initiative that would look at because of the fact that it's tied directly to Property and Development and the growth of the City, would you look at an initiative to find ways and options for funding regional infrastructure? Would you be prepared to lead that initiative similar to the initiative you're leading with 6400 involving Council working together to find some solutions to the very problems that you've imposing?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor De Smedt.

Councillor De Smedt: Can I simply take that under advisement. Obviously the Mayor is sitting here listening to your question. I mean this is a function of the Executive Policy Committee. We have a cabinet style of government but certainly we are all interested in that. I mean we are working it daily.

How do we find additional revenue? How do we find it for infrastructure? I think we are all frustrated by this and the citizens are frustrated. We know that. But we are trying to take it one at a time.

You know though on the other hand, this is Christmas, I think our City is in a much better position then it was many years ago. I've only said this maybe in this floor of Council once before and I said it to many colleagues that I meet in the community in the business sector, you know. This City is a much better City than it was when I first came here in 1955. A much better City.

It's connected better. It's got better infrastructure. It looks better downtown. And the only thing that nostalgic people might, may opt for would be the street cars downtown. One thing I do agree is that we did kill too many trees along Donald and Carlton and all those roads. (in audible) was absolutely correct on that.

Mr. Speaker: Okay thank you. The Committee on Protection and Community Services report December 6th, Councillor Steeves.

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DATED DECEMBER 6, 2005

Councillor Steeves: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I will move the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services report of December 6th, 2005.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

By-laws Councillor.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES CONSIDERATION OF BY-LAWS

Councillor Steeves: A little trouble with my computer here Mr. Speaker. I'm on my way.

I'll move that By-law No. 229/2005 be read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 229/2005.

Councillor Steeves: I'll move that By-law No. 229/2005 be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Clerk: By-law No. 229/2005.

Councillor Steeves: I move that the rules be suspended and By-law No. 229/2005 be read a third time and that same be passed in order to be signed and sealed.

Mr. Speaker: All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Questions for Protection? Councillor Wyatt.

**STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
QUESTION PERIOD**

Councillor Wyatt: Thank you. Mr. Speaker just with regards to Operation Clean Sweep. My question is it's my understanding that this is a temporary operation, that it's not permanent. It's part of the City's landscape and policing landscape and I guess my question would be is the chairperson working towards making it permanent or is this just something that is coming to pass simply because of the previous political pressure because the issue got hot and then once it dies down in the middle of winter and it rolls it and finishes up, it will be the permanent end of Operation Clean Sweep? Or is it permanent and is it going to be ongoing and enhanced? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: I guess the short answer is no, it's not permanent. To be perfectly candid I'm not presently working to make it permanent. We're in the process of Budget discussions I guess, that's where we'll have to decide whether or not means exist to make this type of program more prominent and I guess ideally to be made, those types of decisions would be made in the context of the larger policing budget. I guess that's the short answer.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary Councillor Wyatt.

Councillor Wyatt: Will the recent announcement made by the Mayor and the Premier for more Police resources will those Police resources be dedicated to foot patrols and visible in the community? How will they be distributed into the system Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: You know what Mr. Speaker I, I don't know that I have a direct or clear answer to that. I'll have to get back.

Mr. Speaker: You'll take it as notice.

Councillor Steeves: Yeah.

Mr. Speaker: Final supplementary Councillor Wyatt. Are you done? Councillor Smith.

Councillor Smith: Yes I'd like to ask you when is Operation Clean Sweep, what's the criteria for ceasing its operation? Do you understand that?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Smith: In other words we have Operation Clean Sweep, okay? We've heard, we've heard him say, you've said that it's not going to be permanent. When does it end? What criteria are you establishing to say these conditions are met and therefore we don't need Operation Clean Sweep any longer?

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: Difficult question to answer in terms of when. I mean there's a budget time limit with respect to the specific program. That information I will get to Councillor Smith directly.

In terms of the larger context as to when can I say the problem has been extinguished to the point where we can stop Operation Clean Sweep or any other type of program I, I don't know if I'll ever live long enough to actually make that claim Mr. Speaker.

Councillor Smith: Well let's hope not.

Councillor Steeves: That's not very nice.

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Wyatt do you have any more questions? Come on Council let's get moving. That's really wrong.

Councillor Wyatt: Did you have another supplemental? Okay. Mr. Speaker through you to the chair, it was recently explained to me by a senior member of the Police Service who wishes to remain anonymous, that there is upwards of, at any one point the Police Service is aware of anywhere from 100 to 150 grow ops in

the City but they just do not have the resources or the manpower to go in there and to actually shut them down because they just can't go in and shut it, there is a process involved with shutting down a grow op. And that the green, so called green team that targets the grow ops, of the Police Service is made up of officers assigned on a temporary basis if resources are, are adequate in the districts.

What initiatives are being lead to turn that around and to bring those, those 100 to 150 known grow operations and to shut them down immediately?

Mr. Speaker: Councillor Steeves.

Councillor Steeves: Mr. Speaker I'm always a little reluctant to respond to questions from unknown people who are saying this and have these types of statistics at their fingertips.

Mr. Speaker: Will you take it as notice?

Councillor Steeves: Yeah.

Mr. Speaker: (In audible)

Councillor Steeves: I will take it as notice and will get as much information in that area to Councillor Wyatt as we can.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary Councillor?

Councillor Wyatt: No.

Mr. Speaker: Good. Alternate Service Delivery Committee.

REPORT OF THE ALTERNATE SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE DATED DECEMBER 12, 2005

Mr. Speaker: There is a report. Councillor Swandel. A suspension on the rules to deal with this ASD report for information.

Councillor Swandel: I would be pleased to move the addendum report of the Alternative Service Delivery Committee, the Fleet Management Operating Agency report.

Mr. Speaker: A suspension of the rules to deal with it.

All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Councillor Swandel moves the clause.

All in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Mayor Katz moves adjournment. Before that Merry Christmas, Joyeux Noël, Happy Hanukah and (foreign language)

Roll Call.

ROLL CALL

Clerk: Mr. Speaker Councillor Eadie, His Worship Mayor Katz, Councillors O'Shaughnessy, Lazarenko, Benham, De Smedt, Gerbasi, Lubosch, Magnifico, Pagtakhan, Smith, Steeves, Swandel, Thomas and Wyatt.

COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 4:39 P.M.