Ian Donnelly

I am a resident of Winnipeg living in North Kildonan and I have concerns with the 2020-2023 budget proposed by the City of Winnipeg. It appears that the Councillors of the City of Winnipeg have a skewed sense of priorities. The annual operating budget includes a 10% reduction to almost all city-funded community groups. Library hours are being reduced. Public transit service and funding is being reduced. These reductions in services do not build the vibrance of our city, rather they all negatively affect those who have the greatest need. Council needs to ensure cuts to services do not increase the struggle of those who are already living in poverty.

In the proposed budget business tax is again being cut and some of the biggest businesses and organizations are benefiting to the tune of millions of dollars in refunds of the Entertainment Funding Tax. The City of Winnipeg seems to continue to be burdened by the effects of several years of a “property tax freeze.” Urban sprawl is increasing in all corners of the city which necessitates a strain on infrastructure (water, sewer, gas, public transit, schools) that must be maintained for generations into the future. Rather than cutting taxes to allow for cuts in service, the Councillors of the City of Winnipeg need to seek ways to do the unpopular work of increasing revenues.

The residents of need the leadership of the Councillors of the City of Winnipeg so we can work together to reduce the effects of climate change. The specific area of the budget proposal that I suggest needs to be revisited by Council is related to Public Transit. The City is proposing to cut $3.2M from city funding for transit, reduce service on 14 routes, eliminate the downtown spirit and cut the U-PASS. Rather than these reductions, the city should implement the frequent service network with service frequencies of 10 minutes or better on all 22 frequent, rapid and direct transit routes seven days a week into the evenings and on weekends. Developing the infrastructure and encouraging the use of public transit will modernize the city into the future. Investment in public transit will help to reduce the city’s carbon footprint and make it a greener city. A reliable and robust public transit system will promote greater equity among its citizens. Council needs to revisit the budget as it relates to public transit to reflect these changes over the 4 years of the 202-2023 budget.