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Green Action Centre Comments to Executive Policy Committee Members November 16, 2011, Special Meeting re: Transportation Master Plan

I am here today to speak in support of the Transportation Master Plan with the amendments approved by the Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works Standing Policy Committee on November 15th, in particular:

1. The addition of GHG emissions reduction as a 6th key strategic goal; and

2. Identifying more detailed timelines for building sections of the Rapid Transit network, with Phase II of the Southwest corridor completed in the short-term, the Eastern corridor in the mid-term, and other sections in the long-term.

We would also ask that EPC add the following amendment to address the glaring absence of specific projects, timelines and estimated costs for improvements to the Active Transportation Network:

3. Recognizing the recent rapid growth and interest in the AT Network, the Public Service is directed to develop a plan that identifies strategic improvements to the network and addresses critical gaps in connectivity and chokepoints, along with estimated costs and timelines.

Further detail on our recommendations can be found in the attached remarks presented to Public Works on November 4th.

On behalf of Green Action Centre,

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Green Action Centre Remarks to Public Works Committee on the Transportation Master Plan November 4, 2011

Winnipeg is on a roll, you once again face a major plan stemming from OurWinnipeg, and we are once again before you to comment. As you know, Green Action Centre has tried to move Manitoba and Winnipeg onto a sustainable trajectory for over a quarter of a century. The Transportation Master Plan before you today marks a great leap forward in principle and conceptual design. The challenge for the City will be to keep on track and find the funding to realize the promise of the plan.

The full Transportation Master Plan document was made accessible less than 48 hours ago, so it is too soon for more detailed commentary. We'll see what we might add by the time Council meets. Council's schedule on these matters is frustratingly compressed for public interveners, and perhaps for you as well.

Our brief message today is to offer strong support for the plan and urge its adoption, but with three proposed amendments.

The plan is worthy of adoption. A lot of thought, expertise, consultation and analysis have gone into the development of the Plan. We are heartened that OurWinnipeg adopted sustainability as the overarching framework for city and transportation design. Cities are both major producers and potential reducers of GHG emissions through better design. I'll just note three key insights in this approach**:**

(a) The recognition that transportation and land use decisions must be integrated, since each radically affects the other (e.g. rapid transit is less viable without more intensive multi-faceted development at nodes along corridors and communities are less viable and sustainable without a variety of ways to get around);
(b) that all citizens are multi-modal travelers who have the potential to shift between modes as viable and attractive opportunities are created (e.g. virtually everyone is a pedestrian and a user of autos, transit or both and many are cyclists, skateboarders, or rollerskaters as well. A shift to more active forms of transportation has great health and environmental benefits); and
(c) that Complete Streets and Complete Communities are essential to provide thriving environmentally and economically efficient cities where a variety of needs can be met within short distances and optimal choices exist for local and more distant travel.

Now on to the proposed amendments.

1. We believe there is a continued role for involvement of advisory committees in the implementation of the Plan. The rationale is the same as for the Waste and Diversion Advisory Committee, except that here the committees are already in place. We simply want to ensure that they continue. Hence we propose this amendment to the Public Service recommendations.

   "The Public Service will continue to work closely with the TMP Advisory Committee and Active Transportation Advisory Committee in the further development and implementation of the Plan."

2. In discussion with the Active Transportation community and City officials, we note that, while there are excellent general provisions for AT, there is an asymmetry between specific recommendations here vs. roadways. The Plan as it stands raises the question as to why there is no table / list of strategic improvements to the AT Network given this is clearly identified for the road, goods movement and rapid transit networks. We understand that administration strongly believes it is premature to do this without further public consultation on what the routes and improvements should be. Including the following sentence would clarify the rationale behind this exclusion.

   "Recognizing the recent rapid growth and interest in the AT Network, the Public Service is directed to develop a plan that identifies strategic improvements to the network and addresses critical gaps in connectivity and chokepoints, along with estimated costs and timelines."

3. Although there is mention of transportation emissions at a number of places in the TMP, addressing environmental and climate change issues is curiously omitted from the 5 strategic directions for the plan. We believe that fundamental commitments by the City and Province to address these issues need to be recognized as drivers for plan development and implementation. We have outlined the case in the first several pages of the attached brief, under 1. Context and 2. Strategic Goals and Outputs.

   There are additional considerations. (1) The City could put itself at a disadvantage in any competition for FCM climate change funding if it does NOT incorporate GHG reduction as a factor in transportation planning. (2) It also seems short-sighted for Winnipeg to neglect this issue, given that climate change holds the prospect of more severe flooding, which has direct economic costs to the City. (3) Further, the case for provincial support for transportation infrastructure is strengthened if the City can show that it takes climate change seriously and is prepared to shape transportation (and hopefully land use) decisions accordingly.

So for these reasons, we propose that Council have an opportunity to correct the omission of this strategic direction by adopting the following amendment.

> **"Recognizing that addressing climate change is a major commitment of Winnipeg and Manitoba, the Transportation Master Plan shall add as a sixth Strategic Goal: A transportation system that reduces its GHG emissions footprint and meets or surpasses climate change and emissions reduction goals set by the City and the Province."**

The addition would go at the bottom of p. 3 of the Executive Summary, with a note that it was added to the original five included in Council's Sustainable Transportation Direction Strategy.

Financing the new developments in the plan is obviously a huge issue. In section 10 of our earlier brief to the planners, we made recommendations on financing, and we urge you and the Public Service and Finance Committee to review them as you tackle the issue of economic sustainability.

We have two basic messages:

1. Infrastructure requirements for the city need to be segregated in the pursuit of revenue sources. Roads and bridges should be separated from, say, sewer and water, the police helicopter, or rec centres and the funding sources identified should stem from the vehicles that use the road infrastructure. We think it is a perverse subsidy to motor vehicles to fund roads and bridges from general revenues such as a property tax or sales tax provide.

2. Secondly, use pricing mechanisms for revenue and as disincentives to support desired travel behaviours. Examples include higher parking costs, congestion pricing and pay-as-you-drive insurance, although at this stage in Winnipeg, Green Action Centre does not see congestion pricing as an applicable tool.

These points are elaborated in greater detail in our brief from last January.

Thank you for your attention.