Minute No. 254
Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 8, 2022

Item No. 2 Directing Transportation Project Requests to the 311 System

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and adopted the following:

1. That Councillors use the 311 system as a first point of contact for transportation study requests.

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

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 8, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Allard,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On February 16, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On February 8, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

On December 1, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works granted a further extension of time to its February 8, 2022 meeting for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On September 15, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works granted a further extension of 90 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On June 10, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works granted an extension of time of 60 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 8, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

On February 11, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public directed the Winnipeg Public Service to report back within 120 days on a formal process to initiate minor traffic improvement projects, rather than by way of motion to the Standing Committee.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On January 11, 2021, the Assiniboia Community Committee recommended to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works that the matter be laid over for 90 days to allow the Winnipeg Public Service to engage in more discussions with members of Council.

On January 8, 2021, the City Centre Community Committee recommended to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to:

    A. Report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works within 120 days on the following:

        i. Updates to 311 scripting, and other necessary measures to ensure that the majority of transportation project requests, including traffic studies, can be initiated through the 311 process, rather than by way of motions to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works;

        ii. A record keeping system to track the incoming transportation project requests, and ensure that they are prioritized in an equitable and timely fashion;

    B. Provide a quarterly report to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, beginning in June, 2021, on the volume of files being handled through this process, and the timeline for completion; and

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 8, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

C. Clearly communicate to Council, and members of the public that the process for initiating transportation project requests will be to submit a request to the Public Service through 311."

D. Report back to each Community Committee on the status on the project.

On January 6, 2021, the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee recommended to Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works:

1. That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, as approved by Council on December 17, 2020, be received as information.

2. That Community Committees' ability to request Traffic Studies be retained, that the completion of the Traffic Calming Processing Report be prioritized, and that consideration be given to the creation of a separate traffic calming project under the Capital Project Budget.

3. That an online portal cataloguing Traffic Calming Projects be created for public record.

On January 5, 2021, the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee considered the motion and requested the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works to consider its reservations on the proposal to redirect all minor traffic matters to 311 if there is not an open and transparent system to all Members of Council to track matters being studied by the Department.

On January 4, 2021, the Riel Community Committee recommended to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works that the recommendations in the motion be concurred in.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 8, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION:

On December 17, 2020, Council adopted the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, namely:

1. That the following motion be referred to all five Community Committees in January, 2021, for discussion and recommendations back to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works:

   "WHEREAS Councillors and the public are looking out continually for opportunities to improve transportation conditions in their communities and throughout Winnipeg, and that when these are reviewed by the Winnipeg Public Service and are determined to be necessary, the provision of them is recognized as having being beneficial to life in Winnipeg;

   AND WHEREAS these types of projects take the form of various types of small to medium-sized transportation project such as, but not limited to traffic calming measures, installation of stop signs/yields/signals, changes to signal timing, etc.;

   AND WHEREAS at the moment, there is inconsistency in how incoming projects of this type "get onto the workplan" of the Winnipeg Public Service, with some inquiries being received by the Public Service through 311, while other projects arrive through the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works and thus become prioritized because of Standing Committee's requirement for a stated timeline for completion of the analysis/review;

   AND WHEREAS because of the timeline, this may place some lower-priority projects (coming in via the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works) ahead of other projects which might have a higher priority (positive impact, number of people impacted) only because of the former came in initially via the Standing Committee;

   AND WHEREAS the number of small requests regularly can take up greater than half the agenda at the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works meetings, when these files are relatively small in scale and do not impact the entire city;

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works – February 8, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

AND WHEREAS the Winnipeg Public Service has been working on processes to streamline and document the workflow process needed to review and implement said improvements/upgrades;

AND WHEREAS there are already scripting processes in place to handle incoming transportation project requests through the 311 system;

AND WHEREAS the intent of the following is not to downgrade the process of handling transportation requests but rather to treat them all as important projects and not in a two-tier fashion, while improving the handling of higher-profile projects through the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Executive Policy Committee be requested to direct the Winnipeg Public Service to:

A. Report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works within 120 days on the following:

   i. Updates to 311 scripting, and other necessary measures to ensure that the majority of transportation project requests, including traffic studies, can be initiated through the 311 process, rather than by way of motions to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works;

   ii. A record keeping system to track the incoming transportation project requests, and ensure that they are prioritized in an equitable and timely fashion;

B. Provide a quarterly report to the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works, beginning in June, 2021, on the volume of files being handled through this process, and the timeline for completion; and

C. Clearly communicate to Council, and members of the public that the process for initiating transportation project requests will be to submit a request to the Public Service through 311."

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

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Directing Transportation Project Requests to the 311 System

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
D. Patman, P. Eng.	J. Berezowsky	N/A	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transportation Division Staff receive hundreds of requests for different types of traffic and related studies each year. The requests are submitted through four primary channels: by residents via 311; by Councillors via 311; directly by Councillors emailing staff; and, by motion at a meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works (SPCIRPW).

When Councillors submit otherwise straightforward project requests through a Council Committee to the Public Service, the ultimate project recommendation is the same but it takes additional staff resources and Committee time to respond with a formal administrative report.

With limited staff resources this inefficiency reduces the volume of studies that Public Service has the ability to triage and complete each month. Using the 311 system for the intake of the vast majority of project requests is an important step to being able to track and respond to them appropriately and equitably. The system also creates a digital record of the request that supports future investigations, mapping and trend analysis.

The Public Service recommends that a process be adopted wherein Councillors use 311 as a first point of contact for study requests that would respond to a collective community concern. Such service requests will be prioritized over those requests submitted by individuals. This prioritization is necessary due to limited staff resources that prevent all requests for traffic studies from being responded to within the expected timeline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Councillors use the 311 system as a first point of contact for transportation study requests.

2. That the proper officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On February 11, 2021, SPCIRPW directed the Winnipeg Public Service to report back within 120 days on a formal process to initiate minor traffic improvement projects, rather than by way of motion to the Standing Committee.

On June 10, 2021, SPCIRPW granted an extension of time of 60 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On September 15, 2021, SPCIRPW granted a further extension of time of 90 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On December 1, 2021, a further extension was granted to the February 8, 2022 meeting.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends a change in process that can be accommodated using existing systems and as such there are no financial implications.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Transportation Division Staff receive hundreds of requests for different types of traffic and related studies each year. The requests are submitted through four primary channels: by residents via 311; by Councillors via 311; directly by Councillors emailing staff; and, by motion at a meeting of the Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works (SPCIRPW). Many of these studies are small in nature and implementing the recommendations from the study falls within the authority of the Division. When Councillors send minor requests to SPCIRPW, it is unnecessary and time consuming for all parties as they could be more efficiently dealt with through 311.

In contrast, requests for larger and more complex projects that would result in significant spending, major staff resources, or change in a Standing Policy Committee (SPC) approved policy should not be commenced or be implemented without concurrence from SPCIRPW. In many cases this is explicitly required because of past direction from SPCIRPW, but in some cases the Public Service will proactively submit an Administrative Report on a topic of higher consequence to the Committee for concurrence.

The purpose of this report is to provide guidance to Councillors on the most appropriate method to submit a request for the Public Service to complete a transportation study or major project.

311 SYSTEM

The 311 system provides equitable access to City departments, where residents can contact the City for inquiries or information. Requests can be made through various means such as phone and email and in multiple languages.

At any given time, there are several hundred unresolved 311 service requests assigned to various queues in the Transportation Division. The volume of requests normally exceeds the staff resources that would be required to properly review, analyze, prepare recommendations, and respond to the citizens. The result is that staff need to constantly triage the incoming service requests looking for the most serious concerns or similar concerns that can be grouped and responded to or resolved collectively. This means that many service requests are not able to be addressed within the expected response time that is provided to residents. The expected response times that are provided vary depending on the type of request but are typically 12-24 months.

Councillor submitted service requests are generally responded to more promptly as the expectation is that Council-led submissions reflect urgency or matters of collective community importance. It is important to note that Councillors are discouraged from submitting on behalf of a single resident, and, rather, are encouraged to have the resident contact 311 themselves. This ensures that Council submissions are consistently reflective of community, not individual, needs, and helps keep resources distributed equitably.

Using the 311 system for the intake of the vast majority of project requests is an important step to being able to track and respond to them appropriately, in a timely manner. The system also creates a digital record of the request that supports future investigations, mapping and trend analysis.

STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL AND PUBLIC WORKS

Although SPCIRPW has the final authority on implementation of some Public Service recommendations, it is not necessary for all transportation project requests to be initiated at SPCIRPW. It is common for project requests to originate from residents or Councillors through 311; if the Public Service requires approval from SPCIRPW, a report is submitted on the project to the committee. This is the preferred model for the majority of cases moving forward; some exceptions are outlined below.

Transportation project requests that would result in a significant assignment of staff time and resources should continue to be approved by SPCIRPW. This provides more transparency for what Transportation Division staff resources are focused on and ensures that SPCIRPW and the Public Service's efforts are aligned.

As well, it is often appropriate for SPCIRPW to provide direction through a disposition to the Public Service because ultimately the committee will need to approve the recommendation. It is difficult to list all of these types of requests but the most common scenarios where a project should be initiated at SPCIRPW are as follows:

- The request involves a comprehensive transportation study for a corridor or neighbourhood that would require a significant assignment of staff time and resources;
- The request may have greater regional or city-wide impacts;
- The request is accompanied by a budget allocation; or

- The request is to review or change an internal policy or public policy.

Submitting a project request to SPCIRPW that could easily be handled outside of the committee is an inefficient use of staff and Councillor resources and should be avoided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Public Service recommends that Councillors use 311 as a first point of contact for the majority of project requests that represent a collective community concern. Service requests submitted by Councillors that represent a collective community concern will be prioritized over those that are from individuals. This prioritization is necessary due to limited staff resources that prevent all service requests from being responded to within the expected timeline.

Projects submitted by Councillors that are too large or complex to be completed within operating or program budgets will be referred back to the Councillor for them to initiate through Council Committees.

The long-term vision for intake of transportation project requests in the 311 system is to adopt a more formal assessment and prioritization process for the most common types of projects, where prioritization lists could be shared publicly. This would increase transparency and allow staff to provide more accurate estimates for when projects will be completed. Additional staff resources would be required to develop new processes, maintain prioritization lists and to be able to respond to all incoming 311 service requests in a timely manner. Current staff resources do not allow for this project to be undertaken.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** December 16, 2021

Project Name:

Directing Transportation Project Requests to the 311 System

COMMENTS:

There is no financial impact associated with the recommendation of this report.

"signed by J. Ruby, CPA, CA"
J. Ruby CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: N/A

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The Sustainable Transportation Direction Strategy developed as part of OurWinnipeg forms the policy framework for the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Sustainable Transportation identified a vision and five Key Strategic Goals which are critical to achieving a balanced and sustainable transportation system for Winnipeg. These goals form the basis for the TMP and the directions and strategies contained within it:

1. A transportation system that is dynamically integrated with land use;
2. A transportation system that supports active, accessible and healthy lifestyle options;
3. A safe, efficient and equitable transportation system for people, goods and services;
4. Transportation infrastructure that is well maintained; and
5. A transportation system that is financially sustainable.

The recommendations within this report are consistent with the Key Strategic Goals.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

N/A

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

N/A

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Public Works
Division: Transportation
Prepared by: Greg Blatz, P. Eng. Traffic Management Engineer
Date: December 16, 2021