Agenda – Council – November 21, 2024

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 7, 2024

Item No. 1 Primary Transit Network Communications and Promotional Plan

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 13, 2024, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Primary Transit Network Service Communications and Promotional Plan, attached as Appendix A, be received as information.

Agenda – Council – November 21, 2024

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 13, 2024, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works and submitted the matter to Council.

David Grant submitted a communication in opposition to the matter.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 7, 2024, 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.

David Grant submitted a communication in opposition to the matter.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On June 27, 2024, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, as amended, and adopted the following:

1. That the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan, attached as Appendix A, be approved as a supplement to the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan, and that the transit network plan described therein be approved as the Short-Term Network Plan for Winnipeg Transit.

5. That the Public Service be directed to report to Council at or before its November 2024 meeting on a communication plan for educating riders on how to use the new components of the system independently, developed in consultation with Councillors, drivers, and stakeholders (that can also be identified by area councillors working in consultation with Winnipeg Transit) as identified from the disability community, after multiple meetings with each group.

On April 29, 2021, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works, as amended by the Executive Policy Committee, and adopted the following:

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 7, 2024

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

1. That in order to outline a 25-year vision and plan for the future of transit service in Winnipeg, and the infrastructure needed to implement that vision, the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (attached [to the 2021 report] as Appendix 1) be adopted as the long-range strategic plan for public transit in the City of Winnipeg.

18. That when implementation plans are created for Appendix 1 Section 8.2 Transit Accessibility, Appendix 2 Short Term Network Plan and Appendix 3 Long Term Network Plan [appendices refer to the 2021 report], the Public Service be directed to include the following:
    A. Higher standards for clearing snow and ice around all route junction bus stops and pedestrian pathways from one route to another, including a funding source for associated costs to meet those standards;

    B. A communication plan for educating riders on how to use the new components of the system independently, developed in consultation with stakeholders from the disability community.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Primary Transit Network Communications and Promotional Plan

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

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
A. Clark	G. Ewankiw	T. Graham	S. Armbruster, Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (WTMP) was approved by Council in April 2021. It presented a vision for transit service and infrastructure in Winnipeg for the next 25 years. The WTMP proposed an entirely new transit network for the entire city. It's designed to be resilient and adaptable as the city grows.

Initially, Winnipeg Transit committed to launch the new service network along with its supporting infrastructure by 2026. In November 2023, the timeline for a new network was accelerated. In June 2024, Council approved the Primary Transit Network Implementation Plan. With it, the launch date of June 29, 2025 was set for the Primary Transit Network and its feeder routes.

The launch represents the largest service change in Winnipeg Transit's history. It will require passengers and bus operators to adjust to new routes, schedules and bus stops, city-wide. It also presents an opportunity to attract new bus riders. A comprehensive, multiplatform communications strategy has been developed to support the launch of the Primary Transit Network.

The strategy must reflect the unique needs of different audiences, both internal and external. To ensure this, members of the Public Service were directed to engage and/or consult with:

- Stakeholders from the disability community
- Bus operators
- City Councillors

These engagements/consultations took place between February 2024 and September 2024.

Winnipeg Transit is committed to carrying out the communications and promotional tactics described in Appendix A. Highlights include:

- A new bus stop sign design
- A community organization toolkit
- Paid advertising
- A printed system map

Further tactics may be added as we move closer to launch, as is feasible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Primary Transit Network Service Communications and Promotional Plan, attached as Appendix A, be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

At its April 29, 2021, meeting, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works, as amended by the Executive Policy Committee, and adopted the following:

1. That in order to outline a 25-year vision and plan for the future of transit service in Winnipeg, and the infrastructure needed to implement that vision, the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (attached [to the 2021 report] as Appendix 1) be adopted as the long-range strategic plan for public transit in the City of Winnipeg.

18. That when implementation plans are created for Appendix 1 Section 8.2 Transit Accessibility, Appendix 2 Short Term Network Plan and Appendix 3 Long Term Network Plan [appendices refer to the 2021 report], the Public Service be directed to include the following:

    A. Higher standards for clearing snow and ice around all route junction bus stops and pedestrian pathways from one route to another, including a funding source for associated costs to meet those standards;

    B. A communication plan for educating riders on how to use the new components of the system independently, developed in consultation with stakeholders from the disability community.

On June 27, 2024, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, as amended, and adopted the following:

1. That the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan, attached as Appendix A, be approved as a supplement to the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan,

and that the transit network plan described therein be approved as the Short-Term Network Plan for Winnipeg Transit.

5. That the Public Service be directed to report to Council at or before its November 2024 meeting on a communication plan for educating riders on how to use the new components of the system independently, developed in consultation with Councillors, drivers, and stakeholders (that can also be identified by area councillors working in consultation with Winnipeg Transit) as identified from the disability community, after multiple meetings with each group.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The tactics described in Appendix A, the Primary Transit Network Communications and Promotional Plan, will be carried out beginning in January 2025 through to launch and fall 2025.
There is funding available in the Primary Transit Network Infrastructure Capital Budget for a communications campaign about the new network and its infrastructure.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

In 2018, the Public Service began the process of developing the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (WTMP), as a combination of two projects: a Strategic Service Plan and a Rapid Transit Master Plan.

The WTMP laid out a vision for transit service in Winnipeg for the next 25 years. It proposed a redesign of the transit route network, along with the Rapid Transit and other infrastructure needed to make the new network safe, convenient, efficient, flexible, and universally accessible. The plan also proposed changes to the Winnipeg Transit Plus service delivery model.

Transitioning to the newly-redesigned transit system, known as the Primary Transit Network and feeder routes, is the first major step in implementing the WTMP.

Timeline
The Winnipeg Transit Master Plan was approved in 2021. At that time, Winnipeg Transit committed to transitioning to the new network by 2026. By fall of 2023, the timeline for launch had been accelerated to the earliest feasible date, in alignment with priority action #4.4 in Council's Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) which was adopted by Council on May 30, 2023.

Comprehensive, effective communications is a critical aspect of this project, so passengers, operators and others in the community are prepared to use the new network. It is also necessary as a mechanism to support employees who provide customer service at Transit and 311, as it is anticipated this transition will generate lots of questions and information requests. It was noted in the report on an accelerated

timeline that there may not be sufficient customer service resources to handle the number of customer questions in the immediate lead-up and follow-up to the network transition in 2025.

To mitigate this, consistent and strategic communications efforts are required.

Throughout the fall of 2024, Winnipeg Transit will update the project website as needed, to reflect early changes to infrastructure taking place to coincide with construction projects. Transit will also develop and distribute internal resources to support employees who work in customer service and distribute information to bus operators. Because any release of new information can generate inquiries from members of the public, these internal resources need to be in place prior to any public release of information about the new network.

In early 2025, Winnipeg Transit will launch the public information campaign with the release of a Community Toolkit. It will include information resources that can be distributed within existing community networks, with the goal of getting the word out at a grassroots level.

In spring of 2025, Winnipeg Transit will launch a wider campaign with paid advertising to coincide with schedules for the new network being put online. Closer to launch, pop-up information sessions will take place.

Communications will continue through the summer and into fall, to reach passengers who only take Transit during the school year.

Primary Transit Network Communications and Promotional Plan – engagement and consultations

Stakeholder engagement and consultations are summarized in Appendix A. Winnipeg Transit is grateful to stakeholders in the disability community, Councillors, and operators who provided feedback, which led to the commitment to starting the campaign earlier at the community level, and including some materials in languages other than French and English. Winnipeg Transit si still exploring the feasibility of some suggested tactics, and the list in this report is not necessarily exhaustive.

Primary Transit Network Communications and Promotional Plan - Tactics

The recommended tactics fall into one of four themes:

Reaching passengers

- Paid advertisements on Transit buses, benches, and shelters
- BusWatch signs
- New bus stop signs
- QR codes operators can direct passengers to for information

Reaching out with already-available tools

- Winnipeg Transit website

- Our City, Our Stories
- Winnipeg Transit app
- Social media
- Earned media
- 311 and Winnipeg Transit customer service

Reaching targeted stakeholders

- Community organization toolkit
- Newsletters
- Transit app
- Operator book of routes
- System map

Reaching out further in the lead up to the launch

- Paid advertising
- Pop-up sessions

Funding for the Primary Transit Network Infrastructure (PTNI) project

To launch the recommended service network, in addition to the communication plan outlined in this report, several infrastructure elements will be constructed around Winnipeg under the Primary Transit Network Infrastructure (PTNI) project including bus stops, signage, shelters, passenger amenities, accessibility improvements, and traffic signals.

This project is funded under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Public Transit Infrastructure Stream (ICIP-PTIS).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: September 26, 2024

Project Name:

Primary Transit Network Communications and Promotional Plan

COMMENTS:

There is no impact from the recommendation in this report as it is for information only.

There is funding in the Primary Transit Network Infrastructure Capital Budget for a communications campaign about the new network and its infrastructure. This project is funded under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program - Public Transit Infrastructure Stream.

Laurie Fisher September 26, 2024
Laurie Fisher, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with

- Customer Service and Communications, Corporate Marketing

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

OurWinnipeg 2045

Goal: 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

Network Goals:

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

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

This report is in accordance with the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (WCAP) as per Direction 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: Megan Benedictson, Communications Officer
Alissa Clark, Manager of Communications
Date: September 27, 2024

Attachments:

Appendix A: Primary Transit Network and Communications and Promotional Plan