Executive Policy Committee

Re: Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works Dated June 11, 2024
2. Preliminary Design Study Route 90 Improvements - Taylor to Ness Avenue

June 18, 2024

Greetings,

I'm Mel Marginet, member of the Sustainable Transportation Team at Green Action Centre. Our vision is all Manitobans living green, and living well.

We've reviewed the latest reports from the Route 90 Improvement Study. It's abundantly clear that the proposed widening of Kenaston from Taylor to Ness, plus adding a third span to the St. James Bridge, is not sustainable from either a fiscal or environmental perspective. We therefore recommend that EPC:
1. Reject the proposed design to widen this corridor; and
2. Approve a motion supporting rehabilitating the existing infrastructure.

This will ensure that future generations of Winnipeggers are not burdened with more new infrastructure than we can afford to maintain. It will also ensure that this project does not undermine key principles of the *Climate Action Plan* and *Community Energy Investment Roadmap* adopted by the City of Winnipeg.

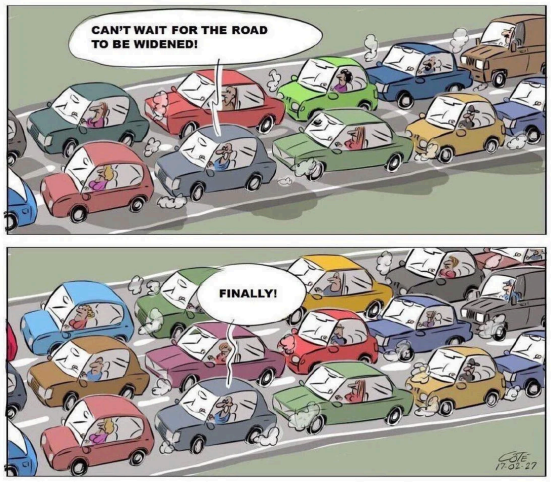
Michel Durand-Wood, on his blog Dear Winnipeg, does an excellent job breaking down the financials on this project. We won't spend our time reiterating the dismal business case put forward for the expansion. We do want to highlight that, with administration and contingency costs, the cost of the proposed widening fails to exceed its costs. Even if we all wanted to believe that the project did deliver a positive 1:1.7 benefit-cost ratio with those costs excluded, that's a very low benefit when compared to the potential return on investment of other more beneficial projects.

At IRPW last week it was noted that folks such as myself didn't talk about the economic benefits of expanding Kenaston. That is impossible to do given that the City has once again declined to

commission an independent assessment of whether there is a convincing economic case for this road and bridge expansion. Those in favour of this project didn't touch upon the economic risk to Winnipeg taxpayers, nor how the city will cover the additional maintenance costs, or how transportation is evolving in their industries.

We must ensure current data is being used in evaluations as well. For example, data used to stress this as an important trade corridor was from 2011 before the opening of CentrePort Canada Way (a $212 million dollar project) or the effects of the multi-billion dollars committed to the South Perimeter Highway. In fact, traffic studies show that the majority of the current traffic on Kenaston is actually single occupant personal vehicles with only 4% of traffic involving the movement of goods.

On that note, we'll focus our time on the problem that we're trying to solve with roadway expansions: congestion. Congestion is an issue on Kenaston during peak periods but it also a problem on Broadway, on Osborne, on Provencher, on McPhillips, on Henderson. I could go on. And we want to relieve congestion so that people's lives are easier, be it getting to work, school, appointments. We all want our goods to move efficiently, and we want our emergency vehicles to move easily.



Experience in other jurisdictions repeatedly demonstrates that simply building more roads and ignoring other alternatives to improve mobility is an expensive, temporary solution. In the long run, more road capacity to accommodate single occupant vehicles make congestion worse.

This is due to 'induced demand'.

If all goes as planned with this project, the average user who interacts with this corridor can look forward to a long-term drive time savings of … 11 seconds. This is poor value. As noted in Durand-Wood's article, The Kenaston Widening is Dead, Long Live the Kenaston Widening, we would be financially better off paying out people a nickel for this time directly.

The vision of this project is that “We are building a city for the future” (Mayor Gilingham, CTV News.) I find this hard to believe, as much of the logic is entrenched in old-school thinking from the past.

HOW DO WE SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF CONGESTION?

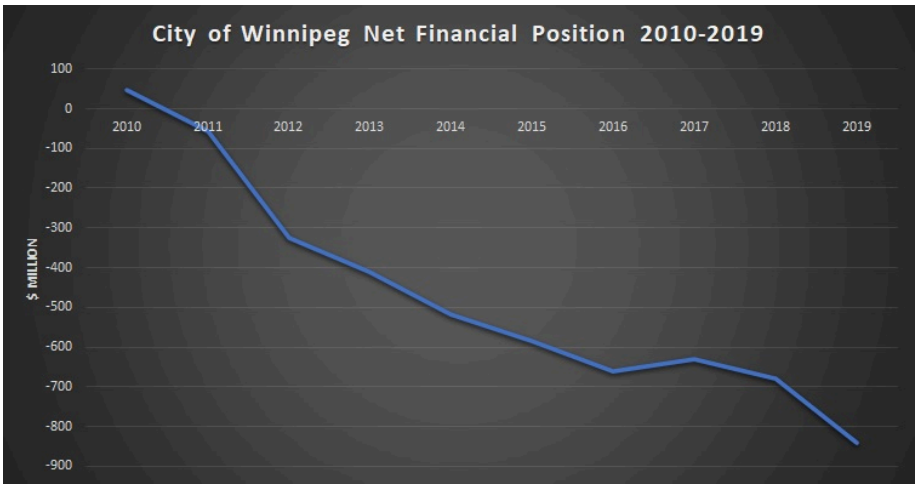
The City of Winnipeg currently has an 80% driving mode share, primarily single occupancy vehicles. This is very high and a prime cause of congestion. Moving people in a growing city by single-occupant vehicle is very expensive and incredibly inefficient.

Unfortunately, new greenfield developments built over generations and still being approved today, are the root of the problem. This is where we need to focus our attention and resources.

Traffic is like water, and if we keep turning up the tap on the edges, we will always have floods towards the core. If we want to solve congestion, we need to stop the gush from the edges through zoning changes and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) practices. We already know that we have enough people who want to travel in another way, be it transit, biking or walking. (Do we have to convince Winnipeggers to drive less?) We just underfund these modes, making them inconvenient and uncomfortable to most. “I’d like to take the bus, but it takes twice as long to get there, I have no choice but to drive” for example.

We also must consider the Naawi Oodena development of the former Kapyong lands, and creating six lanes of congestion next to it will be a barrier. As noted in the 2021 *Former Kapyong Barracks Master Plan*, “*Route 90 – both in its current form and proposed future configuration – poses some significant challenges from the perspective of site access, pedestrian and cycling comfort and connectivity, and the creation of a strong urban character along its frontage*.” (page 74). The master plan makes it very clear that this development does not want to attract personal vehicles, and it also notes the hope of being included for Rapid Transit service at the corner of Grant and Route 90.

Again, we all want to reduce congestion. Building more roads while underfunding and ignoring alternatives makes the problem worse. It is the most expensive, least effective strategy and we need to stop. If having more roads per capita were the solution to our woes, Winnipeg would have won that lottery. We have doubled the physical size of our city in the past 50 years, while growing our population by less than 40%. Each Winnipegger has way more space than Winnipeggers of the past, and yet we have never been in a worse financial position as a city.



In a time where, with record road spending, we can only afford to repair roads every 70 years, and replace them every 250 years, the idea that we would need to continue to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on more regional road extensions and widenings to try to make the system work is ridiculous. We need to fundamentally change our transportation system through Transportation Demand Management. This gives the City of Winnipeg more tools in the tool belt, so we can grow as a city without having to spend billions of dollars incentivizing personal vehicles.

At Green Action Centre, we do want to stress that we absolutely agree that the road needs to be fixed. We want to point out that, for a road that this report calls “an important transportation corridor” we haven’t increased its annual maintenance allowance for over 20 years, which has seen the infrastructure crumble. If we haven’t been able to increase the budget with inflation on such an important corridor, we have to ask ourselves why.

It’s because we don’t have the money. We don’t have the money to properly maintain the corridor at its current size. If we haven’t been able to increase the annual spending on maintenance for Route 90 at its current size in over 20 years, how are we going to maintain even more infrastructure on an even bigger Route 90 in the future? As noted last week at IRPW, the Transit department was given strict instructions that no new operating budget was available for the rerouting plan. The Transit department has provided a plan to provide transit improvements to thousands of Winnipeggers in all corners of our city, and they have done it with a plan that has no new operating costs. What would the Route 90 plan look like if the team was given similar instructions?

As noted by Councillor Lukes “We’re over our heads with the roads we already have”. This is exactly right. We cannot afford to add more. We need to focus on repairing the infrastructure we already have, and use it more efficiently to actually solve our congestion problems.

Finally, we do want to highlight our opposition to the findings under Environment and Road Safety headings. The idea that highway expansions “reduces idling” and therefore should be

considered “good” for the environment has long been debunked as evidence of induced demand has been made clear. Also, as noted, the report doesn’t account for the physical emissions created from building the infrastructure. Cement is very emission heavy and this expansion will likely wipe out any perceived benefits long before it’s even completed.

We noted serious safety concerns at the open houses for the proposed design of a widened Route 90 about the higher speed limit (from 50 to 60 kph) and increase in slip lanes that people walking and biking would need to cross. Slip lanes create a turning radius where the driver can maintain their speed. Having people walking and biking across multi-lane slip lanes is dangerous. We noted at the open house that for someone going from Superstore and heading south on the bus, they would have to cross a dozen high-speed traffic and slip lanes.

Once again, we call upon EPC to make a motion that removes the road widening elements from this project. A wider Kenaston plus extra span for the St. James Bridge will not build us a city of the future. Instead, the project is tied to decades old visions of Winnipeg long past their expiry. The project is mired in old-school thinking, which will lead us to a future of more broken infrastructure, devastating financial outcomes and missed goals to reduce our adopted targets for greenhouse gas reductions.

Mel Marginet
Sustainable Transportation
Green Action Centre

Route 90 Expansion

Focus Today:

1. Financially, this project doesn’t make sense and is incredibly risky
2. We’re not getting what we pay for
3. The money should be spent on more worthy projects

Recommendations:

1. Reject the proposed design to widen the corridor.
2. Approve a motion supporting the rehabilitation of the current infrastructure.

winnipeg.com/2023/02/14/the-largest-mistake-of-our-generation/

The Largest Mistake of Our Generation

ELMWOOD GUY FEBRUARY 14, 2023



Photo by Brett Jordan on Unsplash

Dear Winnipeg,

The City's proposed annual budget has been released, and the first thing it made me think of was Elmwood Park's gardener.

If you don't know it, Elmwood Park is a small neighbourhood park near my home. It has a sandbox, an aging wading pool, a swing set and play structure, a couple of benches, and an open area that can serve for pickup games of soccer, outdoor movie nights or winter skating.

Short term benefits vs
Long term liabilities

Return On Investment

ROADS

$1 = $1.30 (Conference Board of Canada)

*This report gives Kenaston a worse rating of 1 : 1.7

TRANSIT

$1 = $3.37 (Canadian Urban Transit Association)

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

$1 = $11.70 (Alliance for Biking and Walking Report)

*this report also found that AT infra creates twice as many jobs as road infra (better for the economy at a fraction of the cost!)

Speaking about “the future” …



Why FedEx chose a Canadian city to launch its unique ebike pilot project

Using cargo bikes as a sustainable delivery option

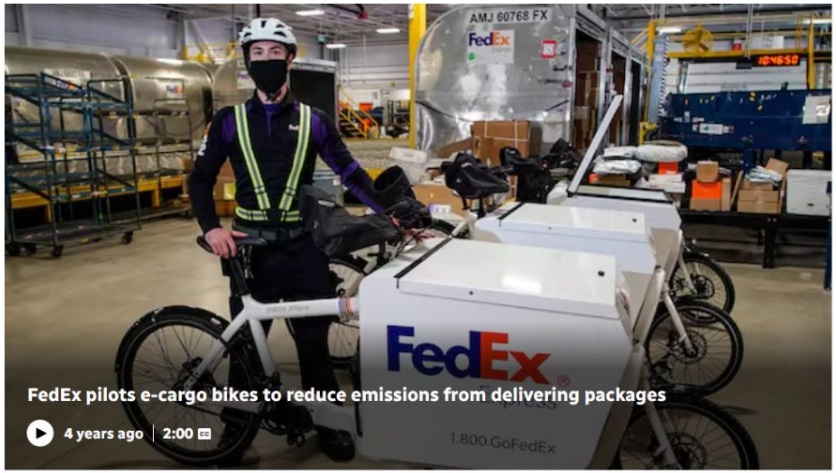
“By August 2021, the FedEx team had managed to add 40 more bikes to the fleet and launch e-bike delivery programs in Montreal, Ottawa, Mississauga, Calgary, Vancouver and Victoria. Many of the bikes are stored in “micro-hubs” – there are two in Toronto – where they are loaded with packages before hitting the streets, returning to the hub for more cargo and to re-charge.

Even the hubs are evolving. FedEx recently announced that they will operate some e-bikes out of a new shared micro-hub in Montreal.”

Parcel delivery companies are trading trucks for bikes in some Canadian cities. Here's why

Road-clogging, polluting vehicles found to be less efficient than greener option

Emily Chung, Alice Hopton, Tashauna Reid · CBC News ·
Posted: Nov 28, 2020 3:00 AM CST | Last Updated: November 28, 2020



A pilot project in downtown Toronto is testing e-cargo bikes for FedEx deliveries. The idea is to reduce carbon emissions from all those trucks on the road making deliveries for Canadians' online purchases during this pandemic, while also reducing companies' delivery costs.

408 comments

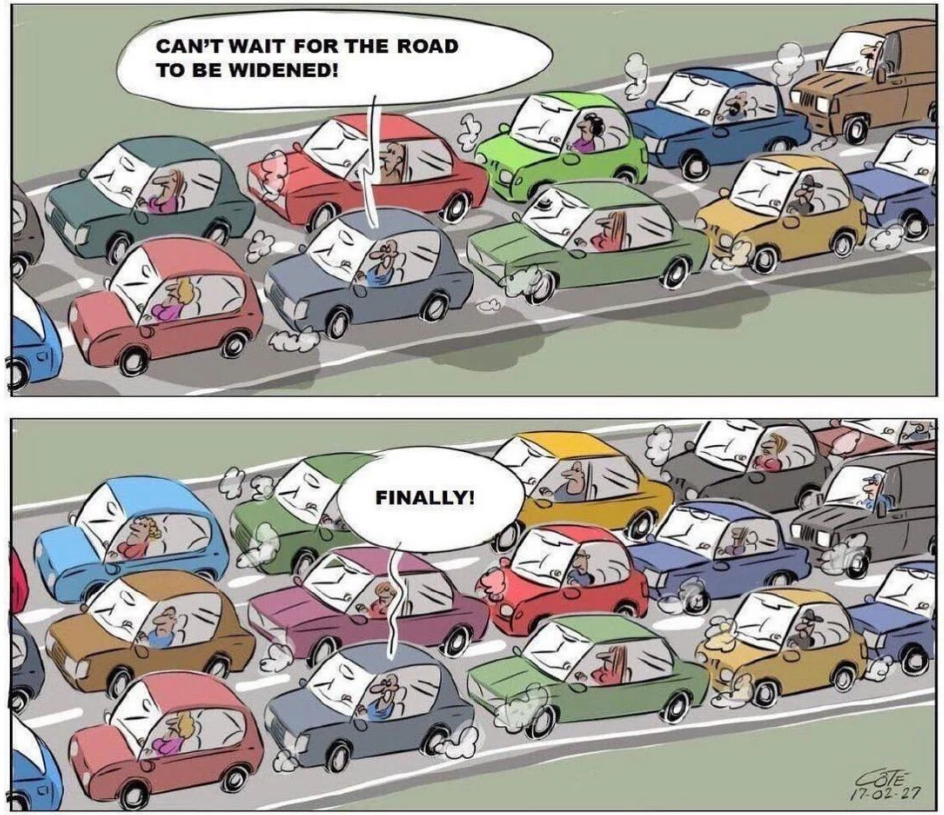
The Black Friday, Cyber Monday, pre-Christmas pandemic online shopping frenzy calls for huge fleets of trucks and vans to deliver those gadgets and gifts. But those road-clogging, polluting vehicles are starting to give way to a greener, more efficient option in many Canadian cities: e-cargo bikes and trikes.

“Now that Project Colibri has been running for more than a full year in Montreal, Brard said an analysis shows that an e-bike is 30 to 40 per cent more efficient than a truck in terms of deliveries per hour.”

RE: Traffic flow according to the BCA

"Ongoing time savings are marginal: estimated reductions in average travel times for users once the improved facility is operational means minor time savings benefits which are generally the primary driver behind transportation improvements." (page 26)

More roads don't solve congestion, they make it worse.



Mar 6, 2023 - Economy

The $1 billion push to remove highways dividing communities

Joann Muller

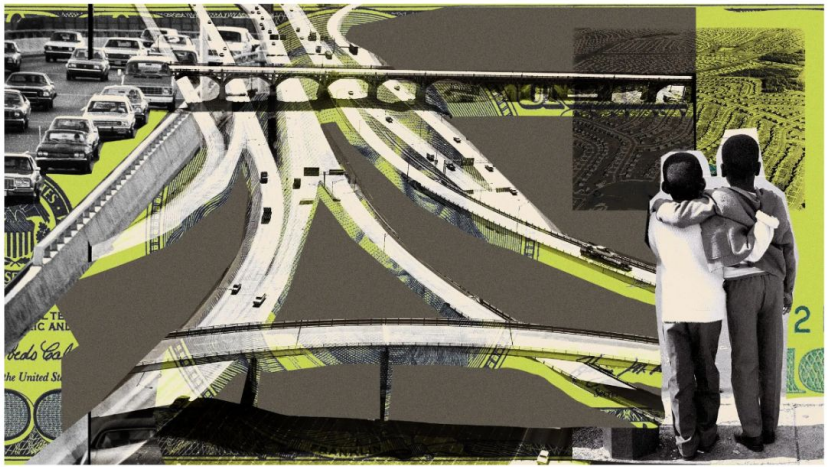


Photo illustration: Shoshana Gordon/Axios. Photos: Heilman/ClassicStock, H. Armstrong Roberts/ClassicStock, Charles E. Rotkin/Corbis/VCG,

Details: Buffalo, New York, is getting the largest award: a $55.6 million grant to build a cap and tunnel over a 1960s-era six-lane expressway, which segregated Black residents from the rest of the city.

- Some 600 homes were demolished to make way for the highway, which cut off residents' access to necessities like banks and grocery stores.
- It also led to high unemployment and increased health problems, per DOT.

Other notable projects:

- **Oak Park, Michigan**, a Detroit suburb, is receiving $21.7 million to reconstruct a crumbling plaza over I-696, a trenched highway that bisects the city's Orthodox Jewish community.
- **Boston** is getting $2 million to begin planning a park over the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) in Chinatown, considered the state's most polluted neighborhood.
- **St. Paul, Minnesota,** received a $2 million grant to study the environmental and traffic impact of a proposed five-block "land bridge" to reconnect the city's majority Black Rondo neighborhood, as *Axios' Torey Van Oot reports.*
- **Tampa** is getting a $5.3 million grant to lower an interchange ramp to street level in order to eliminate the barrier between downtown and the city's riverfront and to make the streets safer for walking and biking.
- **A full list** of awarded projects can be found here.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)






City of Winnipeg Net Financial Position 2008-2022
200
0
-200
-400
-600
-800
-1000
-1200
$ Million
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
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2016
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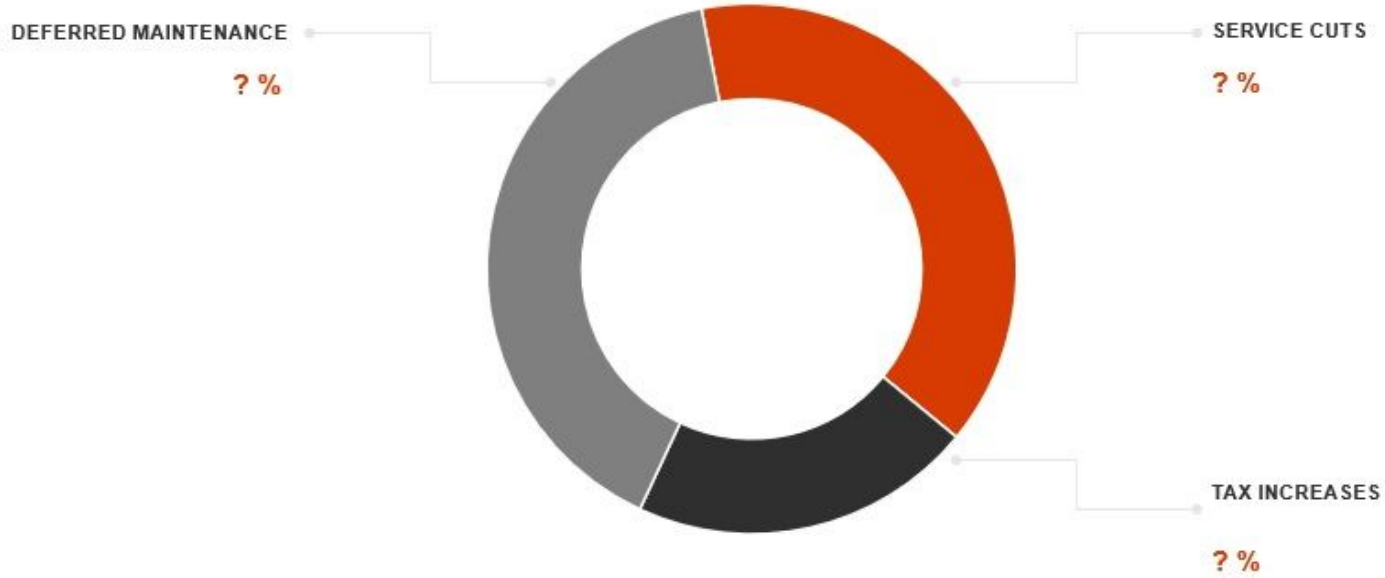
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022

A “Balanced Budget”: How To



ICONIC

The history of this site is rich and varied and through its many occupants, uses, struggles, and victories this site has earned a place in the memory of Winnipeg and Treaty 1 territory. Moving now in a new direction, the former Kapyong Barracks should continue to hold a place in the minds of Manitobans and become an iconic feature of this province. Through landscape design and defining elements such as native plant species and local materials, this redevelopment can contribute to the creation of a distinct identity and sense of place.

Strategic Directions

- Encourage the use of native plants, local materials, and natural elements, in all open space design.
- Integrate public art throughout the site, promoting and emphasizing work by both established and resurgent First Nations artists.
- Incorporate reference to the site's military history through signage, public art, and naming choices.
- Encourage references to this region's original landscape, plants, and animals in planting and landscape design throughout the site.



Mixed-Use Village: *The village-like atmosphere planned for the Mixed-Use Village area will transform the character of Grant entering the former Kapyong Barracks site. The existing open fields will give way to mid-rise, mixed-use buildings, active storefronts, patios, and courtyards offering neighbourhood scale goods and services such as clothing, art, food, coffee, bakery, bikes, books, and technology, with a strong emphasis on Indigenous design and culture.*



Cultural Campus: *Envisioned as the centre for Treaty 1 Nation government and culture, this area is intended to create a unique campus-like setting, including an iconic mix of cultural institutions, centres of learning, museum and gallery space, student housing, and other uses that support and attract cultural enrichment and education.*

EVOCATIVE

Whether we inhabit a space for a length of time or simply move through it as a small portion of our day, our experiences are led by our senses. The colours, textures, sounds, and smells that we encounter throughout the day shape our experience of a space and can be used to evoke a sense of familiarity and belonging and create powerful memories. The former Kapyong Barracks site will come to be a place of work, play, and home to many people in the future, and the creation of multi-sensory experiences is one way in which to create a welcoming and memorable experience for residents and visitors alike.

Strategic Directions

- Encourage the responsible design of outdoor fire pits for both ceremonial and recreational uses.
- Integrate natural play elements throughout outdoor spaces.
- Encourage the consideration and use of sound, smell, and touch in all landscape and planting design.
- Encourage memorable views and sightlines throughout.

TDM : What are the tools?

- PARKING
  - Parking benefit districts, permits in neighbourhoods, demand-based pricing, remove parking minimums
- CONGESTION PRICING
  - User fee during peak periods
  - Considers time, distance
- ROBUST TRANSIT
  - Transit Master Plan is revolutionary for Winnipeg
  - Implementation is far too slow
- COMFORTABLE WALKING & BIKING
  - Complete communities, zoning reform,
  - Pedestrian & cycling strategies (again, far too slow)

From Appendix E of the BCA:

"In general, benefit-cost analysis (BCA) is most useful when being used to do the following: 1. Compare different configurations or design options for a single project., or 2. Compare and prioritize multiple different capital projects."

"For the current study, only one configuration, the current preliminary design, was studied.

Further, BCA calculations have not been conducted on any other major transportation projects being considered by the City of Winnipeg at this time. Therefore, there may be projects or proposals that yield better results, but the outcomes of those projects are currently unknown. This limits the usefulness of benefit-cost analysis."