Agenda – Council – December 15, 2022

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 29, 2022

Item No. 1 Winnipeg Transit On-Request Pilot

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 7, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee submitted to Council that the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works be referred to the 2023 Budget Review Process, namely:

1. That Winnipeg Transit adopt On-Request transit as the way of providing demand-responsive transit service in Winnipeg and that the Dial-a-Ride-Transit system be cancelled.

2. That, subject to the approval of Recommendation 1, the Winnipeg Transit 2023 operating budget and future forecast years be amended for the financial impact as follows:

2023	2024	2025	2026
$182,069	$185,966	$188,913	$192,412

3. That, subject to the approval of Recommendation 1, 2.60 permanent Clerk A FTEs be added to Winnipeg Transit's employee complement.

4. That the City award, enter into, execute and deliver a contract extension for the provision of software and support for on-request transit service to VIA Transportation for the period of January 1 – September 30, 2023, in the amount of $31,500 plus MRST and GST as applicable.

5. That authority to be delegated to the Director of Transit to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions for the provision of software and support for on-request transit service and any Ancillary Agreement in accordance with this report and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

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

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 29, 2022

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 7, 2022, the Executive Policy Committee recommended that the matter be referred to the 2023 Budget Review Process, and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 29, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

The following persons submitted communications with respect to the matter:

- Romeo Ignacio, President Business Agent, Amalgamated Transit Union 1505
- Patrick Stewart, Consultant, Independent Living Resource Centre

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Winnipeg Transit On-Request Pilot

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
A. Budowski	G. Ewankiw	C. Kloepfer	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Winnipeg Transit entered into an agreement with VIA Transportation to provide technology, support, and services for On-Request transit, and launched the Winnipeg Transit On-Request Pilot Project on August 12, 2021. A detailed report summarizing the Winnipeg Transit On-Request pilot project can be found in Appendix A.

Prior to the On-Request pilot, Winnipeg Transit did not have a call centre for the Dial-a-Ride Transit (DART) system as it relied on passengers calling the bus operators directly. In order to allow for passengers to continue booking rides by phone using On-Request transit, calls were directed to the Winnipeg Transit Plus contact centre. The contact centre was able to take these calls with minimal disruption to Winnipeg Transit Plus service and maintained low wait times for On-Request bookings because they were receiving fewer calls overall at Winnipeg Transit Plus (with reduced ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic). However, with a continued resumption of service, the contact centre is receiving an increased volume of calls that is impacting overall customer wait times. During the On-Request pilot project, the contact centre also extended its hours by approximately 24 hours per week in order to match the operational hours of On-Request service.

Winnipeg Transit is recommending to continue operating On-Request transit in all three zones associated with the pilot. In order to do so, Winnipeg Transit is also requesting the addition of 2.60 Clerk A Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) within Winnipeg Transit Plus to help maintain service levels, keep call wait times low, and allow Winnipeg Transit Plus to permanently change the contact centre hours to match those of On-Request.

The current contract for the On-Request software platform is set to expire on December 31, 2022. Winnipeg Transit is currently procuring a permanent On-Request vendor through an RFP process; however, the vendor who is selected through this process may not be in place until September 2023. Winnipeg Transit is requesting to continue operating the Winnipeg Transit On-Request pilot through the transition period from pilot project to permanently-contracted service by extending the current contract for up to nine (9) months for the period of January 1 – September 30, 2023, at a cost of $31,500 plus MRST and GST as applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Winnipeg Transit adopt On-Request transit as the way of providing demand-responsive transit service in Winnipeg and that the Dial-a-Ride-Transit system be cancelled.

2. That, subject to the approval of Recommendation 1, the Winnipeg Transit 2023 operating budget and future forecast years be amended for the financial impact as follows:

2023	2024	2025	2026
$182,069	$185,966	$188,913	$192,412

3. That, subject to the approval of Recommendation 1, 2.60 permanent Clerk A FTEs be added to Winnipeg Transit's employee complement.

4. That the City award, enter into, execute and deliver a contract extension for the provision of software and support for on-request transit service to VIA Transportation for the period of January 1 – September 30, 2023, in the amount of $31,500 plus MRST and GST as applicable.

5. That authority to be delegated to the Director of Transit to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions for the provision of software and support for on-request transit service and any Ancillary Agreement in accordance with this report and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

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

REASON FOR THE REPORT

Increases in department staff establishments and additional appropriations to Operating Budgets require the approval of Council.

As per City Policy F1-003, section B8.1.1(b) the Chief Administrative Officer shall forward a recommendation to Executive Policy Committee which may approve the Single Source negotiation where the Single Source is not permitted under the Policy and/or not permitted under the various Trade Agreements.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed changes will permanently replace the DART service as the means of providing demand responsive transit in Winnipeg with On-Request technology.

The proposed changes will add 2.60 additional 'Clerk A' FTEs to increase staffing levels in Winnipeg Transit's Client Service division to accommodate increasing call volumes, extended operating hours and maintain low wait times.

The proposed changes will allow Winnipeg Transit to continue operating the Winnipeg Transit On-Request pilot through a contract extension valued at $31,500, plus MRST and GST as applicable. However, the On-Request service will continue to require a technology platform and for the financial impact it is assumed subsequent contracts will be procured at a comparable rate.

Additional operating funds have been reflected in the Financial Impact Statement.

In order to continue with On-Request transit service, Winnipeg Transit requires 2.60 Clerk A FTEs and permission to extend the contract with the On-Request vendor.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Winnipeg Transit began exploring On-Request transit in order to offer a more modernized version of the demand-responsive transit service known as Dial-a-Ride-Transit (DART) and to gain critical experience in operating On-Request service which is a key component of the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (WTMP). Through a single-source award of contract authorized by the Manager of Materials, Winnipeg Transit entered into an agreement with VIA Transportation to provide technology, support, and services for On-Request transit, and launched the Winnipeg Transit On-Request Pilot Project on August 12th, 2021. A detailed report summarizing the Winnipeg Transit On-Request pilot project can be found in Appendix A.

Planning for the Winnipeg Transit On-Request pilot project began in November 2020. Funding for the buses and operators would not change for the On-Request zones involved in the pilot project. However, On-Request transit requires additional funding that is paid to a vendor to manage the technology platform (App), The fees cover the cost of using the transit rider application, the bus operator application, and the vehicle operations centre. Monthly costs are based on the number of service vehicles an agency operates. The pilot project was launched as a joint effort between Winnipeg Transit and the Innovation and Technology Department with the latter providing funding to pay for the vendor for the duration of the pilot project. This included $37,500 in start-up costs and $46,200 in monthly subscription costs.

The project was originally set to expire on August 31st, 2022 but has had a four (4) month extension which is allowing Winnipeg Transit to continue operating On-Request transit until December 31, 2022, while actively working towards hiring a permanent On-Request vendor through an RFP process.

Given that Winnipeg was already offering demand-responsive transit service under the three (3) DART routes, these were selected as the routes where On-Request service would now be offered;

- Zone 101: St. Amant/Plaza Drive,
- Zone 102: Southdale, and
- Zone 110: St. Boniface.

A map of each zone is included in Appendix A.

On-Request allows passengers to book rides using one of the following options;

- Winnipeg Transit On-Request app: passengers can download the app to their mobile device and use it to book a ride. The app is bilingual and fully ‘Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0’ compliant;

- Winnipeg Transit On-Request online booking portal available through any web browser; and
- By calling 311 and following the prompts for on-request bookings. On-Request bookings are made by Transit customer service representatives which a customers to bypass the regular queue at 311. Wait times have typically been between one and four minutes.

Prior to the On-Request pilot, Winnipeg Transit did not have a call centre for the DART system as it relied on passengers calling the bus operators directly. In order to allow for passengers to continue booking rides by phone using On-Request transit, calls were directed to the Winnipeg Transit Plus contact centre. Due to the nature of On-Request calls being made to schedule immediate travel, the contact centre prioritized On-Request bookings. The contact centre at Winnipeg Transit Plus was able to take these calls with minimal disruption to Winnipeg Transit Plus service and maintained low wait times for On-Request bookings because they were receiving fewer calls overall at Winnipeg Transit Plus (with reduced ridership due to the pandemic). However, with a continued resumption of service the contact centre is receiving an increased volume of calls that are impacting overall customer wait times. During the On-Request pilot project, the contact centre also extended its hours by approximately 24 hours per week in order to match the operational hours of On-Request service.

Winnipeg Transit is recommending to continue operating On-Request transit in all three zones associated with the pilot. In order to do so Winnipeg Transit is also requesting the addition of 2.60 Clerk A FTEs within Winnipeg Transit Plus to help maintain service levels, keep call wait times low, and allow Winnipeg Transit Plus to permanently change the contact centre hours to match those of On-Request.

The current contract is set to expire on December 31st, 2022. Winnipeg Transit is currently procuring a permanent On-Request vendor through an RFP process; however, the vendor who is selected through this process may not be in place until September 2023. Winnipeg Transit is requesting to continue operating the Winnipeg Transit On-Request service through extending the current contract with VIA Transportation for up to nine (9) months for the period of January 1 – September 30, 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** October 24, 2022

Project Name: **First Year of Program** **2023**

Winnipeg Transit On-Request Pilot

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 182,069	$ 185,966	$ 188,913	$ 192,412	$ 196,260
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 182,069	$ 185,966	$ 188,913	$ 192,412	$ 196,260
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ 182,069	$ 185,966	$ 188,913	$ 192,412	$ 196,260

Additional Comments: Direct costs reflect the addition of 2.60 Clerk A FTEs and the cost of a technology platform which includes the contract extension terms with VIA Transportation for the period of January 1 - September 30, 2023 (plus applicable MRST) and subsequently which have been estimated at a comparable monthly cost. There is a net budget adjustment required for 2023 and future forecasts.

Laurie Fisher October 24, 2022

Laurie Fisher, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance and Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

n/a

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

OurWinnipeg 2045 (2022)
Environmental Resilience, Objective 2: Prioritize sustainable transportation as the mobility options of choice.

Prioritize sustainable transportation as the mobility options of choice. Transition to a sustainable transportation system that safely and efficiently moves people, goods and services, increases access to a variety of affordable mobility choices, encourages less reliance on personal vehicle travel, reduces travel time, mitigates congestion and related greenhouse gas emissions, and supports the development of denser, better-connected, healthy and complete communities.

Policy 2.9: Reduce Road Congestion

Increase the efficiency, convenience and usage of the active and public transportation system, to improve air quality, provide a viable alternative to the automobile, and reduce current and future road congestion.

Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (2021)
Network Goals:

1. Enhance Customer Experience
   Increase Ridership
   Improve Downtown Mobility
   Complement Land-Use Development
   Improve Multi-modal Mobility
   Ensure Transit is Inclusive
   Continuously Innovate
   Empower Healthy Communities
   Balance Investment with Affordability

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

This report is in accordance with the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (WCAP) as per Directions 3.1 Increase Use and Efficiency of Public Transit Systems (p.46).

Relevant actions include: Deliver continuous improvement in transit service with a focus on customer service, reliability, and route connectivity, and public education (found on page 46 of the WCAP).

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Goal 5(a) Transportation System Equity is Enhanced – the affordability and accessibility of transportation and transit service is increased

Goal 5(b) Transportation System Equity is Enhanced – improvements to transportation and transit infrastructure and services prioritize areas of higher poverty, and increased interconnectivity to employment and affordable goods and services

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Transit
Division: Service Development
Prepared by: Adam Budowski, Transit Planner
Date: October 24, 2022

Attachment:

Appendix A - Demand Responsive Transit and the Winnipeg Transit On-Request Pilot