Minutes – Council – March 21, 2024

Minute No. 211
Report – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 7, 2024

Item No. 2 Portage and Main Intersection – Implementation of a Phased-Approach to Below and At-Grade Improvements

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, as amended, and adopted the following:

1. That the at-grade vision for the Portage and Main intersection as articulated in Appendix 7 be approved as the guiding vision for renewal of the infrastructure and public realm at the intersection, with the exception that future designs should incorporate at-grade pedestrian crossing access and that it be referred to the forthcoming Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study for inclusion in that project.

2. That the opening of at-grade pedestrian crossing at Portage and Main be approved, and the Public Service be directed to take the necessary steps required to facilitate that by July 1, 2025.

3 That the Public Service be directed to prepare the scope of work and budget to assess the condition of the below-grade concourse to determine the steps, costs, and traffic impacts required to decommission and close the concourse to public access, and to refer that project forward for Council consideration prior to the 2025 Budget Review Process.

4. That the Public Service be authorized to negotiate with the property owners at the four corners related to property acquisition, encroachments and/or easements related to the construction.

5. That the Public Service consult the tenants of the concourse, the property owners on the 4 corners and other downtown stakeholders, consistent with the previous rounds of consultation about the intersection, on the process and timing of the at-grade opening and the decommissioning of the concourse and include the findings in the report back to Council outlined in Recommendation 3.

6. That $13,000,000 be approved to facilitate the initial opening design and construction requirements, funded as follows:

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 7, 2024

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

A. Replace the first charge authorization for Downtown Streets in 2025 capital forecast for $8.64 million with the streets related work for the Portage and Main intersection; and defer the planned downtown streets to 2028 offset by reduction from the "Regional Street Renewals – Annual Program – Various locations to be identified" of $8.64 million in 2028 (see page 65 of the Supplement – from $60.212 million to $51.572 million).

B. Dedicate the funding authorized in 2023 and 2024 for Portage Place revitalization project (part of the Regional and Local Street Renewal program) to this project totaling $1.1 million (2023 - $400,000, 2024 - $700,000) and defer this $1.1 million to 2027 offset by a reduction from the "Regional Street Renewals – Annual Program – Various locations to be identified" of $1.1 million in 2027 (see page 65 of the Supplement – from $38.704 million to $37.604 million).

C. Approve new capital borrowing authority of $3.26 million in 2024 and enact a borrowing by-law in accordance with section 294 of the City of Winnipeg Charter.

7. That the corresponding debt and finance charges be included in the operating budget offset by a corresponding increase in Corporate Efficiencies (2024 - $111,000, 2025 - $200,000, 2026 and 2027 $212,000 each).

8. That the Public Service be authorized to enter into a Sole Source agreement with an Engineering Consultant to expedite all engineering services (preliminary design, detailed design, contract administration and post construction services).

9. That a request of $1.063 million for preliminary design, engineering and engagement in 2025 in conjunction with the Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study be referred to the 2025 Budget Review Process for consideration.

10. That the Public Service consult with the Winnipeg Arts Council in an effort to address concerns related to the public art that is located in the concourse.

11. 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 Property and Development – March 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Rollins,
That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development be adopted.

In amendment,
Moved by Councillor Rollins,
Seconded by Councillor Browaty,

BE IT RESOLVED that Item 2 of the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development dated March 7, 2024, be amended as follows:

- Delete Recommendation 3 and replace it with the following:

  "3. That the Public Service be directed to prepare the scope of work and budget to assess the condition of the below-grade concourse to determine the steps, costs, and traffic impacts required to decommission and close the concourse to public access, and to refer that project forward for Council consideration prior to the 2025 Budget Review Process."

- Delete Recommendation 5 and replace it with the following:

  "5. That the Public Service consult the tenants of the concourse, the property owners on the 4 corners and other downtown stakeholders, consistent with the previous rounds of consultation about the intersection, on the process and timing of the at-grade opening and the decommissioning of the concourse and include the findings in the report back to Council outlined in Recommendation 3."

- Add the following new Recommendation 10 and renumber the remaining recommendation accordingly:

  "10. That the Public Service consult with the Winnipeg Arts Council in an effort to address concerns related to the public art that is located in the concourse."

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

In amendment,
Moved by Councillor Wyatt,
Seconded by Councillor Schreyer,

AND WHEREAS in 2018 65% of electors voted to keep Portage and Main closed in a Plebiscite held for the Winnipeg elector;

AND WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg now has precedent to hold a Plebiscite re Portage and Main;

AND WHEREAS new information has come to light regarding the costs involved to maintain the underground concourse at Portage and Main and to address existing crumbling sewer infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS the Mayor, as a candidate, was quoted in the Winnipeg Free Press saying "I don't support re-opening Portage and Main at this time. The question was asked during the last election and the result was very clear. It would be disrespectful to the public to ignore that and go in a different direction right now."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Item 2 of the Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development dated March 7th, 2024 be amended as follows:

- Add the following new recommendations and renumber the remaining recommendation accordingly:

  "10. That the implementation of Recommendations 1-9 be subject to the affirmative results of a plebiscite, and that a plebiscite be held containing for the following question:

  Do you support the opening of Portage and Main to pedestrian crossings? YES/NO

  11. That the requirements of the City of Winnipeg Plebiscites policy be waived, with the exception of the 2/3rds vote required to establish a plebiscite question."

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

The motion for adoption of the amendment moved by Councillor Wyatt and seconded by Councillor Schreyer was put:

Councillor Rollins called for the yeas and nays, which were as follows:

Yea: Councillors Schreyer and Wyatt 2

Nay: His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Dobson, Duncan, Eadie, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Rollins, Santos and Sharma 12

Absent: Councillor Chambers 1

and the motion for amendment was declared lost.

The motion for adoption of the amendment moved by Councillor Rollins and seconded by Councillor Browaty was put:

Councillor Rollins called for the yeas and nays, which were as follows:

Yea: His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Dobson, Duncan, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Rollins, Santos, Schreyer, Sharma and Wyatt 13

Nay: Councillor Eadie 1

Absent: Councillor Chambers 1

and the motion for amendment was declared carried.

The motion for the adoption of the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, as amended, was put.

Councillor Rollins called for the yeas and nays, which were as follows:

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

Yea: His Worship Mayor Gillingham, Councillors Allard, Browaty, Dobson, Duncan, Gilroy, Lukes, Mayes, Rollins, Santos and Sharma 11

Nay: Councillor Eadie, Schreyer and Wyatt 3

Absent: Councillor Chambers 1

and the item as amended was declared carried.

The following persons submitted communications with respect to the matter:

- Olesia Romaniuk
- Patrick Stewart
- Judy Waytiuk

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 12, 2024, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development and submitted the matter to Council.

The following persons submitted communications with respect to the matter:

- David Grant
- Nancy Gouliquer

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 7, 2024, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, with the following amendment:

- Delete Recommendations 1-5 in their entirety and replace with the following:

  "1. That the at-grade vision for the Portage and Main intersection as articulated in Appendix 7 be approved as the guiding vision for renewal of the infrastructure and public realm at the intersection, with the exception that future designs should incorporate at-grade pedestrian crossing access and that it be referred to the forthcoming Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study for inclusion in that project.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

2. That Council approve the opening of at-grade pedestrian crossing at Portage and Main and the Public Service be directed to take the necessary steps required to facilitate that by July 1, 2025.

3. That the Public Service be directed to assess the condition of the below-grade concourse to determine the steps required to decommission and close the concourse to public access, and to refer that project forward for consideration for the 2025 Budget Review Process.

4. That the Public Service be authorized to negotiate with the property owners at the four corners related to property acquisition, encroachments and/or easements related to the construction.

5. That the Public Service consult the tenants of the concourse and other downtown stakeholders, consistent with the previous rounds of consultation about the intersection, on the process and timing of the at-grade opening and the decommissioning of the concourse.

6. That $13,000,000 be approved to facilitate the initial opening design and construction requirements, funded as follows:

    A. Replace the first charge authorization for Downtown Streets in 2025 capital forecast for $8.64 million with the streets related work for the Portage and Main intersection; and defer the planned downtown streets to 2028 offset by reduction from the “Regional Street Renewals – Annual Program – Various locations to be identified” of $8.64 million in 2028 (see page 65 of the Supplement – from $60.212 million to $51.572 million).

    B. Dedicate the funding authorized in 2023 and 2024 for Portage Place revitalization project (part of the Regional and Local Street Renewal program) to this project totaling $1.1 million (2023 - $400,000, 2024 - $700,000) and defer this $1.1 million to 2027 offset by a reduction from the “Regional Street Renewals – Annual Program – Various locations to be identified” of $1.1 million in 2027 (see page 65 of the Supplement – from $38.704 million to $37.604 million).

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – March 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

C. Approve new capital borrowing authority of $3.26 million in 2024 and enact a borrowing by-law in accordance with section 294 of the City of Winnipeg Charter.

7. That the corresponding debt and finance charges be included in the operating budget offset by a corresponding increase in Corporate Efficiencies (2024 - $111,000, 2025 - $200,000, 2026 and 2027 $212,000 each).

8. That the Public Service be authorized to enter into a Sole Source agreement with an Engineering Consultant to expedite all engineering services (preliminary design, detailed design, contract administration and post construction services).

9. That a request of $1.063 million for preliminary design, engineering and engagement in 2025 in conjunction with the Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study be referred to the 2025 Budget Review Process for consideration.

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

and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

The following persons submitted communications with respect to the matter:

- David Grant
- Patrick Stewart
- Nicholas Warsza
- Mel Marginet, Green Action Centre Sustainable Transportation Team

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Portage and Main Intersection – Implementation of a Phased-Approach to Below and At-Grade Improvements

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
J. Veitch (Acting)	H. Borys	C. Kloepfer	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October of 2017, Council identified Portage Avenue and Main Street as a priority for renewed purpose and investment.

In November 2021, a consultant assignment was awarded for planning and design services, with the public space design informed by public engagement. The project scope included an illustrated revitalization vision for the intersection including a plan to replace the waterproof membrane that protects the underground concourse. In respect of the 2018 plebiscite, the urban design contract was predicated on retaining some form of barriers to prevent pedestrian crossing of the Portage and Main intersection at grade. However, the proposed design needed to be adaptable for the long-term evolution of the intersection to be able to accommodate opening to pedestrians, potentially on a temporary (e.g., special event) basis.

Illustrations of the proposed design concept can be found in Attachment H and Class 4 construction costs can be found in at the end of Attachment A. Recognizing that the design is only presented and costed at a conceptual level, it is recommended that further design and engineering work happening as part of the rapid transit study be used to take this Portage and Main design vision to a Class 3 preliminary design level to give the Public Service more accurate capital cost estimates. This would require additional budget for consulting in 2025, but the amount is significantly reduced by rolling it into the forthcoming Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study.

In addition to the design work outlined in this report, Municipal Accommodations Division has developed a plan to ensure at least five more years of useful life for the concourse by identifying a series of critical short-term repairs. As recommended by the consultant, an analysis of the condition of the concrete structure will also need to be carried out. The Budget for that work will be part of the annual budget review process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the vision for the Portage and Main intersection articulated in this report be approved as the guiding vision for renewal of the infrastructure and public realm at the intersection.

2. That the design vision for Portage and Main be referred to the forthcoming Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study for inclusion in that project.

3. That the request for $1.063 million for preliminary design, engineering and engagement in 2025 in conjunction with the Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study be referred to the 2025 budget process.

4. That the Public Service be directed to engage with the property owners at the four corners regarding a cost-sharing agreement for the renewal of the concourse (including the interior, the membrane, the stairwells and proposed elevators).

5. That the Proper Officers of the City do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

In 2017, Council allocated budget for architectural and engineering services for Portage and Main. Per the administrative report at that time, “Further study is required that takes into consideration the broader downtown planning, land use, design, and includes further consultation with neighboring private stakeholders about their interests and future investment.” This report is an update on the recently completed consultant assignment.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the recommendations be approved, the Public Service will pursue the following:

- Preliminary design and engineering integrated with the rapid transit study.

- Concurrence from the connected property owners on a cost-sharing agreement as contemplated when Council last considered a supplemental agreement dealing with access to and from the City concourse.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

On October 25, 2017, Council adopted the following:

1. *That the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street be identified as a priority, through a phased approach, for renewed purpose and investment that allows for full use*

by everyone, pedestrian (both at and below grade) and vehicle, to increase walkability, safety and connectivity throughout the entire downtown.

2. *That a Portage Avenue and Main Street Working Group be established by the Chief Administrative Officer which will include the CAO, representatives of the property owners at the intersection, and the departments of Public Works, Transit, Planning, Property and Development and Water and Waste, to ensure collaboration and consultation for aligned overall planning.*

3. *That a new Portage and Main Intersection Improvements capital project in the amount of $1,500,000 be authorized for inclusion in the 2018 Capital Budget (Appendix A) to be funded with prior year authorizations as laid out in Appendix B; and that the 2018 Regional and Local Streets Renewal Budget include the project "Portage and Main Rehabilitation" in the amount of $2,000,000.*

4. *Subject to approval of Recommendation 3, that Council authorize expenditures in 2017 of up to $3,500,000, prior to the adoption of the 2018 Capital Budget, as a first charge against the General Capital Fund – of up to $1,500,000 for the 2018 Portage and Main Intersection Improvements capital project, and up to $2,000,000 for the Portage and Main Rehabilitation project in the 2018 Regional and Local Street Renewal capital program, in accordance with Subsection 288(2) of the City of Winnipeg Charter, to be utilized as follows:*

   A. *Up to $1,500,000 for Architectural and Engineering services obtained through a competitive bid process.*

   B. *Up to $500,000 for new sidewalks, curbs, paving bands and street trees on the city's assets directly connected to the plaza at 365 Main Street (Richardson Building).*

   C. *Up to $1,500,000 for the city's assets in the concourse, consisting of work in the concourse below 201 Portage Avenue, removal of the bunker and associated works at 365 Main Street and concourse evaluations, assessments and studies.*

5. *That the City enter into, execute and deliver an agreement on a single source basis with Harvard Property Management Inc. for reimbursement of costs for renovation and upgrading work to be undertaken by Harvard Property Management Inc., to a maximum of $500,000, in the City-owned portion of the Underground Pedestrian Concourse adjacent to the 201 Portage Avenue property and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to implement the intent of the foregoing (the "Ancillary Agreements").*

6. *That the City enter into, execute and deliver agreements with the property owners at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street to reintroduce at grade pedestrian activity at the intersection, and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to implement the intent of the foregoing (the "Other Ancillary Agreements") including the amendment or termination of any previous agreements entered into with existing or previous property owners at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street.*

7. That authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the agreements referred to in Recommendations 5 and 6 and the Ancillary Agreements and the Other Ancillary Agreements, 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.

In 2018, a plebiscite in the municipal election posed a question about pedestrian crossings at Portage and Main. As a result of the plebiscite, the urban design contract was predicated on retaining some form of barriers to prevent pedestrian crossing. However, the design should be adaptable for the long-term evolution of the intersection to be able to accommodate opening to pedestrians, potentially on a temporary (e.g., special event) basis.

The contract for the Portage and Main Intersection Revitalization was awarded to HTFC Planning & Design in November 2021. Per the details of their bid, HTFC partnered with Stantec Engineering, Brook McIlroy Urban Design and Architectural Services, Argyle Public Engagement and Communication, Ombrages Lighting Design, specialty services from Anne Lindsay (historian/researcher), and Hanscomb Quantity Surveyors.

The scope of work involves a revitalization vision for Portage and Main, triggered by the need to demolish portions of the roadway and sidewalks to replace the aging waterproofing membrane on the underground concourse. The membrane replacement, recent investments from private owners at the corners, and a future rapid transit station at the intersection all support rethinking the public realm at Portage and Main to create a more welcoming, vibrant, and equitable experience that supports flexible programming and reflects the spirit of the City of Winnipeg. Deliverables included a proposed urban design vision, a construction plan, and Class 4 estimates for intersection enhancements and renewal of the concourse membrane beneath the sidewalk.

Engagement

Three phases of engagement were carried out. The initial phase included stakeholder interviews and a workshop focused on themes and priorities. The second phase included stakeholder meetings, two public pop-up events, a community gathering, and an online survey. This phase explored a variety of ideas and design elements for the design of the public space at the intersection. The final phase of engagement included a stakeholder meeting to review and discuss the draft recommendations. Throughout the project, there was ongoing dialogue with the property owners at Portage and Main to ensure alignment with initiatives and projects at their sites. Attachments E, F, and G include a complete description of the engagement activities, feedback received, and how feedback was used in each phase. There was a high level of interest from residents, with over 9,500 survey participants and 350 event attendees. Although a pedestrian crossing was not being considered in the design, many shared their views on pedestrian crossing. For transparency, all comments are included in the public engagement summaries. The most common themes in the feedback included a desire for pedestrian crossing, a preference for keeping the design simple, avoiding elaborate installations and keeping costs to a minimum. Other themes that came up frequently were the need for improved accessibility, public safety, and greenery (trees and landscaping).

Design

Illustrations of the proposed design concept can be found in Attachment H. Key features of the design concept include the following.

Accessibility – The design incorporates two public elevators as a way of improving access to the concourse, one at Portage East and one in front of 201 Portage at the northwest corner of the intersection. The Portage East elevator would serve pedestrian access to and from the northeast and southeast. No public elevator is able to be incorporated in the southwest corner of the intersection due to the lack of space. However, the Fort Street crossing allows relatively close access to the proposed elevator on the north side. A substantial redevelopment of the City-owned 210 Portage space would need to be investigated to address this accessibility gap. The intent is that these elevators would be available during all concourse operating hours, which are currently 6:30 am to 10:30 pm. This means that an accessibility gap would also continue to exist during the nighttime when the concourse is closed. The elevators are incorporated into glass pavilions that also include a stairwell to the concourse (replacing the existing concrete bunkers).

Rapid Transit Integration – Although exact details around the configuration of rapid transit at this intersection will not be finalized until the Rapid Transit Downtown Corridors Preliminary Design is completed, the consultant worked closely with Transit staff to explore how it might be integrated. The Portage and Main station has the potential to bring tens of thousands of transit users getting on and off buses at this location. This would add significant activity and vibrancy to the area. Public open space around the station will become an important consideration. The design of the station itself can help to unify the overall intersection with an architectural vocabulary consistent with other proposed elements.

Sidewalk Extensions – Recognizing the importance of pedestrian open space around any future transit station, the design concept contemplates a narrowing of the roadway at Portage East in order to provide more sidewalk space and other amenities. A transportation analysis by Dillon Consulting was completed in 2017 and discussed the prospect of restricting right turns onto Portage East. Very few cars currently make this movement (most preferring to go east on York Avenue or William Stephenson). Revising the curb radius in front of 335 Main and reducing the number of lanes on Portage East opens up valuable space for transit, for concourse access (the pavilion) and for pedestrian movement to and from these facilities.

Pavement design – While opportunities for public art integration can be seen illustrated in many of the elements in the design concept, the major interpretive element would be the Circle demarcated in the centre of the intersection, representing ‘Wahkohtowin’: the tradition of cultural exchange, hospitality and coming together that was central to the history of this intersection and the birth of Winnipeg. The Circle also reflects the geometry of the concourse ‘circus’ below. As a placeholder, renderings of the Circle show a variegated ring of Manitoba granite pavers, inspired by an Indigenous weaving pattern created by Nadia Myre of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabeg First Nation. There are still a number of technical challenges that would need to be considered through detailed design. Our road renewal cycle is approximately 20 years, so it would be important to consider whether the intervention is something that can be reintegrated into/onto new pavement or if it is meant to be a temporary installation that is redesigned after a number of years.

Lighting – A proper lighting strategy not only improves safety but can also make a space feel inviting and animated. The report recommends that the heritage-style street lighting that exists along much of Portage Avenue and Main Street would continue to provide general overhead lighting. Additional lighting on the pavilions and transit station would improve safety and make these elements stand out. The report expresses a preference for recessed lighting to avoid glare and make them more vandal-resistant. (See Figure 48 in Attachment A.) A signature

feature of the intersection would be a series of mast lights in the medians. These would include technology to allow colours to change seasonally or for special holidays and observances. They can be programmed to react to movement. They can include projectors that cast images onto the pavement – seasonal décor, hockey night themed imagery, and would even have the ability to illuminate and animate the circular paving detail as shown in Figure 46 in Attachment A.

Planting – New street trees would be sparingly distributed along the sidewalk edge, only where there is adequate light and space. In all cases, street trees would be planted using a soil cell system to provide adequate soil volume. The soil cells would be linked in a continuous gallery that also serves as a bioretention reservoir, irrigating the trees and treating and slowing the flow of stormwater. The concept also recommends green roofs on the concourse access pavilions and planters on the corners where there is an opportunity to add additional landscaping.

Unification and wayfinding – The concept recommends the use of native tall grasses on the concourse rooftops and in planters adjacent to the intersection as a unifying signature element across the four corners. These grasses are hardy, drought tolerant, and provide movement as they react to the wind. The property owners have indicated a willingness to try this on their own properties to advance the idea. Another key signature element recommended would be Glulam wooden fascias and 'woven' timber beams on pavilions and Transit station canopy to create a warm, distinctive image and useful wayfinding cue. For continuity, the recommendation is to makeover the concourse entrance at 210 Portage using the same architectural elements. Figure 45 in Attachment A shows what this might look like. It also shows how wayfinding information could be incorporated on the wooden fascia at each of the concourse access points.

Membrane Replacement

Addressing water penetration into the underground concourse will require replacement of the 45-year-old waterproof membrane on both the top and sides of the structure. Because the membrane is on the exterior of the structure, work requires complete excavation of the intersection. This would be a four to five-year project. North-south traffic movement would be maintained with reduced capacity, including the right-only turn to westbound Portage. All other movements would be detoured during the construction period. Certain sections of the concourse or pedestrian entrances from the street are likely to be closed from time to time to accommodate construction, resulting in temporary detours for those on foot. Some mitigation strategies are addressed in the report.

Cost Estimates

In rounded numbers, the Class 4 estimates break down as follows:

- Excavation and membrane replacement: $29 Million
- Traffic management during construction: $12 Million
- Watermains and sewer work: $13 Million
- New concourse access stairs/elevators: $ 6 Million

- Paving, lighting, trees, barricades: $13 Million

Total: **$73 Million**

Further detail can be found at the end of the Attachment A report. It should be noted that these numbers do not include work needed within the concourse itself. The construction plan for membrane replacement assumes that the underground structural concrete is in good condition. However, the consultants have recommended a lifecycle study of the existing concrete structure prior to commencing with the next design phase. Other interior design and accessibility improvements would also be warranted in the future. No assessment of those costs has been undertaken.

The estimate above also does not include the transit station. Rapid transit is being viewed as its own separate capital project.

These dollar figures also do not include on-going operation and maintenance costs for either the concourse or the proposed at-grade elements. A detailed operation and maintenance plan with associated costs would be determined at the Class 3 design stage. It is noted that the City currently replaces panes of glass on the existing stairwell bunker fairly frequently (as does Winnipeg Transit at their bus shelters). Long term costs would need to account for vandalism and occasional glass replacement (shatter resistant), graffiti clean-up, etc. Many stakeholders and members of the public expressed concern that, if there is no concerted effort to stay on top of maintenance issues, all the proposed investments could become an eyesore. Similarly, stakeholders felt that an enhanced security presence around the concourse and its entry points would be essential. In order to meet Transit's operational needs, the future transit station would require concourse access from 5:15 a.m. to 1:45 a.m., which is a significant increase over our current hours of operation.

Options
The Public Service recognizes that $73 Million is a significant commitment of public dollars, most of which is associated with keeping the underground concourse in operation. It is also recognized that this is not a one-time fix – even a new membrane would have a service life of approximately 40 years, meaning that this undertaking would need to be repeated in the future. A number of alternatives were explored. Section 9.15 of the Attachment B report looks at whether waterproofing could occur from the interior and describes the shortcomings of that approach. Through the consultant's design process (featured in Section 3.2 of the Attachment A report) the idea of routing cars through an underpass with a park above was explored (eliminating the concourse entirely). This, unfortunately, would be far costlier than the $73 Million for the recommended proposal. The Sky Garden concept also had the potential to serve as a replacement for the concourse, but it generated a strong negative response from a number of stakeholders, property owners and members of the public for being heavy handed and visually dominant, creating too much shadow and obscuring the buildings.

The Public Service also explored whether the need for new public stairwells and elevators to the concourse could be eliminated through agreements with the property owners to provide required concourse access and exiting. This would be similar to the proposal with Richardson Centre discussed in a recent report to Council. There are a number of challenges with this approach:

- There is little indication that the other three corner property owners would be interested in the approach that Richardson Centre is taking. We note, as an example, the office tower at the southeast corner is currently card access only, meaning only employees have access to their elevator.
- Most of the office buildings lock their doors at 6 pm, meaning that an at-grade crossing option would need to be in place for the evenings and weekends.

- The building code requires a certain number of exits from the concourse and limits how many can be through another building. Even if a code equivalent solution were discovered, it would require physical changes to the private properties to accommodate current fire exit standards.

- This option would likely only save about $6 Million off of the $73 Million total project costs.

If Council decided to reject the concourse-related works and revert the intersection back to a standard design with crossings, costs associated with excavation and membrane replacement, traffic management during construction, new barricades, stairwells and elevators would be eliminated. The 2017 report by Dillon Consulting estimated the cost of implementing crosswalks at approximately $6 Million for removal of barricades/planters, installing sidewalks and signalization. An updated 2024 estimate would be approximately $10 Million (Class 5) based on a summer/fall construction schedule and a 12- to 14-month project timeline – including traffic analysis, preliminary/detailed engineering and construction. There would also be decommissioning costs associated with the underground circus that may be in the range of $20-$50 Million (subject to further study). This option was not discussed with the property owners so the Public Service does not yet know how important the concourse connection may be to them.

Recent counts show that approximately 72,000 vehicles pass through the intersection per weekday, which is 10% lower than what was observed in 2016 (it is still the sixth busiest intersection in Winnipeg). A 2023 study counted more than 2,100 pedestrians using the underground circus during a midday 2-hour period on a weekday. Additionally, above ground counts conducted in mid-January 2024 found that more than 1,500 people walk by the intersection on adjacent sidewalks on a typical winter weekday.

Next steps

When Council considered a supplemental agreement to the original concourse access agreement with the four property owners in 1988, the Council minutes indicated that the parties involved in the negotiation agreed to the proportionate cost-sharing of all refurbishing, structural improvement, maintenance and operating costs following expiration of the original 40-year term in 2019. Given the information now available on the costs of this work, it would be prudent to re-engage with the property owners to confirm their willingness to proceed with such an agreement in order to extend the life of the concourse connecting the four properties. Their participation would support the business case for undertaking the proposed work. While the City's own retail spaces within the concourse remain at 40% vacancy, there may be positive economic impacts of the concourse for the properties connected to it.

Assuming there is a desire to extend the life of the concourse, the design vision illustrated in Attachment H should be advanced to preliminary design stage. This additional design work would enable Class 3 cost estimates (accuracy level: -20% to +30%). To ensure continued integration between the urban design vision and the development of rapid transit, the Public Service recommends that the next phase of design work be rolled into the forthcoming Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study. This will result in significant cost-savings as well. As a stand-alone project, Class 3 design, engineering and engagement for Portage and Main would require almost $2 Million in consulting costs. Given the design and engineering work Transit is already planning to do in this area in 2025, the incremental cost to incorporate the membrane and design elements illustrated here would be $1,063,000. This work would be carried out between 2025 and 2027, so a decision on funding at this time would enable the scope of the project to be finalized without delaying the posting of the consultant assignment next year.

Further, the Municipal Accommodations Division will be pursuing urgent repairs within the concourse in the short term to extend its useful life at least five more years at a cost of approximately $1.6 million. Municipal Accommodations will also undertake the lifecycle study of the existing concrete structure referred to above. Associated budget recommendations will be forwarded to Council through the capital budget review process.

Requested Changes

At a briefing on January 18, 2024, an earlier draft of this administrative report was reviewed by members of the Executive Policy Committee and the following revisions were requested:

- The ballpark cost to open the intersection to at-grade pedestrian crossing.
- The ballpark cost to decommission the concourse.
- Traffic counts pre-pandemic and post-2022.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: February 9, 2024

Project Name:

First Year of Program 2025

Portage and Main Intersection – Implementation of a Phased-Approach to Below and At-Grade Improvements

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ 1,063,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ 1,063,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ 1,063,000				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments: Capital expenditures consist of preliminary design, engineering and engagement costs in 2025 in conjunction with the Rapid Transit (Downtown Corridors) Preliminary Design Study. For the purposes of this report, it is assumed that consultations with the property owners on the four corners entails no (or at least no material) costs.

Mike McGinn Feb. 9, 2024

Mike McGinn, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Assets and Project Management
- Public Works
- Winnipeg Transit
- Water and Waste
- Customer Service and Communications

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Complete Communities Direction Strategy

C1. Downtown
Goal 8 – Prioritize pedestrian comfort, convenience, and amenities Downtown

Strategic sites
8.2 Capitalize on strategic locations and view lines by facilitating development that showcases exemplary urban design, enhances our civic image, and supports the overall ease of experiencing Downtown.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and its Goals and Objectives, and it was determined that the PRS is not applicable to this specific report.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Planning, Property & Development
Division: Urban Planning & Design
Prepared by: Kurtis Kowalke
Date: February 13, 2024
File No: N/A

Attachments:

A. Portage and Main Revitalization Study

B. Membrane Replacement Report (Appendix 1)

C. Heritage Report (Appendix 2)
D. Lighting Vision (Appendix 4)
E. Public Engagement Phase 1 Summary
F. Public Engagement Phase 2 Summary
G. Public Engagement Phase 3 Summary
H. Renderings (Appendix 7)