Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – March 18, 2025

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – March 4, 2025

Item No. 1 Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan Revision

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works, as amended, and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan, previously approved on June 27, 2024, be replaced with the revised Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan (March 2025), attached as Revised Appendix A and detailed in Appendix B.

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

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – March 4, 2025

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Lukes,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works be concurred in, with the following amendment:

- In Recommendation 1, delete the words "Appendix A" and replace with "Revised Appendix A"

and forwarded to Council.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 4, 2025, 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:

- Max Schreckenbach, with respect to the matter
- David Grant, 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.

2. That, subject to approval of Recommendation 1, the transit route network described in Appendix A, and detailed in Revised Appendix B, be approved to begin service on June 29, 2025, replacing the current transit route network following the end of regular service on June 28, 2025.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – March 4, 2025

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

3. That, subject to approval of Recommendation 1, effective June 29, 2025, Council approval be required to change one or more transit routes in such a manner that would eliminate Primary Transit service from any street or street segment, and approval of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works be required to approve any other route change.

4. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to undertake a formal review of the new transit routes in September to November of 2026, when peak ridership is traditionally at its highest in the year, and bring forward the findings of their review and any recommendations for modifications to Council for consideration in Q1 of 2027.

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.

6. That subject to approval of Recommendation 1, the installation of new traffic control signals be approved at the intersections of:

    A. St Mary's Road and Carriere Avenue
    B. Main Street and Sutherland Avenue
    C. Sutherland Avenue and Higgins Avenue

7. That the list of ancillary road network changes described in Appendix C be received as information.

8. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works at its meeting on November 29, 2024, with a proposal for an Annual Service Plan process that will outline how the Winnipeg Public Service will consider, evaluate, review, and prioritize requests for changes to the transit route network and service levels that arise from internal staff review, suggestions from the public, motions from Council and Council Committees, and other sources.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – March 4, 2025

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

9. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works at its March 2025 meeting with upgrades that have been completed as part of the $20.4 million Primary Transit Network Infrastructure Project, and other unfunded and outstanding infrastructure upgrades related to ensure the maximum convenience and comfort of transit users.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan Revision

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

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
K. Sturgeon, B. Radstrom	P. Cross, acting for G. Ewankiw	T. Graham	S. Armbruster, Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 27, 2024, Council approved the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan (the "Plan"). The Plan details the proposed new transit network. Service on the new Primary Transit Network and its feeder routes will begin on June 29, 2025.

The Service Implementation Plan included:

- a transit system map;
- individual route maps; and
- turn-by-turn directions for each fixed route.

The Public Service recommends the following revisions to the Plan:

- Expanding the scale of Winnipeg Transit On-Request service.
- Removing limited-span service to Bird's Hill Provincial Park from the 2025 System Map. This service will not launch in 2025.
- Amending miscellaneous minor routing, typographic, and mapping errors within the document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan, previously approved on June 27, 2024, be replaced with the revised Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan (March 2025), attached as Appendix A and detailed in Appendix B.

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

REASON FOR THE REPORT

At its June 27, 2024 meeting, 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.

2. That, subject to approval of Recommendation 1, the transit route network described in Appendix A, and detailed in Revised Appendix B, be approved to begin service on June 29, 2025, replacing the current transit route network following the end of regular service on June 28, 2025.

As Council approved the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan, Council must also approve revisions to this plan.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The transit network outlined in the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan (March 2025) will become Winnipeg's new transit network on June 29, 2025.

Funding for additional hardware and one-time set up costs for the expanded Winnipeg Transit On-Request service will be funded through the Primary Transit Network Infrastructure capital budget. The ongoing operating costs are estimated to be less than $10,000 per year and will be funded from the Department's operating budget.

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.

The WTMP was approved by Council on April 29, 2021. It presented a vision for transit service and infrastructure in Winnipeg for the next 25 years. At that time, Winnipeg Transit committed to launching the new service network by 2026. In November 2023, the timeline for launching the new service network was accelerated to 2025. On June 27, 2024, Council approved the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan, detailing the proposed new transit network. On November 7, 2024, the Public Service presented the Primary Transit Network Communications and Promotions Plan to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works.

On-Request Expansion and Impacts to Community Route Service Spans

As approved in the initial Primary Transit Network Implementation Plan, On-Request service would expand from four zones to eight zones. Under this proposed revision, the number of zones would further expand to 12, and the zone boundaries will be modified, to:

- Cover more destinations
- Provide more travel options
- Reflect anticipated travel patterns within neighbourhoods, and
- Increase connectivity with the Primary Transit Network

Winnipeg Transit proposes operating this expanded On-Request service primarily on weekends and during the late evening period on weekdays.

On-Request service better reflects the typical travel patterns of weekends, which tend to be focused more on shopping, recreation, and other non-commuting trips than weekday daytime trips. This service type is flexible, adapting to the needs of passengers in real-time.

The application vendor for the Winnipeg Transit On-Request system since August 2024 has been Spare Labs Inc. This system enables multiple vehicles to be dispatched to each service zone, and to be re-positioned from one zone to another in real-time based on demand.

On-Request service enables customers to request a trip at the time of their departure. Advanced booking is not required or permitted. For paratransit-eligible customers, On-Request vehicles offer pickups and drop-offs at the booking address (where feasible), while for other customers pickups and drop-offs are at designated virtual bus stops, which are generally at nearby intersections.

Based on the experience in the current On-Request service zones, medical facilities are common destinations for On-Request customers. This service expansion would expand On-Request from serving three major medical facilities in the previously-approved eight service zones (St. Boniface Hospital, Riverview Health Centre, and St. Amant Centre) to six, bringing Concordia, Grace, and Victoria Hospitals within On-Request zones.

Community feeder routes typically meander through neighbourhoods, with many turns. Many of these routes were designed to serve high schools, along with other neighbourhood-level destinations. There is little demand for trips to high schools on weekends and weeknights. Demand on these routes would be quite low, while travel time and waiting time would be high, due to low frequencies and meandering nature of the routes.

If the expanded On-Request service is approved, Winnipeg Transit would not provide service on many Community feeder routes during these low-demand periods. Other fixed routes, including the Primary Transit Network and Connector Routes, would remain in service. Select Community feeder routes would also operate. The exact span of service of each feeder route would be adjusted as part of seasonal schedule changes and informed by the upcoming Annual Service Plan process.

The proposed On-Request system would offer better flexibility and resiliency during these low-demand times than would be available on the Community feeder fixed-route network. Many Community Routes would normally be served by only one bus in low-demand times. Breakdowns, crashes, operator unavailability, or other unforeseen circumstances could lead to

the entire route temporarily and unexpectedly ceasing to operate. The On-Request system, by contrast, is a network of many buses dispatched by the software application in real-time according to demand. If one bus from this network is unable to operate, wait times may increase slightly, but the system would continue to operate in all areas. This resiliency is a key benefit of On-Request service.

The proposed On-Request expansion is expected to serve customers better and requires fewer resources than the network of Community routes. This enables Winnipeg Transit to meet nearly all frequency targets for the Primary Transit Network and other remaining feeder routes.

If a similar level of resources were allocated to the Community route network on Sundays rather than any On-Request service, many Community routes would see just a few trips per day, at frequencies that would likely not meet the needs of riders. Alternatively, if resources were reallocated from the higher-tier services to improved wait times on the Community route network, some other service classes would fall below their frequency targets.

A potential disadvantage of On-Request is greater variability in trip times. While the average trip on a low-frequency Community route may take longer than using On-Request, the total trip time would be more consistent, while trip times with On-Request fluctuate.

Implications to Transit Fleet

No additional buses are required for the implementation of the revisions in this report.

Winnipeg Transit currently uses mostly 30-foot buses for On-Request service, but the number of 30-foot buses in its fleet is insufficient. This deficit exists both for the level of On-Request service initially approved in the Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan, as well as the expansion proposed in this report. Some On-Request services would be operated using 40-foot buses. This occasionally occurs now with the four On-Request zones currently in operation.

A longer-term goal of Winnipeg Transit is to purchase additional smaller buses for On-Request service. Currently no small, heavy-duty transit buses are available in the North American market that meet Winnipeg Transit's requirements. Winnipeg Transit, and many other transit agencies, are working with established manufacturers to encourage more options to be brought to the market.

Communications

Winnipeg Transit currently operates four On-Request service zones. The approved Primary Transit Network included eight. This report recommends expanding to 12 zones.

The need for communications and promotions relating to expanded On-Request service already existed. Should Council approve this revised plan, similar methods would be required but with an impact to more people.

Winnipeg Transit is in the process of hiring up to seven temporary Travel Trainers, along with a temporary Travel Training Coordinator. This is in addition to one permanent position that has recently been filled. The Travel Trainers will be available to help provide information to citizens and groups in the months leading to launch and for a few months afterwards. It is expected that On-Request service will feature prominently in the travel training program.

The total costs for the initial purchase of devices and related set up costs related to the expansion of the On-Request service is estimated to be $25,000 and will be funded through the Primary Transit Network Infrastructure capital project. The ongoing annual costs are estimated to be less than $10,000 per year and will be funded through the operating budget.

Changes to Fixed Routes

The proposed change to On-Request service does not affect the route alignment of fixed transit routes as presented in the original Service Implementation Plan.

A small number of minor route modifications and corrections were identified, and are amended in the revised Service Implementation Plan. These changes include:

- The western terminal of Primary Line FX4 was originally described as its temporary terminal alignment, with a footnote indicating this was temporary until infrastructure modifications are complete. This has been revised to describe the permanent route alignment, with a footnote describing that there will be a temporary terminal until infrastructure modifications are complete.

- Route 330, which launched in September 2024, enters Wal-Mart property in the northbound direction only, while southbound service remains on McPhillips Street. While illustrated correctly in the route detail map, this was incorrectly described in the text detail and has been amended in Appendix B. Route 336 is similarly amended.

- Routes 330, 886, and 887 are intended to eventually terminate at a future transit loop adjacent to Fire Hall No. 2 near the intersection of Nairn Avenue and Watt Street. Their temporary terminals are existing bus stops near the intersection of Nairn Avenue and Stadacona Street. The terminal loop was described and illustrated as including a right turn from Nairn Avenue to Stadacona Street. This intersection was recently reconstructed, removing the ability of buses to negotiate this turn. A revised terminal loop for each of these routes is included in Appendix B.

- Route 664, which serves Taylor Avenue, included a right turn from Taylor Avenue to Pembina Highway and from Pembina Highway to Stafford Street prior to entering the transit loop just north of that intersection. Based on further operational review, this is revised to a right turn from Taylor Avenue to Stafford Street and a left turn from Stafford Street into the transit loop.

- Route 671 west terminal extended 750 metres north to Centre Street at Bison Drive to provide a connection to Route 74.

Service to Bird's Hill Park

Seasonal transit service to Bird's Hill Provincial Park was illustrated in the Short-Term Network Plan shown in the 2021 Winnipeg Transit Master Plan. This was included in the system map within the 2024 Service Implementation Plan, along with the note that the service is subject to

agreement with the Province of Manitoba. Staff will begin these discussions later in 2025, after the rest of the network launches. Transit service to Bird's Hill Provincial Park will not begin in 2025 and is, therefore, removed from the 2025 map.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** January 30, 2025

Project Name: **First Year of Program** **2025**

Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan Revision

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ 25,000	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	25,000	-	-	-	-
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	$ 5,000	$ 10,000	$ 10,000	$ 10,000	$ 10,000
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 5,000	$ 10,000	$ 10,000	$ 10,000	$ 10,000
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	5,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments: The capital expenditures required reflect the estimated total capital cost for the purchase of devices and set up costs related to the proposed expansion of On-Request service. These costs will be funded through the Primary Transit Network Infrastructure capital project. The funding sources include the Province of Manitoba and the Federal Government through the ICIP program. The city contribution will funded through external debt.

The Operating budget impact reflects the ongoing related annual costs from expanding this service. The related interest costs from external borrowing on the city contribution are nomimal. These amounts are included in Transit's annual operating budget submission.

Laurie Fisher January 30, 2025

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

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: Kevin Sturgeon, Senior Transit Planner
Bjorn Radstrom, Manager of Service Development
Date: January 31, 2025

Attachments:

Appendix A: Primary Transit Network Service Implementation Plan (March 2025)

Appendix B: Individual Routes and On-Request Service Zones