Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – June 12, 2025

REPORTS

Item No. 1 Winnipeg Transit Plus – Annual Report 2024

STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and received the report as information.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Chambers,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in.

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION:

On July 3, 2024, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and received the report as information.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 11, 2024, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and granted an extension of time of up to 30 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION:

On June 8, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide future annual reports on Winnipeg Transit Plus at the June meeting of the Standing Policy Committee.

On November 29, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works passed the following motion:

That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to provide annual reports on Transit Plus to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works, beginning March 7, 2023, and include the performance metrics listed in Appendix A

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Winnipeg Transit Plus – Annual Report 2024

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Public Works

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
T. Platt	G. Ewankiw	T. Graham	M. Dryburgh, Acting Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the past year, Winnipeg Transit Plus (WTP) experienced the largest integrated technological enhancement to its service since its inception with the launch of a new scheduling system. Although the system change had the potential to be disruptive, ensuring a smooth transition to the new system was the main priority. The launch was successful, with increased customer satisfaction, on-time performance, and a decline in unaccommodated trips and service complaints.

Some of the highlights and challenges WTP experienced in 2024 include:

- Early in the year, customers experienced high call volumes, long wait times, and delays in processing applications.
- Ongoing recruitment and retention challenges impacted all areas of service.
- Mid-year, the launch of the new software system enhanced service by offering:
    - New ways to book trips by web platform, mobile app, or calling options
    - Improved customer communication
    - Easier fare payment options, including credit, debit, and e-cash
    - Increased efficiency in the scheduling and delivery of trips
    - A new app for customers to book trips on WTP and On-Request
    - A user-friendly software system for staff and drivers

The positive impacts of the new scheduling system include:

- A 55 percent increase in the number of customer-reported commendations for drivers, staff, and the service overall.
- A 12 percent reduction in the number of customer-reported service delivery complaints.
- An increase in our contact centre's customer satisfaction score. This score is measured by post-call surveys. This year, the score increased from an average of 85 percent in 2023 to an average of 90 percent.
- Only eight unaccommodated trips after the launch of our new system between June 18, 2024, and December 31, 2024. This compares to 944 unaccommodated trips from January 1 to June 17, 2024.

With enhancements to service, customers were able to choose their preferred method of managing their trips: 11.71 percent of trips were booked using the app, 1.35 percent by web, 1.9

percent by automated phone service (IVR) and 85.04 percent by phone. These new options contributed to the improvements to our contact centre's customer satisfaction score, with a seven percent increase in the number of calls answered and a 24 percent decrease in the time it takes for one customer interaction.

WTP trips increased by a total of 6.2 percent. Customers were better able to cancel trips in advance using self-service tools. They had more efficient access to the contact centre, and there was a 12 percent reduction in no-shows.

Further details, including performance metrics, are attached as Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That this report be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On November 29, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide annual reports to the Standing Committee on Winnipeg Transit Plus, beginning March 7, 2023, and include the performance metrics listed in Appendix A.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications, financial or otherwise, to receive this report as information.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

In the first half of the year, the performance of the previous software system continued to have impacts on service delivery. At that time, the system was not delivering the features customers required. The former vendor indicated they would not be fixing outstanding issues and that no further product development was going to occur.

To align with the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan and ensure customers received the necessary service improvements, Transit recommended one software platform to meet the business needs for Transit Plus and On-Request trip booking and scheduling. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted January 20, 2023, for a new software vendor to meet Winnipeg Transit Plus (WTP) service delivery requirements and lay the foundation for the integration of Transit service options.

On June 18, 2024, WTP experienced the largest integrated technological enhancement to its service since its inception. Recognizing the success of this launch was linked to effectively managing change as WTP supported customers by;

- Sending mailers to all customers informing them of the changes and upcoming sessions
- Offering several in-person and online information sessions
- Collaborating with stakeholders, including the WTP Policy Advisory Committee
- Comprehensive training and continuous support for staff and drivers

Some challenges WTP faced earlier in 2024 include:

- Ongoing recruitment and retention challenges impacted all areas of service
- Lengthy trip booking calls due to poor system performance
- Delays in processing applications, re-registrations, and service delivery needs

The implementation of the new software system marked a milestone for WTP service and its customers. The key benefits achieved;

- New ways to book trips by web platform, mobile app, or calling options
- Improved customer communication
- Easier fare payment options, including credit, debit, and e-cash
- Increased efficiency in the scheduling and delivery of trips
- A new app for customers to book trips on WTP and On-Request
- A user-friendly software system for staff and drivers

Customer Service Statistics

The table below illustrates application statistics for 2023 and 2024, and the continued increase in applicants to the service. Year upon year, WTP sees an increase in applications and total trips with a return to service. The trend for demand for specialized transportation services is expected to continue due to several key factors, including an aging population aging in place, an increase in reported disabilities, and individuals living in the community with more complex health needs.

Total Application Statistics for 2023 and 2024

Type	2023	2024
New applicants	2,138	2,314
Existing registrants	450	385

Total Application Outcomes for 2023 and 2024

Type	2023	2024
New applicants eligible for service	1,610	1,856
Incomplete registration	368	291
Pending	102	14
Did not meet criteria	58	153

New applicants for the service continue to increase, with some existing registrants also returning to the service.

To improve service access and enhance customer experience, WTP has completed the following initiatives:

- Digitized over 250,000 paper records
- Added recruiting resources to ensure adequate staffing and support
- Collaborated with a consultant to begin work in 2025 to review eligibility criteria

The table below shows the total number of registrants by eligibility criteria and category for 2023 and 2024. The WTP registration process includes applying for and usually attending an assessment for eligibility and service needs, with re-registration required every three years for active registrants.

Total Registrants by Eligibility Criteria and Category for 2023 and 2024

Eligibility Criteria Category	2023	2024
Unconditional		
Year-round	4,525	4,498
Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia	23	47
Conditional		
Winter only	137	205
Dialysis only	109	252
Temporary		
Short term	281	270

*Due to a system change in 2024, registrant data is inclusive of the first 3.5 months of 2025.

In addition to assessing new applicants, WTP also recertifies existing customers every three years, a process reflected in the re-registration outcomes detailed in the following table. As a result of staffing shortages, re-registrations were extended until resources can complete the recertification process; this is reflected in the decrease in re-registrations below.

Total Customer Re-registration Outcomes for 2023 and 2024

Type	2023	2024
Re-registered	974	511
Incomplete	97	26
Found ineligible	0	0
Registered customer's accounts closed*	871	463

**Accounts are closed upon request for those who have not used the service for 18 consecutive months or more or are deceased.*

WTP continues to develop a software solution with Spare Labs Inc. to enhance customer experience through the registration process. This eligibility module will support self-serve tools for customers and caregivers to submit and access their application status and progress online.

Transit Contact Centre Statistics

The new software system implemented in June 2024 provided customers with new ways to book trips, including a web platform, a mobile app, calling the automated phone service or directly to the contact centre.

Enhancements to customer communication and flexible trip booking are highlighted in the improved performance metrics (next page).

Total Transit Contact Centre Statistics for 2023 and 2024

Type	2023	2024
Calls received	201,881	190,428
Calls answered	147,799	158,008
Calls abandoned	44,105	32,420
Web Form (Emails)	730	910
Average wait time (mins)	19.66	11.08
Average handle time[1] (mins)	8.58	6.53
Customer Service Representatives[2] (FTE)	16.10	17.62

[1] *The average time it takes to complete an interaction between a customer and the customer service representative.*

[2] *The approved budgeted number of full-time equivalent customer service representatives.*

The goals WTP identified as success criteria for the launch with Spare Labs highlight the new system's improvement on service as seen below;

- On the previous platform, customers were on hold for up to two hours at peak periods and, due to the poor performance of the software, trip bookings resulted in long call handling times. Complaints and general frustration from customers and staff were high.

- From June 2024 onward, when Spare Labs software launched, improvements are seen in several contact centre metrics, including;
    - An increase (55 percent) in the number of customer-reported commendations for drivers, staff and the service overall.
    - A reduction (12 percent) in the number of customer-reported service delivery complaints.
    - An increase in our contact centre's customer satisfaction score, as measured by post-call survey, from an average of 85 percent in 2023 to an average of 90 percent.

Customer service representatives documented 8,002 customer inquiries in 2024, up from 6,372 in 2023, including 2,795 complaints, 382 commendations, and 4,825 instances requiring follow-up.

Breakdown of the Commendations and Complaints from 2023 and 2024

Category	2023	2024
No-show Disputes	894	1,044
Service Delivery Complaints	799	705
Commendations	246	382
Contact Centre Complaints/Trip Booking Errors	274	498
Schedule Complaints	133	423
Customer Conduct	96	117
Damage Claims	5	8

The table below presents our contact centre's customer satisfaction scores, with the following benchmarks for comparison based on industry averages: 0-74 percent indicates a need for improvement, 75-84 percent is considered good, and 85 percent or higher is rated excellent.

Summary of Customer Satisfaction Survey

Type	2023 Survey Count	Score Average
Customer Satisfaction	1,176*	90%

*Survey count reflects 2023, as 2024 data not available due to the move to the new system. This data will be available again from 2025 onward.

Customers making use of our new software's mobile and web booking apps, initially launched to a select group of early adopters on June 18, 2024, and subsequently to all WTP customers on July 9, 2024, can leave a positive (100 percent) or negative (0 percent) review for each trip. The average rating from riders who left a review at the end of their trip in 2024 was 88 percent from a total of 7,351 trips reviewed.

Service Delivery Statistics

The number of providers delivering service on behalf of WTP may fluctuate annually. Service in 2024 was delivered by six contractors: AB Transit Inc., Exact Care Inc., JD Taxi Inc., Mani Handi Transit Ltd., Care Accessible Transportation and Urban Transit Ltd. Transit selects the vehicles operated to transport customers with varying abilities, needs, and mobility aids and to accommodate the shared ride nature of public transit.

Total Transit Service Delivery Statistics from 2023 and 2024

Type	2023	2024
Total Trips	281,979	299,455
Ambulatory*	193,434	208,072
Non-ambulatory	88,545	91,383
Cancelled in Advance	29,935	59,375
No-shows	13,534	11,973
Unaccommodated	1,804	952

* *Ambulatory means able to walk.*

In 2024, the service assessed 43 service recoveries in total. These were assessed regarding contract adherence-related issues.

As a direct result of scheduling inefficiencies when operating our previous software platform, approximately 541 trip requests per month were diverted to our overflow partner, the Winnipeg WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle) centralized dispatching service. Following the implementation of our new software platform in June, Winnipeg Transit Plus was able to reduce the number of trip requests diverted to overflow to zero.

Beginning August 27, 2024, Winnipeg Transit's On-Request service was re-launched using the same software provider, Spare, as WTP. On-Request is an extension of Transit's conventional service and separate from WTP, which delivers an affordable, convenient, and efficient service in low-density neighborhoods without full-time transit. This enabled WTP customers wishing to make use of On-Request service to do so from the same self-service mobile and web apps used to manage their Transit Plus trips. In 2024, WTP customers took a total of 925 trips throughout Winnipeg's four On-Request zones, with 50 percent of WTP customers booking using our mobile or web apps.

Accessibility Services

Winnipeg Transit remains committed to accessibility and inclusion with the alignment of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) – Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation (ATSR). With customers, the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), and stakeholders, we look forward to the ongoing partnerships to enhance services for all. Some of the key highlights from 2024 include;

- **Grocery shuttle pilot:** A highly successful pilot to assist older adult residents accessing their local grocery stores through community partnerships with Kildonan-River East MLA, Rachelle Schott, Transportation Option Network for Seniors (TONS), and Winnipeg Transit
- **Q'Straint partnership:** Winnipeg Transit partnered with Q'Straint, a wheelchair securement manufacturer, to create a "how to" video with a PAC member. The video highlights how a customer can easily access Winnipeg Transit and independently secure their wheelchair/scooter.
- **Enhancing Transits travel training program:** Winnipeg is collaborating and leading a training travel group with other Transit agencies to share best practices, challenges, and solutions, to help create more effective, cohesive programs across Canada.

Winnipeg Transit Plus Strategic Plan for 2025:

1. Recruitment of a Project Manager to implement the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) – Accessible Transportation Standard Regulation (ATSR) recommendations by January 1, 2027.

2. Genesys Launch – Upgrade of contact centre software to a modern cloud-based platform, enhancing system reliability and opening access to new future communication enhancements.

3. Contract a consultant to assist with the review of eligibility and supporting services, such as no-shows/cancellations. A review of resources and budget will be required to maintain service levels given the demand for specialized resources.

4. Enhance the travel training program to support customers with the launch of the new Primary Transit Network (PTN).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** April 24, 2025

Project Name:

Winnipeg Transit Plus – Annual Report 2024

COMMENTS:

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

M Kray, CPA, CMA for Laurie Fisher, CPA, CA
April 24, 2025
Laurie Fisher, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: N/A

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (2021)
Winnipeg Transit Plus
6.1 Short Term
- Enhance Access to Service

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

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

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

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The information and recommendations presented in this report align with and advance the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (2021 – 2031) as follows:
They embody the following Guiding Principles:
- We will Uphold Human Rights
- We will Address Systemic Oppression, Trauma and Social Inequity
- We will Promote and Maintain the Welfare of All Residents
- We will Develop Trust and Meaningful Partnerships to find solutions and drive change.

They align with the following Goals and Objectives:
- Goal 1: Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change
- Goal 5: Transportation System Equity is enhanced
- Goal 6: All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Transit
Division: Client Services
Prepared by: Teresa Platt, Manager of Client Services
Cody Dzik, Operations Supervisor
Date: April 29, 2025

Attachments:

Appendix A – Winnipeg Transit Plus Annual Report 2024