

4. Transit

In keeping with the goals of *Our Winnipeg*, public expenditure should provide access to transportation to all citizens equitably while enhancing sustainability. Therefore, we must concentrate on the following:

- Reduce infrastructure deficit
- Stop sprawl
- Enhance public transit
- Enable access to transportation

Potential new revenue sources:

- Gas tax for infrastructure
- Car-share partnership

Cost savings:

- Roadway expansion moratorium

Increased spending:

- Roadway repair & maintenance
- Rapid transit
- Transit
- U-Pass
- Low-income bus pass

Reduce infrastructure deficit

The *Our Winnipeg: Sustainable Transportation* master plan recognizes that the transportation component of our city's infrastructure deficit is more than \$2 billion (*Our Winnipeg*, 26, figure 05b). The current transportation master plan calls for expansion of this deficit. Instead, we need a plan that systematically addresses and reduces it.

The transportation master plan includes proposals to continue to expand our road systems. To our knowledge, there have been no credible cost/benefit analyses done to justify the continued expansion of a road system when we cannot afford to maintain what we already have.

The current budget has earmarked over \$617.9 million for streets and bridges over the 6-year capital plan, starting with \$124.6 million proposed in 2014. The Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan dedicates almost \$400 million to the expansion of Chief Peguis Trail and William Clement Parkway alone (63). We cannot possibly dedicate this level of spending to new road construction if we hope to have a viable Rapid Transit system in Winnipeg. We recommend not building new roads or widening existing roads, bridges, or underpasses. Any money spent on roadways and bridges must be limited to repair & maintenance and to enabling public and alternative transportation.

Scaling back on new road construction complements the sustainable development policies outlined in the Planning and Environmental sections of this Alternative Budget.

We also encourage working with the provincial government to enable the City to charge a 1-cent per litre tax on gasoline within the Winnipeg Capital region. It is important that the City continue to pressure the Province and that it educate the public as to the logic in charging a gas tax to pay for transportation infrastructure.

Enhance public transit

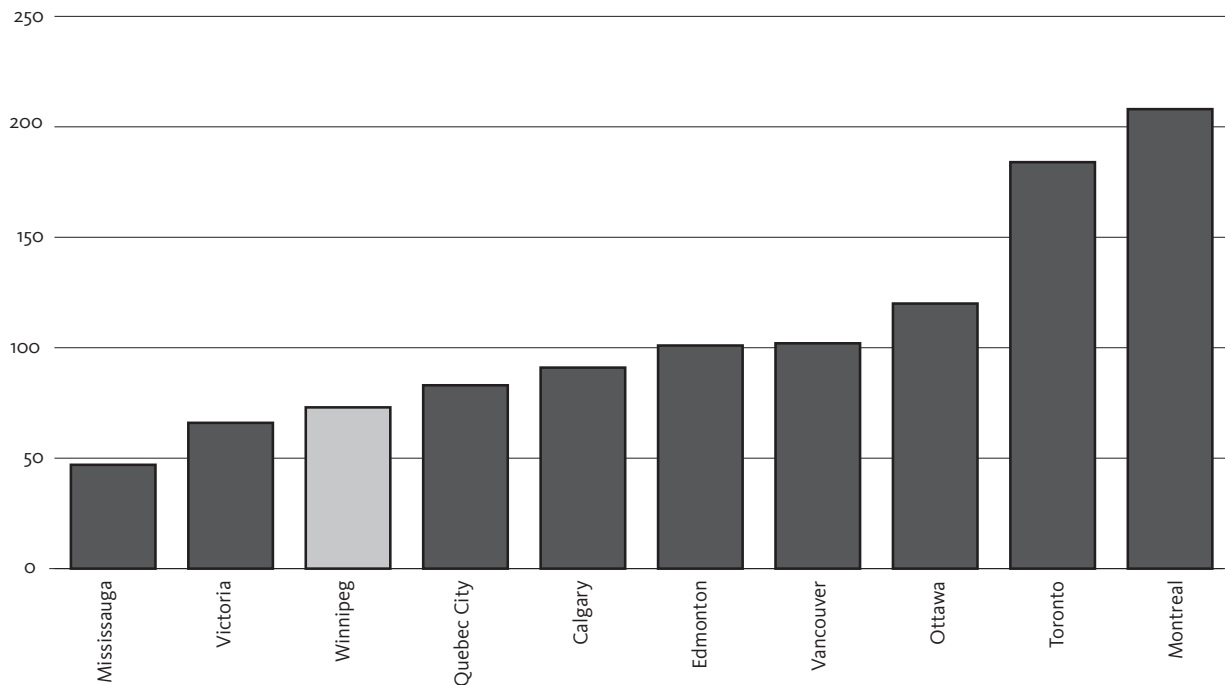
Replacing cars with transit reduces wear and tear on our roadways, bridges, and overpasses, which would ease Winnipeg's infrastructure deficit. We need to invest more to support public transportation and less to support single passenger automobiles.

Winnipeg has one of the lowest rates of transit ridership per capita in the country. (*Winnipeg Preliminary 2014 Operating Budget*, pp 103–105, Figure 5). To encourage more people to choose transit over their cars, public transit needs to be more attractive and competitive. This requires a shift in investment priorities.

Rapid transit

We are very pleased that Winnipeg has completed the first section of our rapid transit sys-

FIGURE 5 Regular Transit Passengers per Capita (2012)



Winnipeg Trend	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	67	68	70	72	73

SOURCE: Canadian Urban Transit Association

tem — Phase I of the South West Rapid Transit Corridor (SWRTC) from Main Street to Jubilee.

Completion of Phase II to connect from Jubilee Avenue to the University of Manitoba is crucial to the success of rapid transit in Winnipeg. This phase has anticipated costs of \$425-million for the transit-way and \$105-million for Jubilee underpass reconstruction. (There is an additional \$70-million allocated for combined-sewer replacements in the vicinity of Calrossie and Cockburn.) The City and Province have each promised to contribute \$225 million for the overall project — we just need commitment of the Federal contribution.

The current 6-year capital investment plan includes \$324.2 million for transit, including a portion of the City's share of the construction of the Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor — Stage 2, forecast in 2015 and 2016. The City and the

Province have recently committed up to \$225 million each toward an integrated rapid transit project. Additional funding is requested from P3 Canada.

While work is underway for Phase II of SWRTC, we also need to support the planning work needed for the subsequent phase — the eastern corridor. The AMB dedicates \$650,000 to advance this plan. These funds will be transferred from the planning for the William R. Clement Parkway extension between Grant and Wilkes, which will be cancelled.

New Expenditures:

- Eastern corridor Rapid Transit Planning: \$650,000
- Cancellation of William R. Clement Parkway Extension: (\$650,000)

FIGURE 6 Bus Spare Ratio

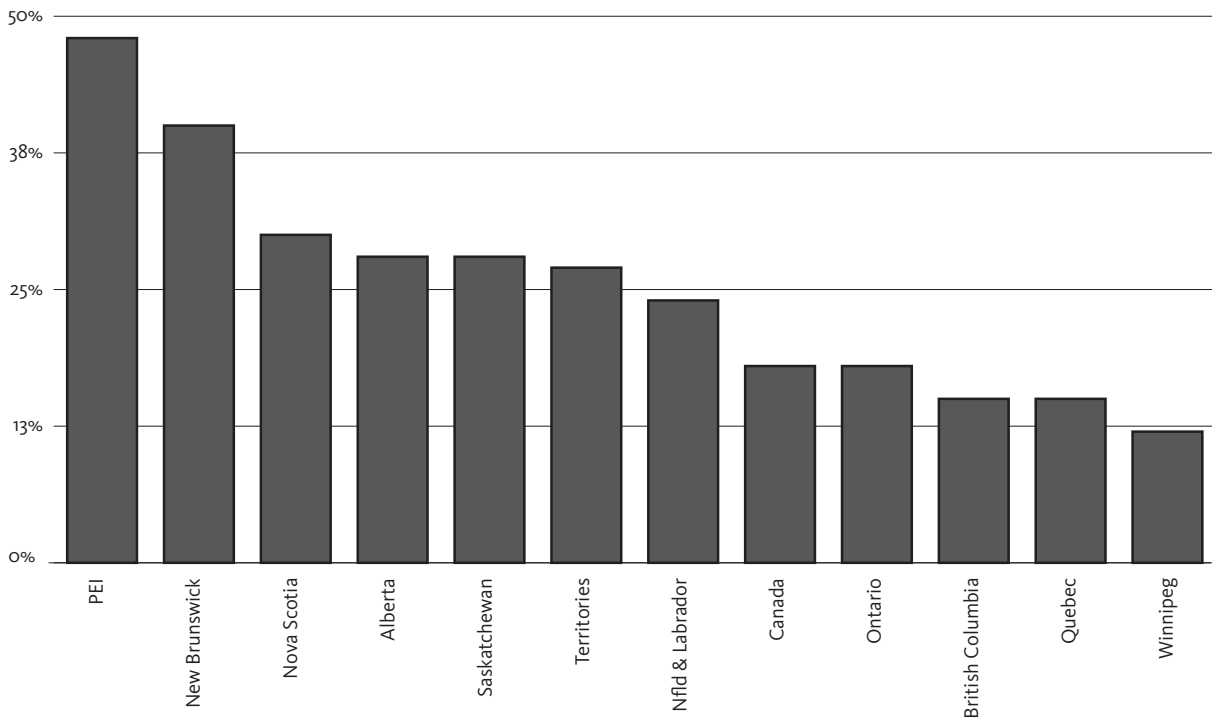
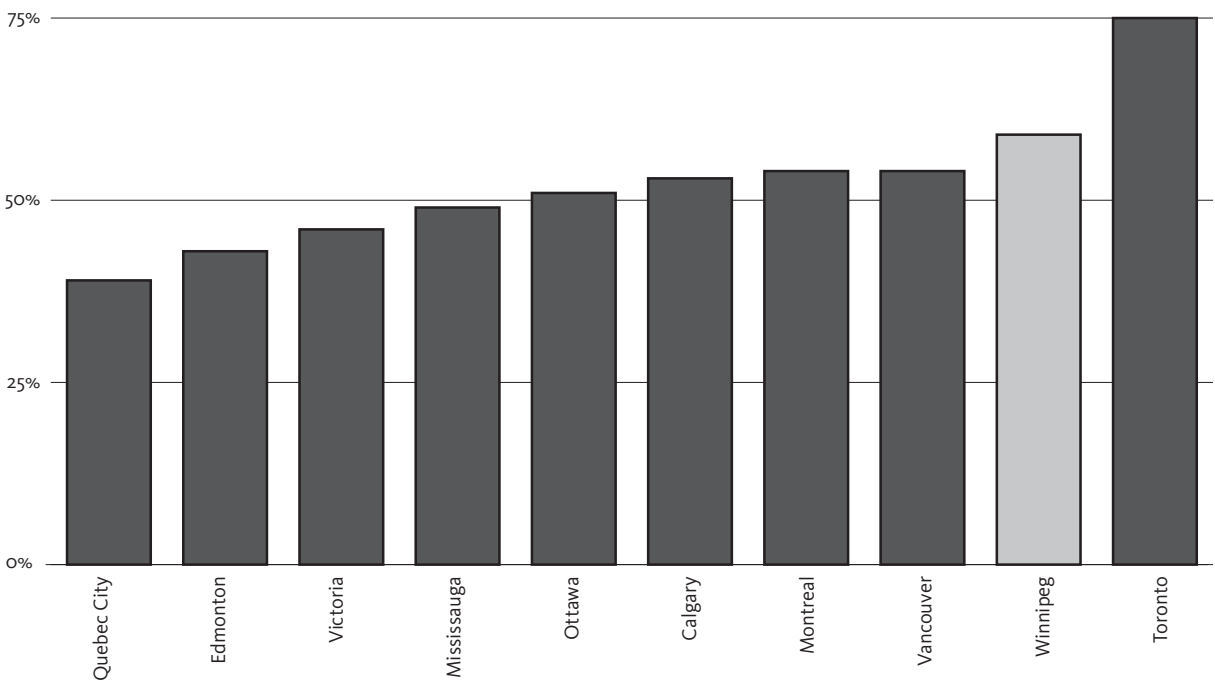


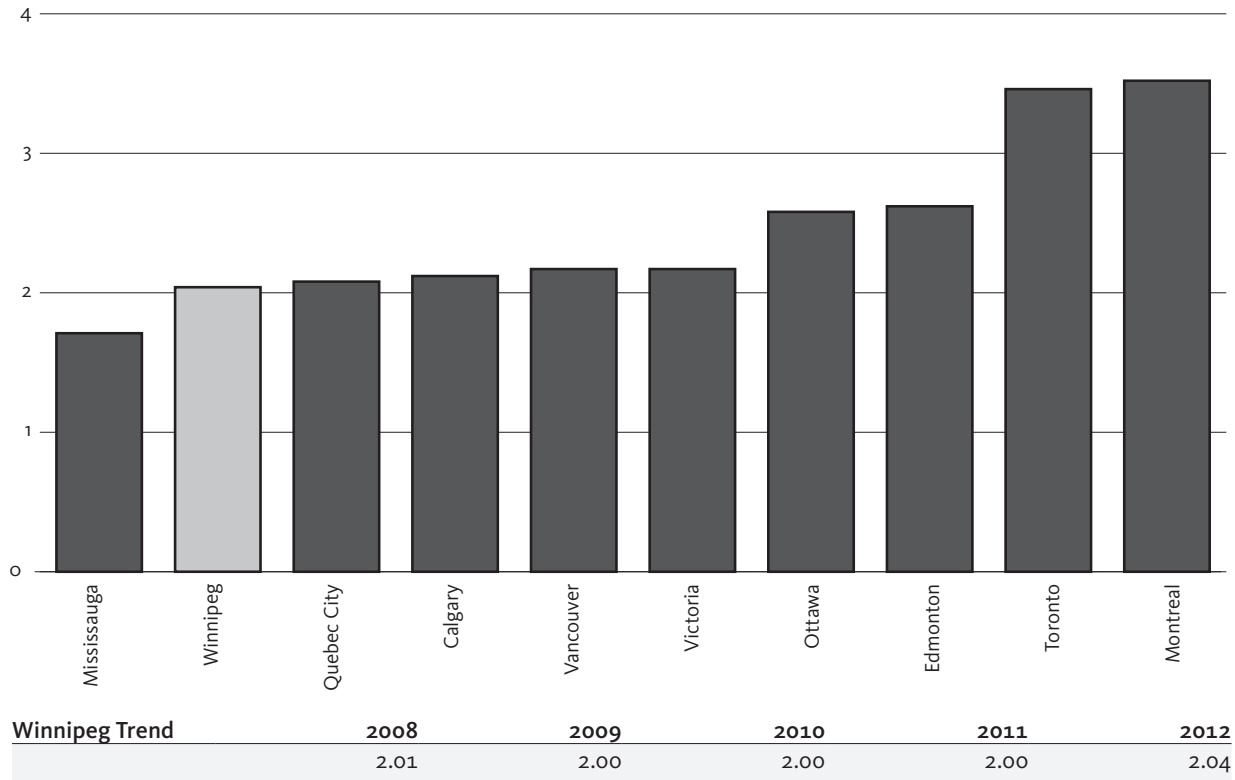
FIGURE 7 Total Operating Revenue/Total Direct Operating Expenses (R/C Ratio) (2012)



Winnipeg Trend	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	50%	61%	59%	60%	59%

SOURCE: Canadian Urban Transit Association

FIGURE 8 Revenue Vehicle Hours/Capita (2012)



SOURCE: Canadian Urban Transit Association

Public transit investment

Besides our investment in rapid transit, the Alternative Budget would invest in improving existing bus service.

Transit’s operations are extremely efficient — there is little “fat” in the system. However, there are indications that we are operating “too close to the bone”. For example, at 11 per cent, we have the lowest “bus spare ratio” in the country — almost all of our buses are always on the road. (Fig 6)

Patterns of land development, coupled with nearly static investment in our public transit system have contributed to Winnipeg having one of the lowest per capita ridership in the country.

Investment in transit needs to be a growing proportion of the budget — not shrinking. In the 2014 Preliminary Budget, the Transit pro-

gram allocation is \$172 million with a City contribution of \$47.6 million. This is 4.9 per cent of the total operating budget. For comparison, in the 2010 budget, the City’s operating subsidy to public transit was \$43.2 million. This is a lesser amount but, at 5.2 per cent, was a larger portion of the total operating budget.

Transit supports more than half of its direct operating expenses with revenue from ridership and advertising to support its operations. This is one of the highest proportions for any Canadian city. (Fig. 7)

Winnipeg has one of the lowest bus hour per capita rates in the country. (Fig. 8) Winnipeg Transit’s bus hours are at 1.48 million hours per year. There was a slight improvement in the hours per capita in 2012. However, we need to continue this trend toward improving bus service availability for our citizens — not just to keep

pace with population growth but to continue to make transit more attractive.

The cost of running a bus is approximately \$100 per hour. Our budget would increase operations by adding 25,000 hours at a cost of \$2.5 million.

New Expenditure: \$2.5M

Transit Quality Corridors

We need to allocate funding and priority for the development of the Transit Quality Corridors called for in the *Our Winnipeg: Sustainable Transportation* master plan.

Transit Quality Corridors are a network of routes that have a set of coordinated priority measures such as “queue- jump lanes approaching intersections, transit vehicle detection for active transit signal priority or pre-emption, passive transit signal priority, relocation or removal of stops and operation of express services. Priority transit services would almost always be able to operate at travel speeds equal to or better than the general traffic” (*Our Winnipeg Sustainable Transportation*, 20).

The network of Transit Quality Corridors identified in the transportation master plan cover the entire city. Although they do not provide the full benefits that come from rapid transit, cost to develop these corridors is substantially lower than full rapid transit and they can be achieved more quickly. The AMB spends \$2.2M on developing transit quality corridors.

New Expenditure:

- Transit quality corridors: \$2.2M

Transit Security

With 52 incidents reported in 2013, security for both transit operators and passengers is a growing concern (Annable, K. 2013). Starting in July 2014, six new officers will be added to the transit operation to increase security presence and

visibility on the transit system. This will require an additional appropriation in 2014 of \$233,800 (\$116,900 after provincial cost sharing). This is intended to be financed through Transit’s own retained earnings. Future years’ funding needs to be included in future budgets. However, it is not clear what powers these officers will have, particularly because the Winnipeg Police Association is opposed to these new officers performing the same duties they do (CTV News). The AMB recommends that Transit work with the Winnipeg Police Association to establish a branch of transit police who will have the proper training to ensure passenger and operator security.

In addition to these officers, the Alternative Budget recommends investigating the re-introduction of transit security stations as annexes to some bus shelters in high-incident locations. Transit security personnel would be stationed at these locations only during high-incident hours. This would provide a fixed location for operators and passengers to seek assistance and would provide a reassuring presence. To start, a downtown security station should be provided with operating hours between 2 p.m. and 9 p.m., at a cost of \$200,000.

As much as possible, the new Transit security operation should coordinate their work and establish close communication facilities and systems with the Police Service, the Cadets, and the Downtown Watch.

New Expenditure:

- Transit security station: \$200,000

Car-share

The City could see a new revenue stream and offset the costs of operating its vehicle fleet by making some of the City’s vehicles available to a car-share network. These vehicles would be booked on-line, would be managed and maintained by the car-share company, and would only be available to the public when not needed for City business.

Winnipeg now has a successful car-share company in the Peg City Car Coop. This system is limited by the number and distribution of vehicles. Making some of the City's vehicle fleet available off-hours would enable car-share to grow significantly and would provide an option to automobile ownership for more citizens in more parts of the city. The AMB will fund a study to examine the feasibility of a car-share program, in the amount of \$20,000.

New Expenditure:

- Car-share feasibility study: \$20,000

Low-income Bus Pass

Currently, provincial employment and income assistance will provide bus passes or tickets to individuals on income assistance, depending on assessed need. A low-income bus pass such as available in Calgary would go a long way to making Winnipeg Transit accessible to all. That city was able to shift attitudes about what causes people to live in poverty and what keeps them there; transportation came to be seen as an important component in social and economic inclusion (CCPA MB. 2012). This policy is particularly meaningful to low-income single mothers who have to balance work and daycare or school. The AMB allocates \$200,000 to the implementation of a low-income bus pass program.

New Expenditure:

- Low-income bus pass program: \$200,000

U-Pass

In the fall of 2012, students from the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba voted overwhelmingly in support of the implementation of a Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) Program. A U-Pass would give eligible students unlimited access to regular Winnipeg Transit services for the fall and winter academic terms for a set price.

The U-Pass program provides a variety of benefits to the student, university and larger community. The potential return on investment has both altruistic and fiscal benefits (Urban Systems, 2005; Litman, 2009; Waisman & Dykstra, 2009).

Consistent and Sustained Fare Revenue

Based on current enrolment figures for both institutions, it is estimated that the U-Pass program would generate \$9.9 million in relatively predictable revenue for Winnipeg Transit each academic year. Currently students do not have access to such a program, making their ridership susceptible to variations in student funding, weather changes, and course scheduling. In contrast, the U-Pass would ensure a predictable, consistent revenue stream for Winnipeg Transit that would be invaluable for future planning and budgeting purposes. Research indicates students who use a U-Pass during their post-secondary education are more likely to continue using public transit after graduation. For example, 50 per cent of recent graduates from the University of Alberta and Grant MacEwan University continued to use public transit (Urban Systems, 2005). Nonetheless, in order to make the program a reality, funding gaps need to be met by the City of Winnipeg. Some of these gaps will be ameliorated by the increase in ridership that will be a result of students having access to the U-Pass.

Rapid Transit/ Increased Ridership — 50 per cent Increase

The second phase of the Rapid Transit line was recently approved by the City of Winnipeg and the Province. The route will end at the University of Manitoba. Although the estimated date of completion is 2018, the implementation of the U-Pass would immediately change the transportation habits of students at the University of Manitoba thereby, increasing overall ridership numbers even before rapid transit arrives on campus. For exam-

ple, since, the adoption of the U-Pass in 2003 at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) had an increased student ridership of 63 per cent (Urban Systems, 2005). We can expect that the combination of the U-Pass and improved transit service to the University of Manitoba will increase ridership and revenues.

Past surveys conducted by Winnipeg Transit demonstrate that approximately 34 per cent of students at the University of Manitoba and 43–47 per cent of students at the University of Winnipeg use transit as their primary mode of travel to school. With the implementation of the U-Pass, the City of Winnipeg could experience a projected 50 per cent increase in student ridership similar to British Columbia and Alberta (Urban Systems, 2005; Waisman & Dykstra, 2009). This is likely to result in increased ridership in poor-performing bus routes and maximization of bus usage and provide a sustained measure of support for the ridership along the second leg of the Rapid Transit line.

Environmental Benefits

With the adoption of the U-Pass, students are more likely to opt for transit over their cars, allowing the City to reduce the overall carbon footprint associated with travel to and from the major post-secondary institutions. In 2008, students at the University of Alberta and Grant MacEwan University reported replacing 5.5 million car trips per academic year with transit due to the availability of the U-Pass (Waisman & Dykstra, 2009). The reduction in car trips represents 1,981 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Equivalents (CDE) which is calculated at a carbon trade market value of over \$49,536 (Litman, 2009).

Reduced Road Maintenance/Improved Parking

In the span of two years, the U-Pass program saved the City of Edmonton approximately \$1.3

million in road maintenance. These savings are based on Todd Litman's (2009) report, *Evaluating Public Transit Benefits and Costs*, wherein he notes that "research has shown that 30 automobile drivers shifting to transit can provide savings worth between \$0.15 and \$1.73 per kilometer" (p. 6). In addition to these monetary savings, more students opting to take transit will result in a reduction of traffic congestion and reduced parking demands in communities surrounding both universities.

Social Benefits

A student U-Pass makes public transportation more affordable for the many students who live with lower incomes and work minimum-wage jobs. The pass would make it easier to get to and from work while keeping expenses down.

Required Investment

The current estimated combined cost per student for the U-Pass program at the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg is \$306, thus requiring an annual operating subsidy of \$3,362,501 (Radstrom, 2013). In a City of Winnipeg U-Pass Report, Winnipeg Transit also identified the need to increase regular services due to anticipated overcrowding on routes (primarily to the University of Manitoba) which would require purchasing eight transit buses. The additional amortized annual capital cost was estimated at \$312,244 (Radstrom, 2013). The eight additional buses will not be exclusively used by students, but rather the larger general Winnipeg bus ridership, so the additional capital costs should be factored into Winnipeg Transit's overall capital budget proposed to the City of Winnipeg, not allocated to students as suggested in the report. Furthermore, municipalities with active U-Pass programs (Vancouver, Edmonton and Ottawa) include a 100 per cent city funded subsidy for the operation of the program (Radstrom, 2013).

Additionally, total investment made by the City of Winnipeg is mitigated with its 50/50 funding partnership with the Province of Manitoba for Winnipeg Transit and other infrastructure needs.

Finally, participating student unions have indicated their collective intention of investing close to \$5.5 million dollars for a viable U-Pass program and encourage the city to match their investment as closely as possible. Students are proposing an initial investment of 75 per cent-100 per cent of the \$3,362,501 annual operating subsidy for a 36 month Winnipeg pilot program. A full program review will occur at the end of the program's pilot status.

The U-Pass program carries significant returns on investment. As previously stated, the U-Pass program institutes consistent fare revenues along with substantial increases in ridership, both necessary to substantiate the development of future transit developments. Additionally, the anticipated switch in behaviour among students will lead to having fewer single occupancy vehicles on the road and, as research demonstrates, reduce carbon emissions and save in overall road maintenance.

In February 2014 City Council approved the U-Pass program plan, but with an increased contribution from students (\$260 for two semesters). The amount approved is \$80 more than what University of Manitoba students approved and \$60 more than what University of Winnipeg students approved. Referenda will be held to approve the new higher amount, putting the program in jeopardy. Given the broad benefits

the program will deliver to all citizens, the AMB recommends the following spending in accordance with a \$200 charge to students for a two semester pass. Also left to negotiate is how the cost of new busses will be allocated.

Total U-Pass expenditure:

- 75 per cent of annual operating subsidy for pilot project: \$2,521,875

Total increase spending for Transit

- Planning for eastern Rapid Transit corridor: \$650,000
- Cancellation of W.R. Clement Parkway extension: \$(650,000)
- Car share program study: \$ 20,000
- Transit quality corridors: \$2.2M
- Increase bus operations: \$2.5M
- Downtown security station: \$200,000
- Low-income bus pass: \$200,000
- U-Pass program: \$2.52M

Total: \$8.2M

References for graphics:

- Figures 5, 7, 8 are screenshots directly from "2014 Adopted Budget — Volume 1", Transit Performance Measures, pp 100 — 101
- Figure 6 from data in Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), Canadian Transit Fleet and On-board Equipment Fact Book — 2012 Operating Data