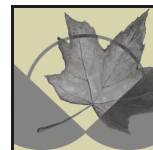




2VISIONS 2CITIES

**A CITIZEN'S GUIDE
TO UNDERSTANDING
WINNIPEG'S CITY
BUDGETS: PUBLIC
SERVICES FOR
PUBLIC GOOD**



CCPA

CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
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de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES

This Guide is the second step in a four-part Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba (CCPA-Mb) project to engage Winnipeggers in municipal decision-making. Step One was a guide to the municipal budget (which is available on the CCPA website), Step Three will be an in-depth response to this spring's 2008 Operating Budget, and Step Four will be our Alternative City Budget, to be released in the fall of 2008.

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1. Two budgets, two visions, two cities

Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz and his supporters on Winnipeg City Council have a vision for the city. They say that they wish to make the City attractive to investors by eliminating the business tax and reducing the costs associated with running the City. Slowly, but surely, they are bringing their vision to life. The Mayor abandoned a planned rapid transit system for the City, turned garbage collection over to private corporations, and closed a community centre in a low-income community. It is a narrow vision, which views the citizens of a city as simply a group of individual taxpayers, rather than a community.

This spring, the Mayor will present City Council with a proposed Operating Budget that will likely be influenced by the recommendations of his Economic Opportunity Commission. That Commission was charged with finding ways to pay for the \$57-million in revenue that the City will lose through a phased-in elimination of the business tax.

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The Mayor began reducing the business tax in 2007, with the intention of decreasing it every year until it was eliminated. While the Mayor has recently announced that there will be no decrease in the business tax in 2008, he remains committed to eliminating the tax in the long run.

The CCPA believes that there is no strong case for eliminating the tax (although it might be appropriate to amend it). In its publication *A Citizen's Guide to Understanding Winnipeg's City Budgets*, the CCPA outlined the weakness with the case for eliminating the tax and provided an analysis of several of the EOC proposals for increasing revenue. It also outlines the weaknesses of public-private partnerships (sometimes referred to as P3s), a type of funding arrangement in which, instead of borrowing money and building and operating a project, the City enters into a long-term contract with a private corporation to build and operate a public facility or service.

This document takes a closer look at key services that are funded by the City, including some that could be affected by EOC cost-cutting measures. In its 2006 report the EOC made the following cost-cutting recommendations, which it said would reduce City costs by \$25 million.

- Tender/contracting and partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations of select non-core services.
- Sell off or tender management of some of the City's exercise and pool facilities, and golf courses.
- Partnership and tender out animal services and park security services.
- Holding overall labour costs to inflation.
- Employee feedback program and a fraud and waste hotline.
- More volunteering.

- Library improvements (which, in fact, involves cutting spending on libraries)
- Pilot projects with BIZs and neighbourhood associations.

It is a long list, but with a consistent vision: the private sector provides services more efficiently than the public sector. Secondly, it suggests that many public services are frills that can be provided through private fundraising. It is a private vision—one that works well only for those who have the private resources to buy all the goods and services that they need.

This vision needs to be countered with a broader community-based vision, one that recognizes that the public sector plays an important and positive role in Canadian life. Unfortunately, critics would have you believe that the public sector is costly and inefficient. They usually propose two solutions to these so-called problems: the government should either reduce services or it should pay private companies to deliver those services.

In the face of these arguments it is useful to bear a few points in mind. The first is that most public services came into being because private businesses were unable to provide needed services for a reasonable price. Clean water and adequate sewage treatment are two high-ticket items

Public services came into being because private businesses were unable to provide needed services for a reasonable price.

in the City of Winnipeg's budget. These are necessary services—yet in no city has the private sector been able to provide them to all citizens at a cost that all can afford.

Public services are often more efficient than private services. When the first public electric company was established in Manitoba in the early 20th century the price of electricity fell dramatically. Often the only way that private companies can make a profit delivering what was once a public service is to either cut the quality of the service or cut wages—a move that often causes the best employees to quit and which compromises environmental standards. The more the private sector is involved in providing services, the less control the City has over quality control and cost overruns.

Looking at the City through the budget

There are many ways to gather information about how Winnipeg is evolving as a city. We can follow media stories, attend council meetings and have discussions with our families and friends. But the lack of openness at City Hall makes it very difficult to develop an informed perspective on civic government. When we at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives thought about how to disentangle the mixed messages coming out from both the media and City Hall, we decided to go directly to the most reliable source of information we had access to: the city budgets.

The City adopts two budgets every year: the Capital Budget and the Operating Budget. Analysing the budgets reveals basic information such as who pays for what, and more subtle, but equally important information concerning who influences those decisions and why. A careful reading of the budgets tells us what kind of city our councillors and Mayor envision.

The Operating Budget

As its name suggests, the Operating Budget deals with the cost of running the City on an annual basis. It includes the cost

of salaries, pensions, interests on debt, heat and lighting of city buildings, rent, and payments for services provided to the City. The Operating Budget not only sets out how much the Council intends on spending in a given year, it includes a plan as to how the City will pay for its operations. The revenue comes from a combination of taxes, fees that the City charges for services, licence fees, and money received from other levels of government.

The Capital Budget

The Capital Budget is reserved for the funding of costly purchases or projects that will be used for at least five years. Capital investments can be made in buildings and equipment that support the City's operations (a municipal office building or a major piece of equipment) or in projects that are used by the public at large (for example, a bridge, a road, or the water and sewage systems). The capital budget includes the amount needed to acquire or construct each of the works proposed in the budget and the anticipated sources of the amount needed for each of those works. The Capital Budget also includes a five-year forecast that is updated every December.

Both budgets reveal a strong tendency to transfer control of public assets into private hands. Whether it is through public-private partnerships (P3s) or contracting out, this administration is determined to erode access to and quality of our public services and amenities. We learnt that not only is our city being run like a business, it is being run *for* business. Many big businesses are profiting from questionable policy decisions such as approval of Waverley West and the use of P3s to maintain our infrastructure.

Services under attack

In coming weeks, Winnipeg City Council will be debating the 2008 Operating Budget. One can expect that the Mayor and his supporters on Council will try to turn their vision into reality through the spending decisions that they will make in

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that budget. To aid citizens in following the budget debate, we have prepared this overview of key city services and the impact that the EOC and the Mayor's policies are likely to have on those services. The services are organized under the following headings:

- Leisure and wellness services

- Environmental services

- Policing

- Planning and transit

We believe that we need to consider much more than the costs involved in providing these amenities: we have to acknowledge the considerable benefits they bestow on all of us, including business. Whether it is by providing recreation to marginalized children, resources for small business or common green spaces we all have access to, we show why these public "goods" are indispensable and why they should stay in public control.

We also recognize that these are not the only pressing issues facing council. In 2003, the City adopted an urban Aboriginal agenda entitled *First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*. The Council recognized the need to ensure that our Aboriginal youth receive education, training, recreation and employment, but spending for such initiatives has yet to materialize.

Lack of suitable, affordable housing is a looming problem for many Winnipeggers. Many low-income people, some working fulltime, struggle with homelessness. We will be raising these issues in our response to the 2008 Operating Budget, and again in our 2008 Alternative Budget.



2. Leisure and wellness services

Leisure and wellness services include recreation and community clubs, parks and playgrounds and libraries. Recreation, parks, arts and culture provide numerous benefits. For example, in a 1992 Angus Reid study that ranked Calgary first overall in terms of quality of life in Canada, 37% of the people surveyed said the best part of living in Calgary was the parks and recreation features and activities. Another study found that companies relocating or establishing new businesses placed the availability of recreation parks and open spaces very high on their priority list of features to consider.

Parks and Urban Forestry

Perhaps more than any other public asset our parks provide us with locations where we can meet collectively and express ourselves as members of a community. Whether we are walking our dogs, playing soccer, attending an outdoor concert or having a family picnic, all of us deserve access to safe and well-kept parks. It is for this reason that many municipalities have a “Community First Policy” that requires any public asset such as green spaces or buildings remain as community space and not be sold as private space. The City Summit organized by the Mayor prior to the last election also recommended

such a policy. This policy would ensure that existing green space would remain a community asset. Given that the EOC recommends selling off selling many public assets, we need such a policy more than ever.

Winnipeg's 939 park sites cover 3,244 hectares or about 12 hectares per 1000 people. According to a 2001 study, *Green Space Acquisition and Stewardship in Canadian Urban Municipalities* by Evergreen, a national environment charity, Winnipeg ranks fifth among mid-sized Canadian cities in terms its green-space per capita. Calgary has the highest ratio, with over 40 hectares; other cities such as Ottawa and Edmonton have 18 to 19 hectares. Toronto, with only 2 hectares per capita, has the lowest ratio.

It is difficult to compare civic budgets due to different departmental configurations. The Evergreen study found that the combined parks and recreation budgets made up the largest percentage of the municipal budget in Mississauga, where it amounted to 24% of the budget. Toronto's figure of 2% was the lowest ranking in the country and the national average was 10.8%. Winnipeg did not participate in this part of the study, but at \$76.1 million, Winnipeg's spending on Parks, Recreation, Arts and City Beautification is 10.2%, of the total \$743.1 million Operating Budget. Regina—which had a similar amount of green space per capita to Winnipeg—spends 14% and Edmonton spends 11.5% of its city budget on parks and recreation.

Our relatively low spending in these two categories may explain why our urban forest is not being well maintained. The Dutch elm forest that characterizes Winnipeg is threatened by Dutch elm disease and age, but it is questionable whether or not the current level of investment in preventative maintenance and replanting of trees is sufficient. The ratio of Dutch elm diseased trees removed compared to those planted was 2,205 to 754; only one of every three trees removed is replaced. The budget amount received from the provincial Dutch

Elm Disease grant in 2006 was \$900,000, which was \$675,000 short of the amount required to maintain our elms. In the 2007 budget, \$200,000 was allocated for tree pruning. The service was contracted out to Green Drop, a lawn fertilizer company that does not specialize in tree pruning. Contracting out of tree maintenance remains a concern as pruning, replacement and new planning is not keeping up with the need to maintain a healthy urban forest. Although the EOC Report does not refer specifically to the Urban Forest, the spirit of contracting out services to the private sector was evident in this spending category. There are often problems when private-sector companies look after public assets. Profit-maximizing companies must keep their costs down and quality of service often suffers as a result.

The Economic Opportunity Commission suggests that spending on parks could be reduced if community groups raised money to "support projects such as pools, play structures, park maintenance, street cleaning and other activities". It goes on to say that "local neighbourhood organizations might decide to pitch in with boulevard maintenance, and use the savings to plant trees." Volunteers can, of course raise money and improve their neighbourhoods, both on an individual and group basis. It is irresponsible to think that these efforts will be uniform across the city: low-income neighbourhoods would not be able raise as much money and would have fewer services. It is a policy designed to create two cities. Winnipeggers should be asking why these services should be shifted to our already overburdened volunteer sector simply to help pay for the reduction of the business tax.

The EOC also recommends contracting out Park Security at Assiniboine and Kildonan Parks to private security firms. While the city employees who currently provide the Park Security service are not members of the Winnipeg Police Service, they do receive the same training as police

officers. While the Winnipeg Police Service handles major incidents in the parks, the Park Security staff handle minor incidents, which the EOC identified as loud music complaints, lost-and-found cases, open-alcohol complaints, public inquiries and 'spitting' violations. Park Security costs \$1.1 million/year; the report does not say how much of this could be saved through contracting out, however the loss of public safety and accountability is likely greater than any potential savings.

There also has been concern about Assiniboine Park's future ever since the Mayor and his supporters suggested building condominiums within the park's boundaries. The new super board that governs the Park can now operate at arm's length from City Council. This model is seen by some as another way of cutting costs for the city, but it also shifts accountability and responsibility for, and potentially access to, this important community asset away from the public.

Recreation and Community Clubs

There are two visions related to recreation. A community vision promotes social interaction and physical activity for all member of our city. The big-business view sees public recreation as an expense with little, if any, direct benefit to business. The focus is on lowering costs by, for example, amalgamating community centres and closing small neighbourhood centres. Extreme "business-first" proponents do not appreciate the role that recreation plays in creating positive social attitudes for disadvantaged people, especially youth, that in turn lowers long-term social costs to society as a whole.

Funding for this category is complicated. First of all, there are two categories of recreation institutions: recreation centres and community clubs. Since there is a need for improvements to both recreation centres and community centres (or community clubs), there is a need for funding from the capital budget. Recreation centres and

community centres both receive funding from the Operating Budget for their day-to-day expenses. We will look first at how recreation figures in the Operating Budget, then in the Capital Budget. Next we will see how both the operating and capital budgets deal with community centres.

Recreation Operating Budget

The 2007 Operating Budget for city recreation facilities (staff, maintenance and programs) was \$45 million. Over \$33 million came from city revenues (only \$566,000 more than last year) and \$11 million was in projected revenue from fees.

According to Statistics Canada's National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, Manitoba has the lowest rates of children's participation in organized sports (only 31% participated at least once per week in 1994-95). We also have the lowest weekly participation in unorganized sports: 42%. Only 17% of children played unorganized sports on most days.

Factors contributing to these poor activity levels are illustrated in a 2001 study by the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence. For example, while fees for skating went up by 80%, the cost for children's swim pass went up 64% for a

Winnipeggers should be asking why these services should be shifted to our already overburdened volunteer sector simply to help pay for the reduction of the business tax.

single visit and 92% for a five-visit pass. Curiously, the adult admission fee during the same period went up only 1% for a single visit and 21% for five.

Compared to other cities in Canada, Winnipeg's recreation programs have fewer subsidy programs and do not advertise these programs to encourage uptake. In 2000, the cost in Winnipeg for a preschool child was \$40.72 for ten recreational classes; this program cost was only higher in Halifax at \$46.00, and the lowest was Hamilton at \$25.00. Most other cities in Canada have a strategic plan to ensure low income is not a barrier to recreation.

Recreation capital budget

Winnipeg's capital budget for recreation does not compare favourably with other cities. The Sport Facility Fund has \$40,000 for capital in 2008, and the Recreation Facility Safety and Accessibility Improvements fund has budgeted \$2.1 million over the six years to 2013, with \$400,000 for 2008. A New Recreation and Leisure Facility Equipment Program will spend \$400,000 in 2008 and 2009.

There is also a fund for several five-year priorities for Recreation and Community Centre Capital funding, totalling \$43 million. Table 1 list the projects that have been given priority.

The \$43 million total capital fund equals the amount that the Mayor committed to community clubs and recreation services in 2005 when he cancelled the \$43 million rapid transit project. But there is some sleight-of-hand here since only \$20 million of these funds come from the Capital Budget, with the rest being cost-shared by the provincial and federal governments.

According to recent media stories, at least \$7 million of this \$43 million has been redirected yet again. The plans for the Kildonan Park Urban Oasis are on hold and the City is now considering dedicating \$7 million of the funding originally budgeted for the Urban Oasis towards a public-public partnership for a water-park project. This is more than simply shifting funding from one recreation project to another. As Free Press reporter Dan Lett has written: this "effortless shifting of money by the Mayor reveals a policy vacuum at city hall...No matter how you frame this debate, there is a fundamental difference between traditional public amenities—hospitals, libraries, large sports or cultural facilities—and a water park. It's the difference between 'attraction' and 'amenity'. ... [O]ne is a thing we want for our community, and the other is a thing that defines our community".¹ The benefits of a downtown water park would be experienced by a very different group people than those who could enjoy a public park.

Table 1

\$7 million	North-End Recreation & Leisure Facility
\$3.9 million	Bronx Park Community Centre (Amalgamated Up-Graded Facility)
\$2.7 million	Sargent Park Recreation Complex (Amalgamated Up-Graded Facility)
\$10 million	Community Centre Investment Fund (Currently unallocated, to support expansion and up-grading where there are amalgamated facilities)
\$9 million	Kildonan Park Urban Oasis
\$2.6 million	Spray Parks/Pads (Conversion of existing wading pools)
\$6 million	Indoor Soccer Complex
\$1.8 million	Skateboard Parks
\$43 million	Total

Community centres

Winnipeg's 71 community centres (also called community clubs) are different from the other recreation facilities in that while they are owned by the City, they are operated by volunteer boards that raise funds to hire staff. According to the 2001 Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence study, Winnipeg is the only city in Canada to administer its community centers on entirely voluntary basis, without city staff.

Community centre Operating Budget

The City's Operating Budget provides community centres with a \$7.866 million in grants, which is not enough to run and maintain these facilities. This grant is determined by the Universal Funding Formula (UFF), which is based on 'heated square footage' of the centres. It places older and/or smaller centres at a disadvantage since they usually have relatively higher maintenance and programming costs, while their smaller square footage calculates into smaller grants. Under the formula, funding is not provided to portions of a facility that are revenue generating, such as indoor arenas.

Community clubs depend heavily on volunteers to both provide services and raise money. Relying on volunteers has and will continue to yield unequal results. Middle- and high-income communities have better facilities, because community residents have more money to donate. While lower income Winnipeggers do volunteer their time to many community-based organizations, the fact is that the demand for volunteers in low-income communities is probably greater than it is in the rest of the city. The best way to ensure that recreation services are available on an equal basis is for the City to provide adequate resources to all centres, and to ensure that all residents feel welcome.

The experience of the River Heights Community Centre demonstrates the effects of the funding formula. It received less money for operation and maintenance in 2007 (\$95,000) than in 1993 (\$110,000).

The UFF makes centres totally responsible for the condition of the community centre while reducing the funds available to them. To make up for the shortfall, the Mayor has suggested that volunteers should drive Zambonis and maintain arenas. This policy would create risk and speed deterioration of recreation facilities, especially in poorer communities.

Volunteers, who may not have proper qualifications, are asked to operate and maintain underfunded facilities, and to provide suitable programming to meet community recreation needs. Even in the case where a community centre has the volunteers and the ability to access financial resources, policies still prevent community centers from meeting the interests of the community they serve. While some can stop supporting deteriorating community centres and join a private health club, this is a luxury many cannot afford.

Community centre capital budget

The capital budget for Winnipeg's 71 community clubs includes \$10 million from the multi-year capital budget plan. However this funding is contingent on the amalgamation and/or closing of smaller clubs. Smaller, older neighbourhood community clubs, usually in lower income areas, are under threat of closure. The funding is now going to pay for new multi-use facilities that may be inaccessible to those who do not live close by. Adding to the maintenance costs is the need to transition to energy-efficient facilities that meet the needs of children, adults and, increasingly, seniors.

Winnipeg community centres also have some access to other capital funds. However, all applications for capital funds must come through the volunteer management boards that may or may not have the qualifications, experience, and/or time to make the numerous applications to public and private funding sources.

Appealing to the volunteer sector is a strategy favoured by the EOC Report.

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As noted, volunteers in marginalized neighbourhoods may not feel comfortable working in this environment, meaning that middle- and upper-class people have better access to recreation than marginalized people. However, it is arguable that poorer kids benefit most from recreational activity, and that society as a whole wins when kids join sports teams instead of gangs. Taxes, rather than killing jobs, provide needed recreation to all our citizens and help make Winnipeg a desirable place to live, and do business.



3. Libraries

Imagine a Winnipeg where public library operating hours have been halved, branches closed, and service fees charged to borrowers. This is the scenario that faces the citizens of Jackson County, Oregon and several other American cities every day, where library services have been taken over by a for-profit management firm.² These takeovers have been sanctioned by city councils that feel that libraries are too expensive and provide poor value for service.

As a “soft” service, public libraries are easy targets for cuts and closures by profit-minded city administrations. There is also an increasingly common misconception that with the near universal availability of

the Internet and easy access to research information through Google and Wikipedia, libraries are obsolete relics. It certainly appears that Winnipeg’s administration subscribes to this belief, since the Economic Opportunities Commission targetted library services for a number of cost-cutting measures.

Winnipeg’s public libraries provide an invaluable service to our community, and are an important component in its economy. Like other libraries that have been the subject of economic studies in Canada, the United States, Australia and Europe, Winnipeg’s libraries are essential to the community’s prosperity, functioning as

employers, purchasers, service providers, and educators.³

As municipal institutions, public libraries receive most of their funding from city taxpayers, but not all their revenue is tax-based. A 2006 Canadian Urban Public Libraries Council report shows that libraries themselves generated nearly \$40 million in revenue through programming, sales, special events, and donations.⁴

Public libraries play an important role in supporting small business development and growth through Internet access, online resources, workshops and research expertise. Government information, including forms and publications are often available exclusively online, which means that public libraries are important access points for government information, including forms and announcements. The federal Community Access Programme (CAP) ensures that every public library in Canada has an Internet connection, and through multi-level government partnerships continues to maintain equipment and access.⁵

Libraries also have an important physical presence. Winnipeggers value library programming, which can include readings, speakers, performances, programs for young adults, new parents and seniors, as well as reading and literacy support. After school Homework Help programs are very popular in many areas.

How well does the City of Winnipeg support this valuable community service? According to the 2007 Operating Budget, the City of Winnipeg contributes \$21.9 million to Libraries, which represents 2.95% of the total municipal budget. Budget figures from cities of similar size across Canada show that each of them contributes a higher proportion of their municipal budget to their libraries. Edmonton is closest with 3%, followed by Hamilton at 4%, Vancouver at 4% and Mississauga at 5%.

Expenditure per capita data are even more revealing. In 2006, Winnipeg ranked 30th in total library expenditures per capita, behind Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay.⁶

It ranked 41st in materials expenditure per capita, and 45th in hours open per capita.

The Winnipeg Public Library system gives value for its budget, with a lean 56% of revenues going toward salaries.⁷ In addition to providing collections and services, WPL also supports family literacy, a summer reading programme, a writer-in-residence and provides 20 weeks of concerts and lectures.⁸ This connection to the community is demonstrated by one important measure: registered borrowers. Here Winnipeg ranks in the top 20 of Canadian libraries with 64.77% of its citizens holding library cards.

In spite of doing more with less compared to other libraries, the 2007 EOC Report proposed that \$2 million in savings could be achieved by replacing paid staff with volunteers, amalgamating public libraries with school libraries and leasing library space in malls. Replacing staff with volunteers is a favourite cost-cutting measure. This comes from a fundamental misunderstanding of what library staff do.

A professional librarian has completed a Master's degree in Library and Information Studies from an accredited program. Librarians are trained managers, with specializations in research and education/training, public service/customer service, information organization, collections development and budgeting, or automated systems and web development. Other staff members are also specially trained to provide library services.

Today's public libraries have multimillion-dollar collection and technology budgets that requires staff with specialized knowledge. In such institutions, volunteers simply cannot provide the necessary level of technical and professional expertise. Volunteers may not be aware of the freedom of information and protection of privacy policies that are core elements of any library operation. They are also not accountable to the municipalities that fund the libraries. Speaking of U.S. experiments with for-profit library privatization Buck Eichler, president of the Service Employees

International Union (SEIU) Local 503 in Jackson County, Florida whose organization represented the public library employees, said private libraries “operate entirely with our tax dollars but they have no transparency...We no longer know where our tax dollars are going.”⁹

The EOC’s proposal to lease or amalgamate space can create false economies. Although locating libraries in malls might be seen as a positive way to reach out to the community, the space would be subject to increases in rent in the absence of a long-term deal. Mall space is also controlled by a management group, which can again raise issues of transparency and accountability, while mall locations often pose challenges to security and safety. Amalgamation of public libraries with school libraries is also an old idea, but as a 1995 report by the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association found,¹⁰ public libraries and school libraries have different and often incompatible missions.

There is one further area integral to public libraries of particular interest to Winnipeg, that of diversity. As a “community commons...where ideas and cultures can intersect”¹¹ public libraries

are uniquely positioned to connect citizens to their community. No one is suggesting that Winnipeg’s social ills can be solved simply through a greater investment in its public libraries; as established, trusted and welcoming places of reading, learning and community, our libraries can play a significant role in the development and enrichment of our city’s potential. The American Library Association may have summed it up best: “libraries are not a simple commodity, but are an essential public good.”¹²

Public libraries play
an important role in
supporting small business
development and growth



4. Environmental Services

The Environmental Services is what the City terms water, sewage and garbage services—considered sanitation services in the past. While listed as environmental services, these public requirements are essential for maintaining community health. When these services were being developed in the early 1900s, disease and illness control were paramount in residents' minds.

Winnipeg went close to 40 years without a safe and adequate water supply and a fully functioning sewage system. It took a typhoid epidemic and the concerted efforts of the City's public-health officials to ensure that the needed public investments were made. The Environmental Services section

of the budget also allocates money for land drainage, flood control (\$15 million in 2007) and recycling of waste (\$9.6 million in 2007).

Water and Waste

The city provides water and sewage to almost 180,000 homes and over 10,000 businesses in Winnipeg. City staff must maintain over 2,500 kilometres of pipes and 20,000 fire hydrants. There are three water treatment plants located to the north, south and west of the city.

In the 2007 Operating Budget, the City planned to spend over \$80 million for clean water and disposal of human wastewater. This is \$5 million more than was budgeted

the previous year and \$5 million less than the City earns in providing these services (the City takes in more in payments for water and waste than it pays out to maintain the service). In the Capital Budget, the City also plans to spend another \$84 million on major replacements of water systems, pumps, aqueduct maintenance, and a new water treatment facility.

Another way the city is raising funds for the new water treatment facility is by increasing the rates charged to customers. This year, \$3.3 million was budgeted to help finance the new facility. The city has also set aside approximately \$25 million in a special reserve funds for the plant. In spite of all these measures, a loan will still be required to finance and build the plant. If the plant had been built in the 1990s as planned, there would have been sufficient funds. Instead, escalating construction and material costs have forced the City to resort to increasing rates and taking on more debt.

There is also the possibility that the Mayor and his supporters on Council will have a private company build, own and operate the new treatment plant. They argue that a public-private partnership could build the facility quickly and distribute costs for the City over a longer term. However, as described in the CCPA's Guide to Winnipeg's budget, this approach would add to citizens' tax burden, although it would be spread over a number of years and, therefore, be somewhat hidden. Cities that have privatized their water and waste systems, such as Halifax, have experienced problems with quality control and violation of environmental standards. Citizens need to be asking questions about the efficacy of this kind of financing.

Garbage Collection and Disposal

The other major expenditure for this area of the budget is for the collection and disposal of solid waste at the Brady Landfill. Currently, the City is responsible for collecting solid waste from over 260,000 households (commercial companies collect

waste from businesses) that produce over 230,000 tonnes of garbage annually.

Since 2005, all residential garbage collection in Winnipeg has been contracted out to private companies. Up until then, half of the service was contracted out and half of was provided by civic employees. When Council voted to contract out the rest of the service, the Mayor said that contracting out would save the City about \$2.8 million a year. In the 2007 budget, the saving was about \$1 million. With other increases in costs, the overall budget of \$16.78 million is the same as the 2006 budget of \$16.8 million. What the budget does not reveal, is that the quality of the collection service has deteriorated and residents are paying more for special pickups of their garbage—a service that the City used to provide for free.

The other element that needs to be watched is the solid waste disposal costs. For 2007, it was estimated that it cost \$8.3 million to run the Brady Landfill site south of Winnipeg. For this amount, the City will earn \$9.4 million, for an annual profit of about \$1 million. This year, the Council also approved about \$500,000 for the purchase of new scales at the site. The scales are used to weigh the amount of waste brought for

Cities that have privatized their water and waste systems, such as Halifax, have experienced problems with quality control and violation of environmental standards.

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disposal (there is a 'tipping fee' for disposing of waste at the landfill).

However, the Economic Opportunities Commission report suggested that the Brady Landfill could be sold or leased to a private company. The EOC said the City would be better served by cutting this cost and revenue from the annual budget. For large multinational waste management companies, such as BFI or Waste Management Inc., the landfill is a potential goldmine, providing guaranteed income at relatively low cost. Across North America large companies have gained control of municipal landfills, providing them with billions in profits and fulfilling a business vision for running municipal governments. Citizens need to ask whether these arrangements end up benefiting the community more than keeping amenities in public hands.



5. Policing

There are two visions for police services in our community. One is the present reactive, punitive law-enforcement approach. The other vision favours a proactive, preventive peacekeeping approach that fits with our community vision.

Police services receive little mention in the EOC report, other than to report that it uses 37% of the total Operating Budget. It is obviously difficult to cut funding to this essential service, but the EOC is surprisingly silent on ways to use revenues more efficiently. In keeping with a business vision, the Mayor is eager to use the WPS as a protector of property and enforcer of laws

rather than as an agent for positive social change.

The Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) employs 1,368 police officers. The WPS's share of this Winnipeg's \$741 million 2007 Operating Budget was \$159.5 million, an increase of 4% over the \$153.3 million that was in the 2006 budget . (Once it is adjusted for inflation, the increase is closer to 1%).

Over the past five years, the provincial government has provided the WPS with 90 additional police officers. In the upcoming three years, the provincial government is committed to providing the WPS with an additional 40 police officers. According to 2007 Statistics Canada data, Winnipeg has

the highest number of police officers per capita of any major city in Canada. How these officers are employed is of primary concern: are they fighting a war, or looking for allies? Do they do they have the necessary training and resources?

What's in a name?

How resources are used is linked to the culture found in the WPS. The philosophy adopted by the previous Chief of Police and current Mayor is that the WPS employs "law enforcement officers". The term used in the Criminal Code of Canada is "peace officer". The difference between the two terms is significant: there will never be enough police officers to enforce the law in our city.

Peace officers, on the other hand, offer a balance between proactive and reactive policing. Rather than providing *police-based policing*, the WPS should invest in *community-based policing*. We need more police officers to work on a full-time basis in high-crime neighbourhoods where they can work with local residents and agencies to prevent crime and improve community security.

The "war on crime" approach of the WPS and Mayor does not solve social ills and it increases costs in the long run. The founder of community policing in Edmonton,

retired Police Superintendent Chris Braiden, observes, "If I am thinking of war, I am looking for enemies; if I am thinking of peace, I am looking for allies".

Intelligent use of resources

The Winnipeg Police Service needs to find a better balance between investing in the community and law enforcement functions. For example, why were 60 police officers sent to break up a card game on Corydon Avenue when there are not enough resources to invest in a School Resource Officer (SRO) program? For the past 25 years, SRO programs have been in place in Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon and Regina. Police officers stationed in high schools engage in education and crime prevention programs, mediation, counselling, intelligence gathering, and investigating incidents of crime.

In Calgary, Regina and Saskatoon, the School Resource Officer program is completely funded by the police service. The School Resource Officers are seen as cost effective because they significantly reduce the calls for service for patrol cars and enable the police service to deploy its resources more efficiently. The mediation- and relationship-based focus of the SRO program also serves to divert young people from formal involvement in the criminal justice system, thereby reducing spending on trials and incarceration.

Presently, the Winnipeg Police Service requires the Winnipeg School Division and local community groups to assist in the funding of the School Resource Officer program. Between 2002 and 2008, the North End Community Renewal Corporation and the Winnipeg School Division will have contributed almost \$1 million to fund three School Resource Officer positions. By insisting that schools pay for this service—essentially treating police officers in schools as rent-a-cops—the City is taking \$1 million from education resources in inner-city schools and neighbourhood-development programs such as youth drop-in centres

Rather than providing police-based policing, the WPS should invest in community-based policing.

and family resource centres. The newly announced SRO program in the downtown area of the inner city will require the Central Neighbourhoods Development Corporation and the Winnipeg School Division to contribute \$340,000 to fund two SRO positions over the next three years.

While this “rent-a-cop” philosophy might make sense for providing police services to Blue Bomber games and rock concerts, it makes no sense when providing proactive community policing services for inner-city schools and neighbourhoods. Police services in other jurisdictions see the importance of School Resource Officers as an effective crime-prevention tool. It is hard to understand why the Winnipeg Police Service does not see the wisdom of fully funding this community approach to policing.

The WPS also needs to change its retirement and recruitment policies. The WPS is losing officers as the baby boom generation retires. The salary and benefits of an entry-level police officer are \$40,000 per year while the salaries and benefits paid officers near retirement are in excess of \$80,000. As these more well-paid officers retire, the WPS will experience significant savings; nonetheless, for the past number of years, the WPS has been operating below its approved staffing levels because of its ineffective recruiting program. The WPS needs to make better human resource decisions in order maximize the use of the current budget resources.

Winnipeggers do not begrudge the money spent on policing services, but most agree that it must be spent intelligently—in a way that enhances our community's wellbeing.



6. Transportation and Planning

Transportation and Planning

In order to create a vibrant city where services are accessible for all citizens, we need to think holistically about our city planning, our transportation systems and the policies that shape them. The Mayor's lack of action and foresight on transport and planning will leave us with a sprawling, car-dependent and inequitable Winnipeg.

Civic transportation and city planning policies are intertwined and set the City's pattern of development. Decisions about where we choose to live and where businesses locate are affected by the type of transport available. City planning, in turn, impacts the costs and restrictions imposed

upon transportation needs. Communities with high population density have lower transportation costs because their needs are more easily met by public and active transport, such as walking and cycling. Urban sprawl increases the costs of building and servicing infrastructure such as longer bus routes, new roads and sidewalks. Active, non-polluting forms of transportation are also made less attractive due to the longer distances between destinations.

Given the connections between planning and transportation, both topics are covered together in this section. However, because the cities generally account for expenditures

on the two areas separately, the financial figures are first reviewed separately¹³.

Transportation

Transportation expenditures make up a large part of Winnipeg's Operating Budget. In 2007, the City spent a total of \$159.2 million on transportation services, comprising 20.1% of the total Operating Budget.

The city has four main categories of transportation spending: Public Transit, Roadway Construction and Maintenance, Transportation Planning and Traffic Management, and Roadway Snow Removal and Ice Control. The distribution of spending is illustrated in Figure 1.

Approximately 73% of total transportation operating expenditures goes towards roadway construction, maintenance and snow and ice removal. The second largest expenditure is the City's subsidy to Winnipeg Transit, which accounts for 21% of spending. The remaining expenditure is on transportation planning and traffic management (6%).

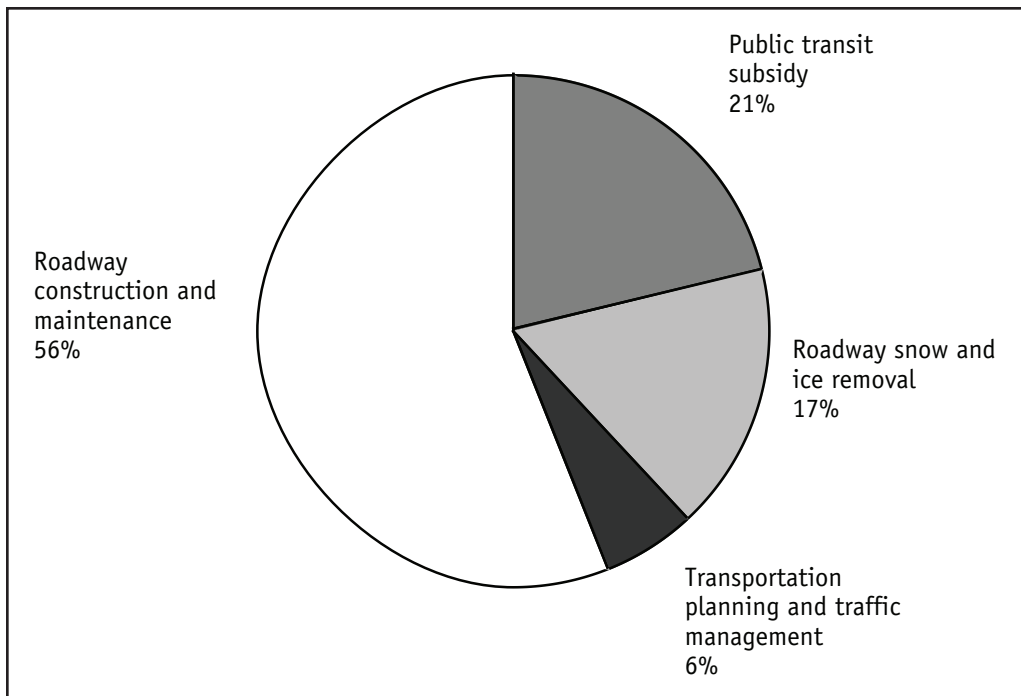
Although expenditure data on Transportation over time are not readily

available, data are available on the expenditures of the City's Public Works department. Roadway Construction and Maintenance, Transportation Planning and Traffic Management and Roadway Snow Removal and Ice Control are almost exclusively funded by this department. In 2007 these three categories, when combined, accounted for 82% of Public Works expenditures. The Public Works Department is also the main channel of funds for other services such as Parks and Urban Forestry, City Beautification, and Facilities Maintenance.

Figures 2 and 3 show the budgeted expenditures of the Public Works Department in real terms and as a percentage of total city operational expenditures¹⁴. "Real terms" means that any price increases caused by inflation have been removed.

From 2001 to 2005, budgeted public works expenditures decreased both in real terms and as a percentage of total operational expenses. In other words, once the effect of inflation is removed, we can see that the amount of spending went down. With the election of Mayor Sam Katz this

Figure 1: Transportation Operating Budget



Figures 2: Public Works as % of Total Operational

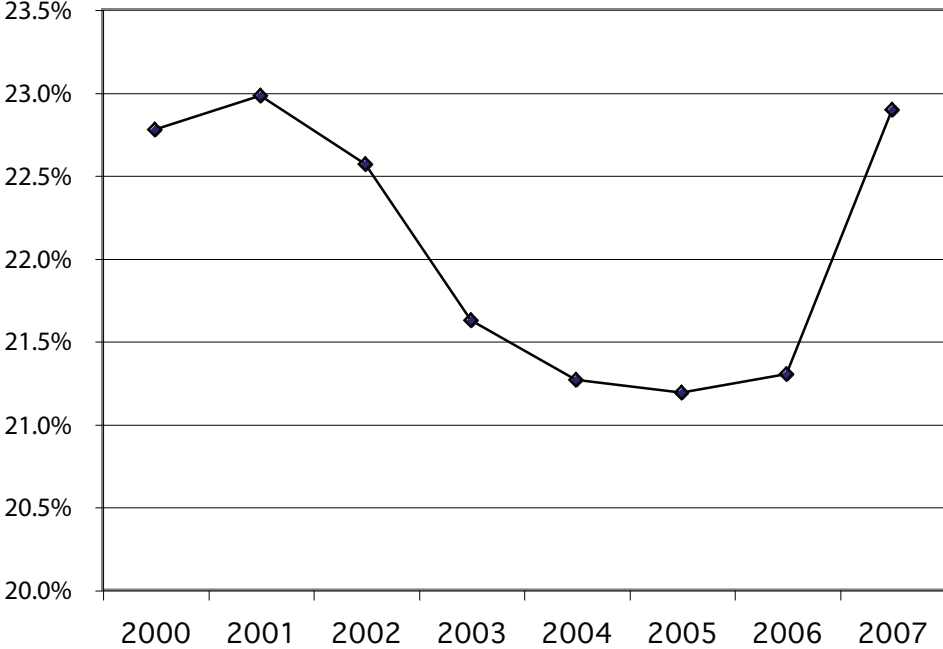
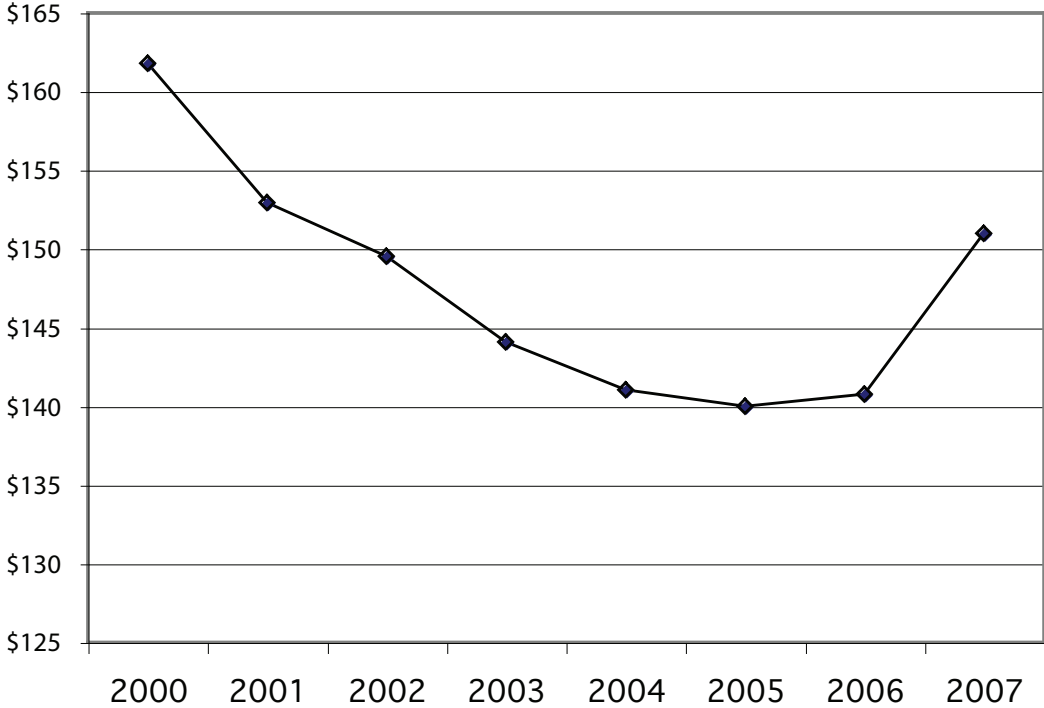


Figure 3: Real Public Works Expenditure, 2002 \$s, in millions



trend was reversed, and from 2005 to 2007 Public Works expenditures increased in real terms and as a proportion of the budget. The city's subsidy to Winnipeg Transit has been following an opposite although less obvious trend. Figures 4 and 5 outline the City's funding contribution to Winnipeg Transit.

From 2000 to 2004 the City's subsidy to Winnipeg Transit increased from 4.0% to 5.1% of the City's Operating Budget, which in real terms was an increase of 5.6 million dollars. In the 2007 budget, the subsidy had dropped to 4.6% of total operational expenditure and had been reduced by \$3.8 million.

Comparing city expenditures on public works and transit reveals a trend of increasing expenditures on public works and falling contributions to transit service. The increase in public works expenditures is not itself a bad thing; infrastructure has been severely neglected by governments across the country. Also, if the increase in expenditures were being used to improve the public transit system and other alternatives to the automobile, it would make sense. Unfortunately the percentage of public works expenditure going towards road maintenance and repairs has increased from 77.9% to 81.7% in the 2007 budget, and funding increases directed at improving public transit appear to be minimal and superficial, and therefore unlikely to lead to any significant change in ridership. A recent re-announcement of \$7 million dollars of new capital investment in the transit system was composed of some minor tinkering with the system, such as the introduction of transit priority traffic signals, and replacement of existing bus shelters and signage consistent with Transit's new marketing image.¹⁵

The city's contribution to Transit operations is also disappointing when compared to similar cities. Figures 6 and 7 contrast Winnipeg's contribution to transit as a percentage of its total operating expenditures, and the percentage of total operating expenditures covered by operating

revenues with the contributions made in Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Regina and Saskatoon.¹⁶

Of the six cities, Winnipeg contributes the smallest proportion of its Operating Budget (4.7%) to Transit operations. Winnipeg also has the highest proportion of its service costs covered by transit fares, with over fifty percent of the costs being covered by passenger fares. Since Transit use has many positive social spin-offs, it should be subsidized to ensure that the burden of supporting this service does not fall on the many low-income patrons who least can afford it. Active Transportation and Rapid Transit are two concepts that would enhance these social spinoffs and transform Winnipeg into a more dynamic and modern city.

Active Transportation and Rapid Transit

Active Transportation

The Active Transportation Study¹⁷ carried out for the City by Marr Consulting laid out the benefits of using human powered transport such as cycling, walking, in-line skating, skateboarding, ice-skating, or cross-country skiing and recommended how to develop the required infrastructure in Winnipeg. Active transportation presents "a significant opportunity for the City of Winnipeg to simultaneously improve the health of its residents, increase quality of life, and achieve other environmental and socio-economic benefits¹⁸."

Thanks to pressure from various Winnipeg interest groups, some of the study's 36 recommendations are being implemented. An Active Transportation Coordinator was hired and the Mayor committed \$500,000 for new bike corridors in 2008. The Winnipeg active transportation infrastructure budget increased from \$200,000 in 2006, to \$2 million in 2008¹⁹. These are encouraging initiatives, but we need to ensure that this money is used for both recreational and transportation trails that lead to places of work.

Figure 4: Contribution to Transit as % of total budgeted operating expenditures

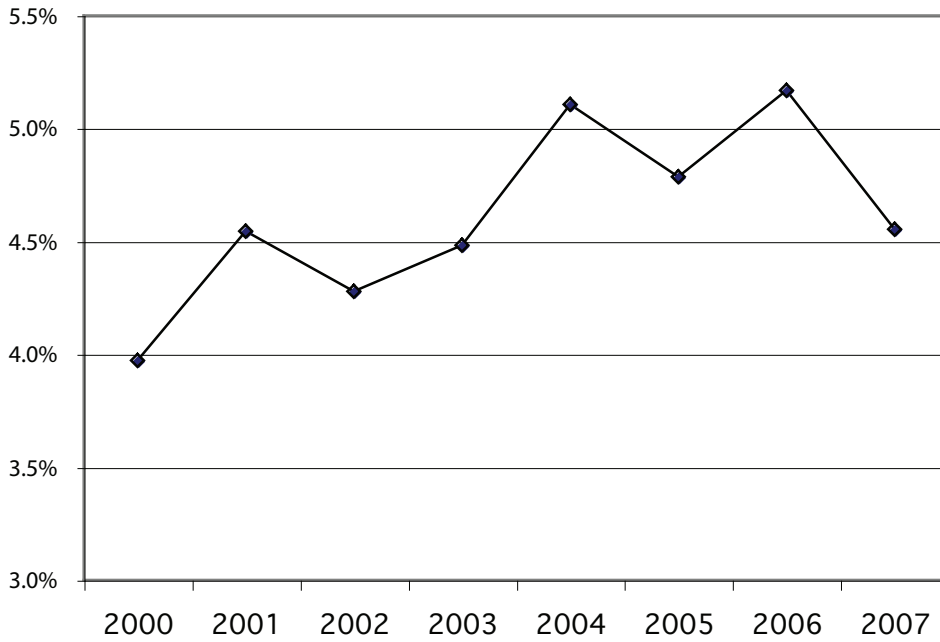
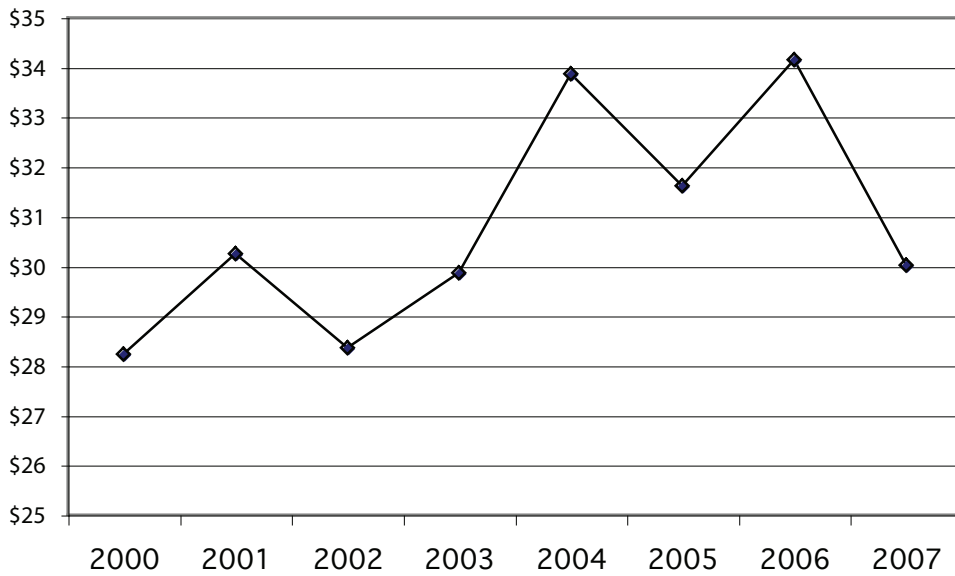


Figure 5: Real contribution to Transit, 2002, \$s in million



Rapid Transit in Winnipeg

Over the years there have been many studies and proposal to modernize the Winnipeg's transit system²⁰. The latest was the 2005 Rapid Transit Task Force (RTTF) commissioned by Mayor Katz. In its final report, the Task Force recommended the

creation of 11 city-wide "quality corridors" which include dedicated busways and on-street improvements. These would provide high-performance urban transport, featuring centralized stations, real-time schedule information and park and ride facilities. The estimated capital costs for the project was \$270 million over 20 years, with one third

Figure 6: City Contribution to Transit: Total Operating Expenditures, 2007 Budget

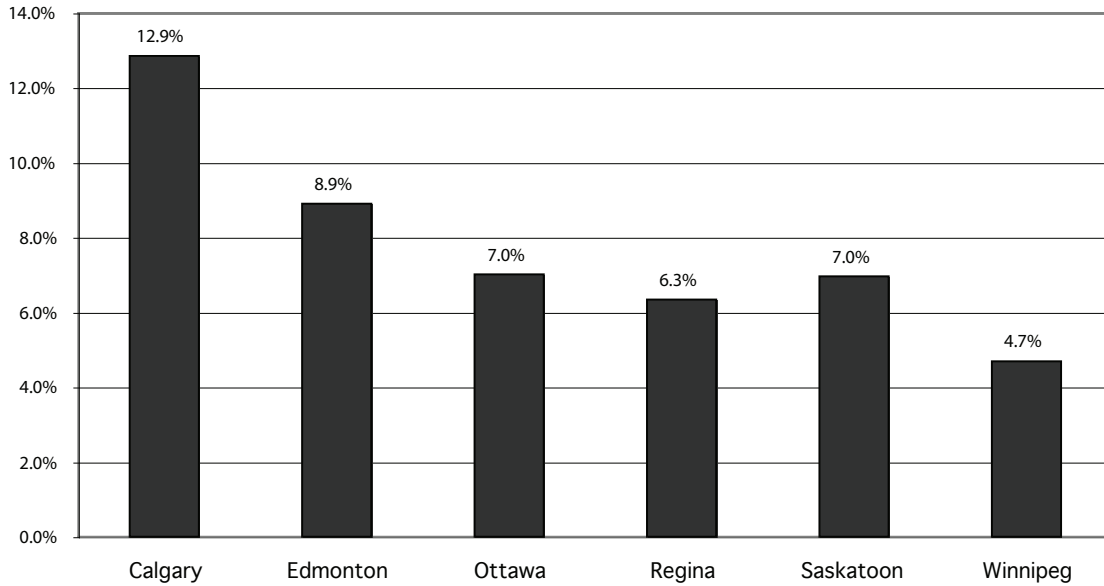
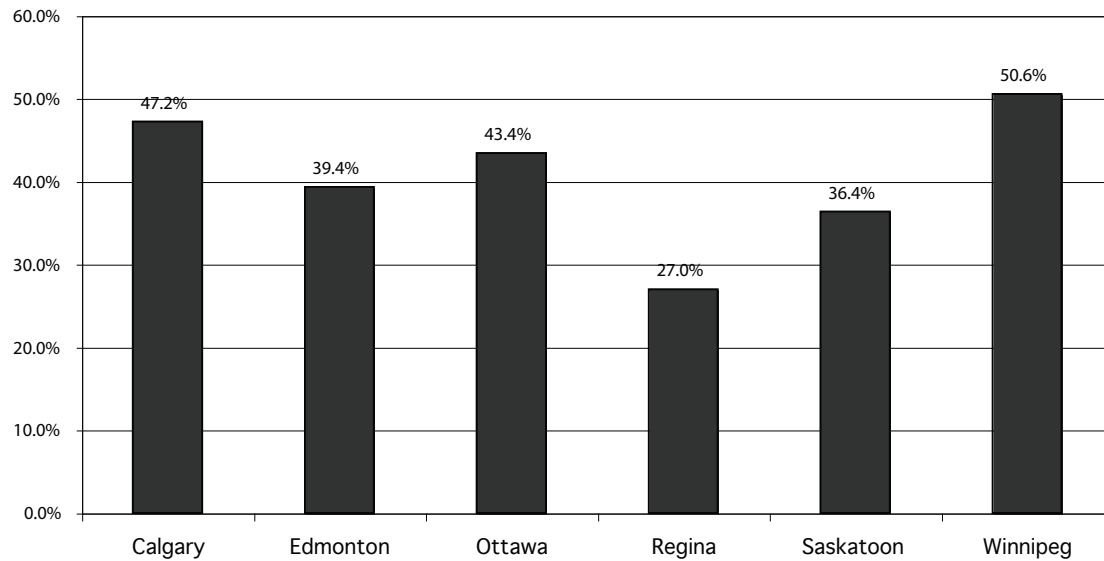


Figure 7: Service Revenue, Total Transit Expenditure, 2007 Budget



each paid by the federal, provincial and municipal governments.²¹

Only a few of the ideas detailed in the RTTF's report are being used. In 2006, the City began a six-year, \$142 million dollar transit upgrade²². Of the \$142 million, almost half will come from the federal (\$44 million) and provincial (\$23 million) governments²³. To date, \$7 million has

been spent, buying 24 new buses and new and improved shelters and developing some on-street changes such as diamond lanes, queue-jumping lanes and transit priority signals on some of the city's busiest routes²⁴. These upgrades are necessary, but they do not constitute the rapid-transit system Winnipeg so badly needs.

Finally, there is another transit issue to which Winnipeggers should pay attention. The Mayor has said that the revenues raised from the recent increase in bus fares will go into a fund that will pay for a future rapid-transit system. Funds that have been earmarked for rapid transit should not be diverted to other projects or allowed to slip back into general revenues.

City Planning

In 2001, the City of Winnipeg published the latest edition of Plan Winnipeg,²⁵ designed to guide planning and development policy for the following 20 years. The plan lays out strategies for promoting residential development downtown, density-focused growth, neighbourhood revitalisation, affordable housing and transportation infrastructure, including a rapid transit network and the promotion of active transportation.

The provincial *City of Winnipeg Charter Act* requires that undertakings and development in the city must be consistent with Plan Winnipeg. However, the goals of the plan were wide-ranging and not prioritized, making enforcement of this provision difficult. The plan also made provisions for measuring outcomes, but this has not been done. There is little evidence the innovative initiatives outlined in the plan are being implemented. Some progress is being made with respect to downtown development, but this progress is miniscule when compared to the resources devoted to furthering sprawling suburban developments. The cancelling of rapid transit and the approval of more urban sprawl in the city's south end show that spirit of the original plan is not being respected.

Planning and development need to be consistent with environmental sustainability and the principles of social fairness; instead we have a legacy of urban sprawl for higher income earners while the concerns of lower income residents and the inner city are treated as peripheral matters. Economic development should incorporate a

Community Economic Development approach to generate employment locally and to provide economic spin-offs for communities. Community Economic Development (CED) refers to: Action by people locally to create economic opportunities in their communities, on a sustainable and inclusive basis. CED includes those community members who are most disadvantaged.

In 2007, spending on City Planning increased by \$1.7 million to \$7.7 million. Given the importance of planning in the development of sustainable and well-functioning city, this increase is a step in the right direction. This one-time increase is primarily due additional funds to assist with the provision of services for long range planning.

The distribution of spending on city planning is also important. High amounts of expenditure on planning will do little to manage the sustainability of the City if the money is financing the development of urban sprawl. Resources need to be committed to developing neighbourhood plans for existing and mature neighbourhoods to help facilitate and overcome the development costs of infill housing. Figure 8 shows the distribution of city planning spending in the 2007 Operating Budget.

Only 15% of planning expenditures was allocated to mature neighbourhood planning, while 64% of the funding was allocated to categories primarily used to finance suburban expansion (surveying and mapping, land development and suburban planning). If the City is to promote infill and centralized residential development, additional resources will need to be reallocated to mature neighbourhood and downtown residential planning.

Planning a community

City investment and funding for public transit is falling and continues to be low relative to other cities, while maintenance of the infrastructure servicing the sprawling suburban areas continue to

grow as a proportion of the city's budget. From an environmental urban-development standpoint, this is not the direction the city should be taking.

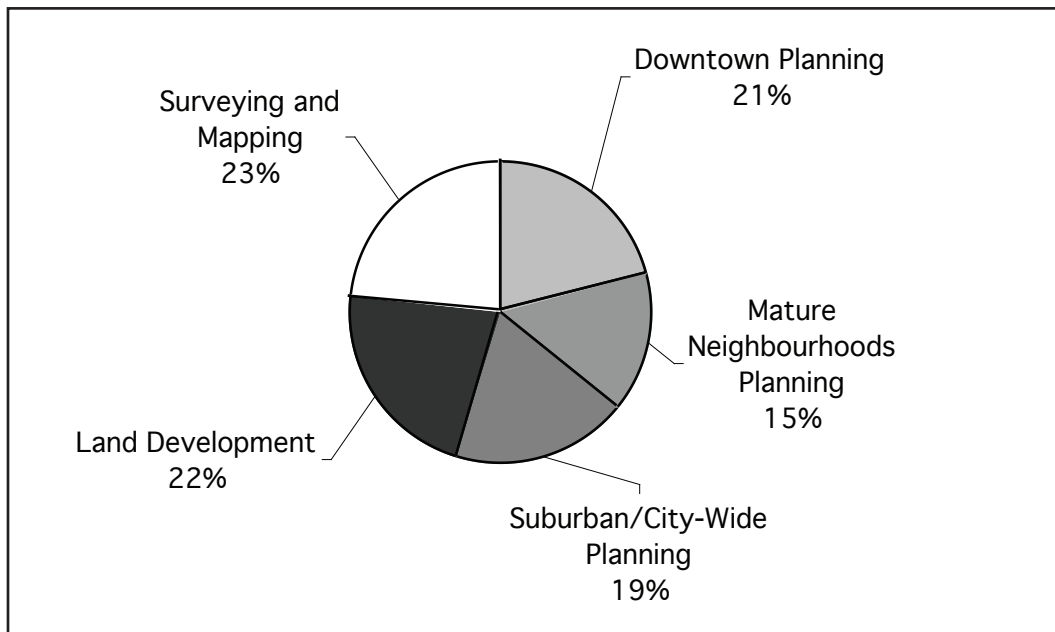
The city seems to be following the path Mayor Katz laid out when he cancelled Winnipeg's rapid transit system in 2005: Funds are diverted away from public transportation while roadway construction and maintenance continue to increase their share of city resources. Instead of investing in urban renewal, the city is cutting resources to neighbourhood revitalization in existing neighbourhoods, and is continuing to permit and provide incentives that promote urban sprawl.

There are two key groups who benefit from the status quo. The main winners are the developers who continue to profit from the geographic expansion of Winnipeg. Profit margins for large developments on undeveloped land are artificially higher than those for infill developments in the inner city. These profits come at the expense of the costs that the city and its taxpayers will have to pay to build and maintain the infrastructure needed to service these new

neighbourhoods indefinitely. The second group to benefit are those commuters who avoid city taxes by living just outside the city limits. Increased development and servicing of suburban infrastructure continues to increase the convenience of commuting. In general it is those who have the higher incomes and can afford the costs of new suburban living that benefit the most.

In the long run all Winnipeggers are hurt by this narrow development strategy. To really attract business and jobs to our city, we have to create positive urban spaces where skilled labour wants to live. We also have to develop infrastructure to support the kind of industries that are attractive to an increasingly sophisticated citizenry. The private sector will not invest in either of these areas; we need a strong, committed public sector to build and maintain a community.

Figure 8: Breakdown of Winnipeg 2007 City Planning Operating Expenditures





7. Two visions – two cities

If we let our city be developed along narrow, private lines, our inner city will continue to deteriorate as marginalized residents lose access to housing, libraries, safe schools and recreation. As poorer residents lose ground in these areas, crime and domestic violence will escalate, putting more pressure on our health-care and justices systems. Urban sprawl will continue and most of us will be condemned to spending much of our working lives in traffic gridlock. Our city parks and urban forests will continue to be underfunded, the private sector will take over more public services and we can expect their quality to diminish while information about how

amenities are run becomes inaccessible to public scrutiny. We can expect to pay more for infrastructure spending, lose control over capital projects and defer the higher costs onto future generations. We will ensure that the large corporations pay less tax while they reap the benefits from public-private partnerships and that small business (who will benefit far less from the tax cut) will have to work with fewer services and an under-educated workforce. By sticking to the Mayor's policies, Winnipeg will not join the ranks of modern, innovative cities; it will never realise its potential. It will slowly lose its heart.

If we have a community vision, our priorities will include environmentally-sound policies such as rapid transit and urban renewal. We will have publicly owned and operated amenities such as water parks, libraries, community clubs, water-treatment plants, parks and forests. The tax burden will be fairly shared. Everyone will have access to all amenities and services, *especially* the poor and marginalized. Services and amenities will be paid for in the most cost-efficient, business-like way possible. In other words, we will not allow those with vested economic interests to determine how to develop our city; nor we will allow them to dictate contracts that increase costs to the public for private economic gain. By standing ground on these fundamental policies, we will see Winnipeg flourish as a modern city, a city with heart: a community.

Endnotes

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