7.0 Rapid Transit Policy Recommendations

The Rapid Transit Task Force recommendations are guided by the Objectives given by City Council in November of 2004. These guiding principles led the Task Force to look clearly at rapid transit and Winnipeg's unique needs, and not be influenced by any previous work or policy. This Task Force believes it has found a 'Made in Winnipeg' Rapid Transit solution.

The Task Force found areas for improvement to Winnipeg's Transit service. In addition to the technical recommendations these innovative customer-centric recommendations can improve service and performance.

The public gave a clear message to the Task Force that a new vision of Transit needs to be started now. The Task Force has identified a number of opportunities for improving Winnipeg's Transit service. These 'Made In Winnipeg' Rapid Transit recommendations touch on many levels and are divided into the following sections: Access, Customer Service, Economic Development, Governance and Guiding Future Development.

With regard to policy issues, the Rapid Transit Task Force makes the following recommendations:

1. **Access:**
   - The proposed Rapid Transit System follow principles of Universal Design.
   - The proposed Rapid Transit System be designed and marketed to encourage use by existing Handi-Transit users.

2. **Customer Service:**
   - A public education campaign be developed on the redesigned Diamond Lanes.
   - Origin/Destination Studies to be completed every three to five years to ensure Transit is meeting customer needs.
   - Transit build on the existing DART service and pilot a shuttle bus project to provide enhanced feeder service to the Rapid Transit System.

3. **Economic Development**:
   - Partnerships with business in station construction, operation, and retail services should be explored.
   - The establishment of Memorandums of Understanding with the bus manufacturing industry on research and development should be considered.

4. **Governance**:

City issues:

- The Alternative Service Delivery Committee investigate the creation of a Winnipeg Transportation Authority to oversee both the road and transit systems.
- As part of The Winnipeg Transportation Authority, a Transit Land Development component should be considered.

Provincial Issues:

- The City Champion "Yield to Bus" legislation.
- The benefit for large EcoPass employers be increased.
- City Council negotiate with the Province to restore the historical 50% share subsidy of Transit, a higher proportion of Handi-Transit funding and dedicate a portion of the Provincial gas tax to Transit Improvements.

Federal Issues:

- City Council lobby the Federal government for legislation to provide municipalities with first right of refusal on railway lands that are to be offered for sale.
- City Council lobby for transit incentive programs such as the EcoPass program, to be eligible for a tax deduction.

5. **Guiding Future Development**:

- City Council be open to shared transit service agreements with outside municipalities if it is shown to be cost neutral to the City of Winnipeg.
- Options for improving transit service to important destinations, such as the Airport, should be considered.
- City Council consider land-use charges for new developments that would be dedicated to transit system improvements.
- City Council should adopt a formal policy to acquire rail rights-of-way for future rapid transit and active transportation purposes as outlined in this report and Plan Winnipeg Policy Plate B.
- Design and construction of the BRT system should consider conversion to LRT in the future.
- City Council should maintain Transit Works outlined in Plan Winnipeg Policy Plate B for future long term development. The recommendations made in this report are complementary to the existing Plan Winnipeg. Council should be urged to adopt this report's recommendations into the next review of Plan Winnipeg.