Minutes - Executive Policy Committee - April 9, 2008

REPORTS

Minute No. 245 Federal Transit Funding - Southwest Bus Rapid Transit Corridor, Phase One
File TT-8

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee recommends to Council:

1. That the March 19, 2008 Council Motion, pertaining to utilizing the federal transit funding for the Southwest Bus Rapid Transit Corridor, Phase 1, be received as information.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Wyatt,

That the March 19, 2008 Council Motion be received as information, and forwarded to Council.

Carried

The Executive Policy Committee received submissions in support of utilizing the federal transit funding for the Southwest Bus Rapid Transit Corridor, Phase 1, from the following:

- Paul Hesse, Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition
- Curt Hull, Bike to the Future and Climate Change Connection, submitted a communication on behalf of Bike to the Future, and a communication on behalf of Climate Change Connection, both communications dated April 9, 2008.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On March 19, 2008, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Executive Policy Committee:

Moved by Councillor Gerbasi,
Seconded by Councillor Smith,

WHEREAS the Federal Government has announced in the recent budget that 18 million in funding for the Province of Manitoba can be used for Public Transit;

AND WHEREAS the Rapid Transit Task Force in 2005 recommended building Bus Rapid Transit with Phase One being the Southwest Corridor utilizing matching funding from the three levels of government;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg endorses utilizing Manitoba's portion of the Federal transit money to build Phase one of BRT from downtown to Jubilee Avenue;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Winnipeg will negotiate a cost sharing agreement with the province in addition to using the recently announced Federal funding to be spent on phase one of the Southwest Bus Rapid Transit Corridor.

Submission from Paul Hesse, Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition

Your worship, members of EPC. I am here as spokesperson for the Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition. We have been coordinating with Bike to the Future and both groups are here this morning to share a common message. I'll have more to say on that in a moment.

The Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition is pleased that the federal government is transferring almost $18 million dollars to the province as part of the 2008 federal budget funding.

I re-read the federal budget again yesterday, and was struck by the language used in the federal budget.

The title for this section of the 2008 federal budget was "Strengthening Public Transit".

The budget then follows to say "Public transit plays an important role in easing traffic congestion in urban areas and contributing to cleaner air and lower greenhouse gas emissions."

It then goes on to read "Budget 2008 sets aside up to $500 million in 2007-08 to be paid into a third-party trust, allocated on a provincial-territorial per capita basis, for public transit infrastructure."

As you'll remember from the petition that we handed during March's EPC meeting, with over 3500 signatures gathered in about a week, that Winnipegers support rapid transit. The Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition and the supporters of our petition, which include the University of Winnipeg, Canadian Mennonite University, Downtown Biz, West End Biz, Osborne Biz, the Social Planning Council, the University of Winnipeg Students Association, the High School students group HASTA, the Recording Artists Association and many other groups, urge the city and the province to match the federal transit funds and to implement the first transitway in the city's Rapid Transit Solution Report.

But let's please be clear. There is some talk that these federal funds could be used for rapid transit or for bicycle paths. This is not an either / or thing. As the City's Rapid Transit Solution Report highlights on page 57, and I quote "active transportation commuter paths should be built in conjunction with busways". In other words, transitways and commuter cycling paths should go along side each other.

Rapid Transit and Active Transportation are both key to this city's future. The beauty is that they can be built more cheaply and more effectively alongside each other and at the same time. The key is to have dedicated transitways and commuter cycling paths together.

We do not support using funds from the section of the federal budget entitled "Strengthening Public Transit" for recreational trails. But we certainly don't object to building commuter cycling paths alongside a rapid transit corridor. That makes sense and it's part of the City's approved Rapid Transit Plan.

Your Worship, members of EPC. We at the Coalition are trying to show leadership on this issue. We are speaking not only with yourselves here at City Hall, but also with provincial cabinet and caucus. We are bringing groups together, whether they be universities, student groups, biz groups, environmental groups, arts groups or cycling groups.

We know that you are all committed to this city and to building a more prosperous, accessible, innovative, sustainable and welcoming city.

We're asking you to get creative now and to find a way to make this happen. We know that you are a creative bunch. We've seen it with the increased funding for infrastructure in the recent capital budget. Councillors Gerbasi and Pagtakhan had a few creative suggestions in the Free Press today, such as using the Rapid Transit reserve funds to amortize the capital portion of the first phase of rapid transit. If for some reason, we can't get all of the funds at once, then let's seek matching funds from the province to amortize the first phase. Use the federal funds as a down payment, build it now and use city and provincial funds to pay off the balance over time.

What's important is to commit now to the first phase of rapid transit, hopefully with commuter cycling paths built in conjunction and alongside each other. We're looking forward to seeing you all there with a shovel at the ceremonial start of construction. Thank you.

Excerpt from the 2008 Federal Budget

Strengthening Public Transit

Public transit plays an important role in easing traffic congestion in urban areas and contributing to cleaner air and lower greenhouse gas emissions. In Budget 2006, the Government set aside $1.3 billion in support of public transit infrastructure and introduced a new tax credit for public transit passes.

Budget 2008 sets aside up to $500 million in 2007–08 to be paid into a third-party trust, allocated on a provincial-territorial per capita basis, for public transit infrastructure. Funding will be paid into the trust, once legislation has been passed, for only those beneficiaries that have made public commitments before March 31, 2008 to undertake investments in public transit. The beneficiaries of the trust will have the flexibility to draw down the funding as they require over the next two years. They are encouraged to report publicly on the expenditures financed and outcomes achieved.

The trust will be used for specific projects of capital infrastructure such as rapid transit, rail, transit buses, and high occupancy vehicle and bicycle lanes.

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April 9, 2008

Executive Policy Committee
City of Winnipeg

RE: Motion for the city to match $18 million federal contribution to rapid transit

Bike to the Future (BttF) is a voluntary, inclusive group of concerned citizens working to make cycling in Winnipeg a safe, enjoyable, accessible and convenient transportation choice year-round. We envision a city where cycling is embraced as the preferred mode of transportation, where cycling is integrated into urban design and planning, and where Winnipeg is recognized as a leader in cycling infrastructure and programs.

Bike to the Future supports the motion on the following grounds:

- Rapid transit will increase people's use of active transportation.
  - Many more people will embrace active transportation once we have bikeways that are
    - segregated from traffic
    - are interconnected throughout the city
    - which provide an efficient route to destinations such as work and shopping
  - The 2005 Rapid Transit Task Force Report recommends that "active transportation commuter paths be integrated into dedicated busways and, where possible, into on-street improvements." **BttF supports the Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition.** We recognize that rapid transit has the potential to produce a portion of the integrated network of transportation pathways that we seek.
- The proposed funding has an amplifying effect.
  - This funding is to match federal money already delivered. If the city supports the project in this way, it makes fund matching by the province more likely. Similarly, if the province matches the federal funding, (say, in the budget that will be announced on Wednesday) how could the city not also contribute?

In addition, we feel that the rapid transit project should not be financed any differently than other transportation infrastructure projects. As we understand it, construction of rapid transit will not start until all of the money required is in the bank. Many other roadway projects have been proposed using borrowed money to provide at least a portion of their financing. Why should rapid transit be expected to be paid up front?

Thank you.

Robert Cosco
Chair, BttF City of Winnipeg Committee

Climate Change Connection

April 8, 2008

Executive Policy Committee
City of Winnipeg

RE: Motion for the city to match $18 million federal contribution to rapid transit

Climate Change Connection (C3) is a hub for information about climate change in Manitoba. We are building awareness of climate change so Manitobans will reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions - both individually and as a community.

Climate Change Connection supports the motion on the following grounds:

- Transportation is Manitoba's largest contributor of greenhouse gases.
  - In 2005, transportation accounted for 37% of Manitoba's total greenhouse gas emissions.[1]
  - Winnipeg contributes about half (46%) of the province's total transportation emissions.[2]
- The GHG from transportation would be reduced significantly if more people in Winnipeg used active (self-propelled) transportation or took public transit.
  - Although there has been a slight (4%) recovery since 2003, Winnipeg has seen about a 35% drop in transit ridership since 1984[3]. 1984 is as far back as we have data. We've been told by Transit that if we go back further, the ridership decline has been even more severe. These are absolute numbers. They've not been adjusted for Winnipeg's increase in population.
- Rapid transit will increase people's use of public transit.
  - This is not only true on the routes constructed but would improve the overall system, making the whole system more attractive.
- Rapid transit will increase people's use of active transportation.
  - The 2005 Rapid Transit Task Force Report recommended that "active transportation commuter paths be integrated into dedicated busways and, where possible, into on-street improvements." So, the question is not rapid

[1] Environment Canada, National Inventory Report, 2005: *Greenhouse Gas Sources & sinks in Canada*
[2] Centre for Sustainable Transportation, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Baseline For The City of Winnipeg*, May 31, 2007
[3] Winnipeg Transit – unpublished data

transit OR active transit. It makes sense to build rapid transit AND commuter paths together.

- Many people will embrace active transportation once we have bikeways that
  - are segregated from traffic
  - are interconnected throughout the city
  - provide an efficient route to destinations (e.g. work, shopping)

- The proposed funding has an amplifying effect.
  - This funding is to match federal money already delivered. If the city supports the project in this way, it makes fund matching by the province more likely. Similarly, if the province matches the federal funding, (say, in the budget that will be announced later today) how could the city not also contribute?

In addition, we feel that the rapid transit project should not be financed any differently than other transportation infrastructure projects. As we understand it, construction of rapid transit will not start until all of the money required is in the bank. Many other completed and currently proposed roadway projects have used or will use borrowed money to provide at least a portion of their financing. Why should rapid transit be expected to be paid up front? This financing expectation clearly sends the message that the roadways for individual car travel take priority over public transit.

In light of current, overwhelming scientific knowledge and consensus of the causes and potentially devastating effects of climate change, *this priority on individual car travel is wrong and out-of-date*.

Successful cities of the future will be easily and safely bike-able and walk-able with fast, smooth-running, comfortable, and efficient public transit systems. **It is time for Winnipeg and this committee to embrace and support that future.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Curtis Hull, P.Eng.
Project Manager