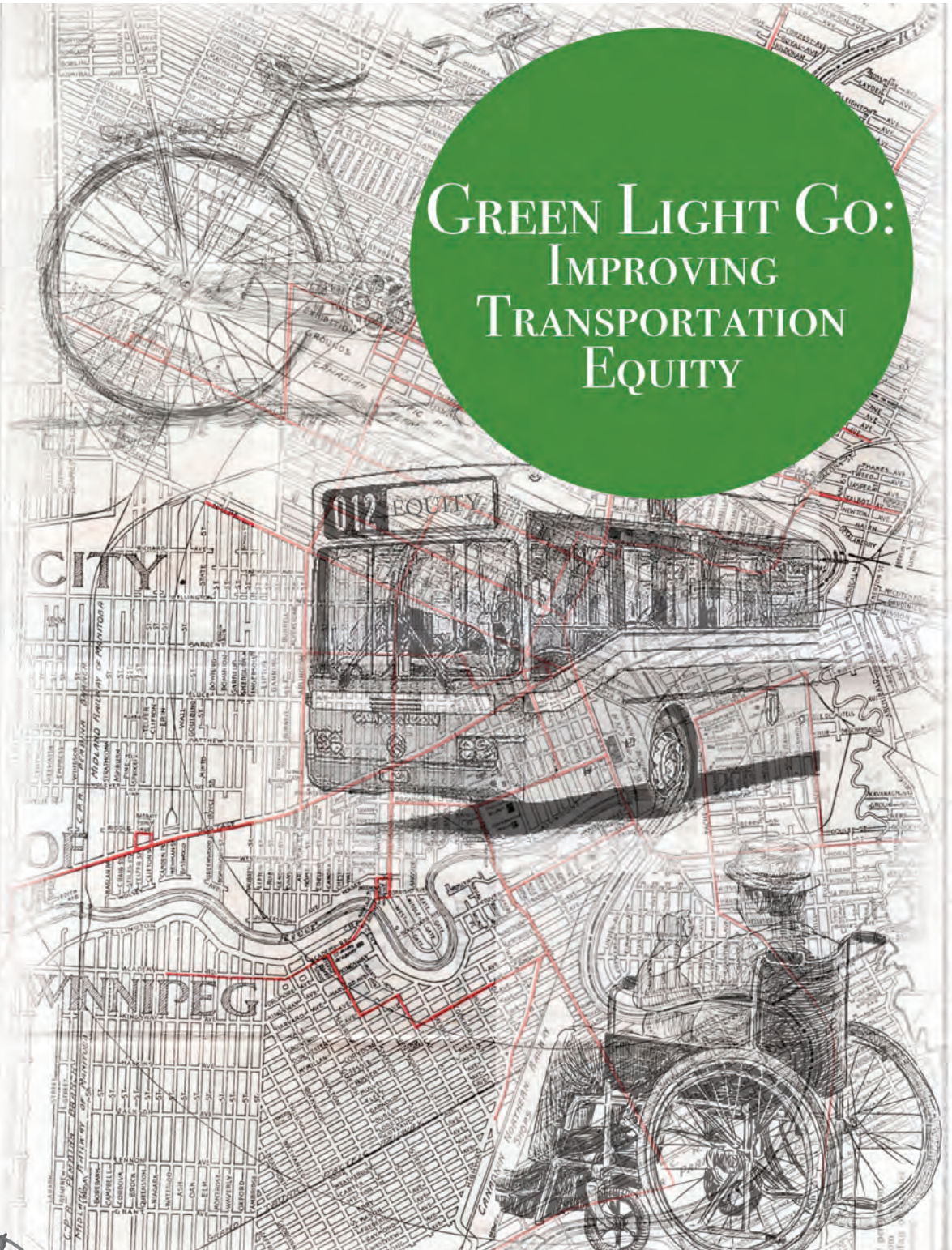


State of the **INNER CITY**



GREEN LIGHT GO: IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

**Green Light Go: Improving Transportation Equity
in Winnipeg's Inner City
State of the Inner City Report 2018**

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I began my career in policy and community advocacy as an intern at CCPA working on the State of the Inner City Report 2010 and I take great pride in coming full circle as this year's author.

Thank you everyone who contributed to this year's report, especially those who shared with me their own personal struggles. I would also like to thank those who came out to meetings, those who shared with me their advice and knowledge and everyone who put up with my endless emails. I would like to especially thank Orly Linovski, ATU, BUILD, John Howard Society, Spence Neighbourhood Association, Rossbrook House, Carlos Sosa, Ikwe Saferide, Boldness Project, Shawna Peloquin, Kyle Weibe at IISD, Functional Transit Winnipeg, and Anders Swanson.

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Canada

State of the Inner City Reports 2005–2017

Date	Reports	Topics
2005	The Promise of Investment in Community-Led Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describing inner city - Statistical overview - Housing, employment development and education • A view from the neighbourhoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparative analysis of Spence, Centennial and Lord Selkirk Park
2006	Inner City Voices: Community-Based Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A portrait of West Broadway and North Point Douglas</i> • <i>Inner City Refugee Women: Lessons for Public Policy</i> • <i>Bridging the Community-Police Divide: Safety and Security in Winnipeg's Inner City</i>
2007	Step by Step: Stories of Change in Winnipeg's Inner City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Building a Community of Opportunity and Hope: Lord Selkirk Park Housing Developments</i> • <i>Costing an Ounce of Prevention: The Fiscal Benefits of Investing in Inner City Preventive Strategies</i> (cost to themselves and society of young women entering the street sex trade) • <i>Is Participation Having an Impact?</i> (how do we measure progress in Winnipeg's Inner City? A participatory approach to understanding outcomes)
2008	Putting Our Housing in Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Policy, people and Winnipeg's inner city</i> • <i>Voicing housing experiences in inner city Winnipeg</i> • <i>From revitalization to revaluation in the Spence neighbourhood</i> • <i>Homeownership for low-income households: outcomes for families and communities</i>
2009	It Takes All Day to be Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven individuals document their experiences living on a low income budget • <i>Tracking poverty in Winnipeg's inner city 1996–2006</i> (analysis of census data) • <i>Lord Selkirk Park: Rebuilding from Within</i> (how community and government can work together to make change for the better)
2010	We're in it for the Long Haul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Together we have CLOUT: model of service delivery and analysis of "the Just City"</i> • <i>Early Childhood Education and Care in the Inner City and Beyond: Addressing the Inequalities Facing Winnipeg's Aboriginal children</i> • <i>Squeezed Out: The impact of rising rents and condo conversions on inner city neighbourhoods</i>
2011	Neo-Liberalism: What a Difference a Theory Makes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance Program: Exploring the Policy Impacts on Winnipeg's inner city</i> • <i>Housing for People, Not Markets: Neoliberalism and housing in Winnipeg's inner city</i> • <i>Policy and the Unique Needs of Aboriginal Second-Chance Learners</i>
2012	Breaking barriers, building bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who's accountable to the community?</i> (two way accountability government to community-based organizations) • <i>Fixing our divided city: Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth, inner city and non-inner city and Aboriginal Elders' dialogue on breaking down barriers</i>
2013	A Youth Lens on Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Literature of youth @ poverty: safety, housing and education</i> • <i>Youth photovoice</i>
2014	Community, Research and Social Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Its more than a collection of stories", looking back on 10 years of State of the Inner City Reports and investment in inner city</i> • <i>Community-based supports and the child welfare system</i>
2015	Drawing on our Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>High and Rising Revisited: Changes in Poverty and Related Inner City Characteristics 1996–011</i> • <i>Indigenous and Newcomer Young People's Experiences of Employment and Unemployment</i> • <i>Beneath the Surface and Beyond the Present: Gains in Fighting Poverty in Winnipeg's Inner City</i>
2016	Reconciliation Lives Here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Marathon Not a Sprint: Reconciliation and Organizations in Winnipeg's Inner City</i> • <i>Bringing Our Community Back: Grassroots and Reconciliation in Winnipeg's Inner City</i>
2017	Between a Rock and a Hard Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Challenges in Measuring Value and Impact in Community-Based Programming</i> • <i>Winnipeg's Inner City Infographic Poster</i>

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Summary

Transportation is essential for getting almost everything we need in our daily lives. Finding a job or going to work, getting groceries or other supplies, participating in social activities, accessing healthcare or social services all require the ability to get there. The inability to travel when and where one needs without difficulty can be understood as ‘transportation disadvantage’. A person is more likely to experience transportation disadvantage¹ if they are low-income, minority status, and lack motorized transportation. Our community partners working in the Inner City have told us that many of the people who frequent their services experience transportation disadvantage and that this impacts all other areas of their lives. There is little formal research or data either documenting or tracking transportation disadvantage in Winnipeg.

Winnipeg, like many other cities, has seen inequities in where investments have been made. While deep pockets of poverty exist outside the Inner City, the communities within the Inner City boundaries² have a long history of concentrated poverty. It is an area that has historically been divided by class and race.³ We believe that the voices and stories of these individuals and communities are critical in directing develop better policy at all levels of government. This research

consulted with 20 Inner City residents to better understand the struggles they have with getting to where they need to go. We also held a town-hall on transportation where Inner City residents were invited to participate in developing policy to address transportation disadvantage. The recommendations presented in this report emerged from what we heard.

The first overarching recommendation in this report is to embed principles of equity into transportation planning. Transportation equity is the idea that everyone, regardless of physical ability, economic class, race, sex, gender identity, age or ability to pay should have access to public transit and active transportation options.⁴ Embedding principles of equity into transportation system design can help us build a transportation system that reduces the barriers for people experiencing transportation disadvantage. Achieving transportation equity however requires investment from all levels of government to improve bus service as well as walking and biking infrastructure. This is the second overarching recommendation. But it does not stop there. An equitable transportation system brings in a historical understanding of how Indigenous peoples experience higher rates of violence and discrimination against them and works to create

a system that mitigates against this. It acknowledges that people who live in poverty often get stuck in a poverty trap due to systemic barriers, further reducing employment options. An equitable system works to remove physical barriers that people with disabilities have to overcome every day. An equitable transportation system gives people the ability to contribute to their communities and to improve their own lives.

Based on our Research, the Following Recommendations Emerge:

- Embed principles of equity in transportation planning
- Increased investment in transit and active transportation
- Development of a low-income bus pass
- Improved service for transit-dependent populations, including:
 - The development of a Frequent Service Network
 - Improved Handi-Transit service
 - On-demand pilot program to improve food security in the Inner City
 - Bus service to the beach to improve social inclusion
 - Sensitivity training for bus drivers
- Addressing safety concerns by addressing root causes of crime
- Improved active transportation network, especially in the Inner City, including:
 - Improved snow removal
 - Installation of safety phones
- Addressing safety for Indigenous women taking taxis

The State of the Inner City

Since 2005 the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba (CCPA-MB) has collaborated with Winnipeg Inner City organizations to research issues that matter to them and the communities they serve. The goal of the State of the Inner City is to connect the personal struggles of the people who live in the Inner City with the political realities and structures that affect their lives. While deep pockets of poverty exist outside the Inner City, the communities within the Inner City boundaries have a long history of concentrated poverty. It is an area that has historically been divided by class and race.⁵ We believe that the voices and stories that these individuals and communities are critical in directing develop better policy at all levels of government.

It's also important for these voices simply to be heard. When people live a marginalized existence they are often made to feel that their voices don't matter and their opinions don't count. Expressing your voice can be an important first step in developing personal agency and furthering community capacity for positive change. Following Indian theorist and philosopher Gayatri Spivak, even the most marginalized populations, those who are rarely given a voice, can in fact, "speak and know their conditions".⁶ Many of the participants we interviewed as part of this re-

search had strong opinions about how things can be improved. The State of the Inner City report attempts to act as a megaphone for these voices and to ultimately, guide the development of a more equitable and liveable city for all.

Identifying the Topic

In early 2018 our community partners came together to discuss what this year's topic should be. There were many issues presented to us as areas that would be important to investigate including the meth crisis, childcare, income inequality, racism, and Indigenous migration into urban centres among many others. Transportation barriers were a topic that popped up early on as an area needing further understanding. It is a topic that the State of the Inner City has never specifically focused on.

Transportation barriers have frequently been mentioned in other reports that the CCPA has conducted on topics such as accessing ID and employment barriers. In these reports respondents spoke about how they couldn't afford bus fare to get to work or get to government offices to apply for identification. While money presents one of the biggest barriers for people being able to get to where they need to go, there are many other

challenges such as reliability and scheduling issues within existing transportation options; safety and perceptions of safety; and physical mobility—especially for seniors and people with disabilities.

When finalizing our research question with our community partners, it was also noted that simply looking at transit services alone is not enough. While many people (for example low-income, minority status, and non-car owning), who reside in the Inner City are likely to be dependent on the bus to get where they need to go they also walk, bike, wheel-chair or take taxis when they can afford to do so. Concerns about walking alone at night and people being robbed of their bikes were reported by our community partners. Taxi-drivers soliciting young Indigenous women for sex in exchange for fare were also raised by our partners, which in turn highlighted the need to bring in an understanding of how gender and racial inequalities affect the ability of those who live in the Inner City to get around.⁷ It was decided through subsequent meetings with our partners that a ‘transportation equity’ lens would be a better way to understand all of the barriers that people face in accessing transportation.

The research questions that we finalized with our partners was ‘How do Inner City residents experience transportation *inequity* and how can transportation equity be achieved?’

While equity principles are fairly well established in the domains of health care, education and housing, in contrast, equity in the practice of transport planning and policy has received less attention.⁸ Given the connection between mobility and health outcomes, there is an urgent need to increase fairness and access to transportation. Ensuring that people can afford to take the bus and are able to safely reach their destination by biking, walking, and wheel-chairing is an important tool in fighting poverty and improving health outcomes. This is especially true in Winnipeg’s Inner City.

The research questions that we finalized with our partners was ‘How do Inner City residents experience transportation *inequity* and how can transportation equity be achieved?’ By asking these questions we are stating from the outset that transportation *inequity* does exist in Winnipeg; both as a symptom as well as a determinant of other inequities. We also argue that transportation inequity is something that must be addressed if we are to improve social determinants of health such as access to jobs, educational outcomes, physical and mental well-being, social connectivity and food insecurity.

To build a transportation system that works for the most vulnerable we need to fully understand the challenges. This research project was guided by an advisory committee with membership from community-based organizations, Indigenous women and people with disabilities. We spoke with twenty people living in Winnipeg’s Inner City and asked them about the barriers they experience in getting where they need to go. We applied for and receive ethics approval to conduct the research from the University of Winnipeg. We also hosted a townhall discussion at the Thunderbird House on September 25th 2018 where all Inner City residents were invited to attend. Many people spoke of the general struggles they have with being poor and that difficulty getting around was just one more struggle they had to deal with;

My feet are always killing me. I have a lot of foot pain and I have depression and anxiety panic attacks... but I think it’s from being poor honestly.... it all adds up.

This research was conducted at a time when we are in danger of moving in the wrong policy direction for transportation. Recent Provincial Government cuts to funding for Winnipeg Transit highlighted the need for meaningful investment by all levels of government to support transit and sustainable transportation. These investments should promote healthy, safe, and inclusive communities. Addi-

tionally, the *Our Winnipeg* plan review (which includes a section on sustainable transportation), as well as the development of a Transit Master Plan, presented an opportunity for us to conduct this research at a moment in time when we have an opportunity to recommend transportation equity is embedded into these renewed policy documents. Winnipeg is at a critical juncture in growth. Winnipeg’s current population is 705,244⁹ and it is estimated that Winnipeg will reach a million people by 2033.¹⁰ To ensure that this growth doesn’t leave our most vulnerable populations behind, a more equitable transportation system is required. The overarching recommendation in this report is that *Our Winnipeg*, the Transit Master Plan and all other documents relating to transportation policy meaningfully incorporate transportation equity principles at the design stage.

The Problem: Transportation Disadvantage
 Research has shown that the poorest groups in any given country tend to be less mobile than higher income earners.¹¹ They are also less likely to have access to private *and* public transport services both in number of options and the quality of services available to them.¹²

Transportation disadvantage has been defined as the inability to travel when and where one needs without difficulty.¹³ Difficulties experienced can include costs, lack of service (for example bus service or the physical infrastructure

to walk or bike), or a lack of physical accessibility (in the case of those who have disabilities). While statistics for transportation disadvantage by neighbourhood cluster does not exist for Winnipeg, one recent study concluded that residents of the North End — one neighbourhood within the

“My feet are always killing me. I have a lot of foot pain and I have depression and anxiety panic attacks... but I think it’s from being poor honestly.... it all adds up.”

broader boundaries of the Inner City — are more likely to be transportation disadvantaged than the rest of the city.¹⁴ Non-ownership of a vehicle, low-income, and minority ethnic identity are all associated with transportation disadvantage. As Table 1 shows, neighbourhoods in the Inner City have lower incomes, more people who commute using transit and higher proportions of Indigenous people and visible minorities than Winnipeg on average. It’s important to note that the data in this table is census data, which only counts trips to work. This means that it likely undercounts people reliant on transit who are unemployed.

Of the twenty individuals interviewed, everyone checked off at least two out of the three indicators of transport disadvantage. As a result of transportation disadvantage an individual may also experience transportation exclusion. Transportation exclusion occurs when people are prevented from participating in the economic,

TABLE 1 Selected Indicators of Transportation Disadvantage

Name of Neighbourhoods	Indicators of Transit-dependency (All values in per cent)		
	Avg HH income below \$30,000	Commuters using transit	Indigenous and visible minorities
Point Douglas North	51.6	30.4	42.9
Dufferin	62.6	26.1	68.2
William Whyte	45.8	30.1	66.6
Lord Selkirk Park	75.0	22.4	67.8
Winnipeg	27.5	14.2	26.5

SOURCE: Chandran 2017.

political, and social life of the community as a result of their reduced accessibility to opportunities, services, and social networks, because of insufficient mobility in a society and environment that assumes high mobility.¹⁵

Experiences with transportation disadvantage, can be influenced by other factors. For example, an Indigenous woman also experiences discrimination (both as a woman but also as an Indigenous person) and is more likely to experience violence against her (including stranger-on-stranger violence).¹⁶ Compared to a white woman, she is less likely to achieve higher education and even when she does, she makes less than her white female counterpart even with the same education levels.¹⁷ Indigenous women also experience poorer health outcomes,¹⁸ which may affect her physical mobility. These other factors deepen her experiences with transportation disadvantage; making her less mobile and in turn, limiting her opportunities to advance in other areas of her life such as getting and keeping a good job, getting good childcare for her children, and accessing nutritious food and medical supports. This is why many transportation advocates are calling for increased equity when it comes to transportation planning.¹⁹

Transportation Equity: A Way Forward

While significant discussion around transit and active transportation is occurring in Winnipeg,

Transportation equity is the idea that everyone, regardless of physical ability, economic class, race, sex, gender identity, age or ability to pay should have access to public transit and active transportation options.

much of the focus of the current discussion tends to be about how to attract new ridership to offset operational costs and/or to reduce congestion and greenhouse gases (GHG). While these are important goals that should be pursued, transpor-

tation equity pays special attention to those who experience marginalization. As transportation is required to access opportunities and services, a lack of access to transportation for marginalized communities is an issue of equity. Creating a transportation system that is equitable is about ensuring that the transportation needs of the most socio-economically vulnerable populations are included in the design and construction of transportation policy. It demands that when we create policy, do planning and allocate resources that we ask ourselves ‘who does this benefit?’ as well as ‘who might this disadvantage?’ Transportation equity argues that everyone, regardless of physical ability, economic class, race, sex, gender identity, age or ability to pay should have access to public transit and active transportation options. When more resources are directed to communities that are marginalized we can achieve better equity outcomes. In short, working towards transportation equity can be an important part of fighting poverty and inequality in Winnipeg.

When discussing equity it’s important to remember that equity and equality are not the same thing. Equity means acknowledging that people have unequal access to opportunities and services, so they must receive different provisions to right this.

Transportation equity is strongly linked to equity planning: an approach that attempts to offer a wider range of choices to individuals who at present have few options.²⁰ Equity planning is a planning strategy meant to address and reduce distributional inequalities as well as a planning practice that emphasizes the responsibility of planners to uphold the rights of the least advantaged; to redress the existing socio-economic disparities; and to ensure the equitable distribution of the community’s limited resources.²¹ Equity planning criticizes institutional policies that are against the interests of the disadvantaged sections, and is a departure from the ‘trickle down’ principle.²²

While Winnipeg as a whole will benefit from public transit infrastructure investments, the

benefits are not necessarily equally distributed across the city. Winnipeg has structural inequities that have been created over decades including where growth has occurred; the type and density of development; where transit and other infrastructures are constructed; and, where public and private capital is invested and extracted. One international review of jurisdictions found that investment in transit tends to favour the influential power elites of the region, and thereby reinforce pre-existing inequities.²³

Recent research that examined equity in planning the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) of three Canadian cities including Winnipeg, revealed that transit equity is rarely figured into the design and planning of BRT systems.²⁴ This same research found that perhaps as importantly, there is a lack of clarity in both defining equity and determining how it should be integrated in planning processes.²⁵ When transit equity was implemented, most definitions of 'transit equity' focused on the equal distribution of resources for all groups rather than consideration of transit-dependent riders. A major focus of the BRT development was directed towards shifting land-use and creating a less auto-dependent region. While creating a less vehicle-dependent city may result in increased accessibility, those benefits may not be felt across all groups. For example, increased accessibility for transit-dependent riders would depend on which areas are serviced well, as well as the cost of using the service. Reducing barriers for certain groups that have greater difficulty in accessing transit however is critical for improving access and should be a consideration at the planning stages.

In short, if equity is not worked into planning from the beginning, transportation investments will tend to benefit areas that are already doing well, while not changing the prospects for areas

that are not. Positive outcomes across demographics are more likely to be evenly achieved if transportation equity is worked into the planning stages.

One researcher highlights a major paradox in transportation planning: that those that suffer from the greatest transportation exclusion are often not heard during the planning process.

Achieving the goals of transportation inclusion also demands policy makers to recognize the transportation needs of those who are unable to reach their destinations due to various accessibility barriers rather than focusing on the visible demand for transportation....

However the travel needs of the people facing transportation exclusion or disadvantage often remain hidden, making it more difficult to frame strategies for their transportation inclusion.²⁶

A greater effort to include these experiences and voices is required in order to develop greater transportation equity.

At present, we have an incredible opportunity to influence transportation policy to become more equitable. The Winnipeg Transit Master plan is in the process of being developed and the *Our Winnipeg* plan — which includes a section on sustainable transportation — is being renewed.

At present, we have an incredible opportunity to influence transportation policy to become more equitable. The Winnipeg Transit Master plan is in the process of being developed and the *Our Winnipeg* plan — which includes a section on sustainable transportation — is being renewed. The City should ensure that these plans are developed according to transportation equity principles so that the city's most vulnerable has access to safe, convenient and affordable transportation.

What We Heard

Background of Our Participants

We recruited participants through word of mouth and by putting up posters asking for people to share their experiences about transportation at Inner City community-based organizations. Twenty interview participants were selected on a first-come basis. Recruitment criteria required that people reside in the Inner City. An honorarium of \$25 plus bus fare was offered for their participation. This study received ethics approval from the University of Winnipeg's research office.

We asked participants for basic demographic background information. Sixteen participants earned between \$0–\$15,000 per year; three earned between \$15,000 and \$25,000 per year; and one earned between \$35,000 and \$45,000 per year. Eight identified as First Nations; eight as Caucasian; and four as either Afro-Canadian or Afro-Caribbean descent. Twelve identified as female; seven as male; and one as transgender. All respondents were renters except one who owned their own home. Only one respondent owned their own vehicle. Nineteen out of twenty indicated that taking transit, supplemented by biking or walking, were the primary modes of transportation. These numbers tell us that all of the people we spoke to would qualify in at least two out of three indicators for transporta-

tion disadvantage with the majority qualifying for all three. We co-hosted a town hall in partnership with labour and transit advocates with a complementary dinner and elder one evening at a community space with 45 participants. More engagement with communities is needed and by working in partnerships with different communities of identity and geography we will be able to better learn about different experiences of transportation.

What was heard during our interviews and townhall is presented in four primary themes: affordability; reliability and convenience; safety and comfort; and physical mobility. The feedback from participants could fall into more than one category (for example snow clearing is both a physical mobility issue as well as a safety issue) and therefore specific issues sometimes cross categories. As well, many people use multiple ways to get to a destination. For example, walk to the bus stop or bike to one area and then bus to reach the final destination. Some people reported they would take the bus to get groceries and then taxi back because carrying large loads on the bus was too hard for them. Therefore, what we heard isn't presented in strict categories of transit, walking, biking, taxi but rather under the four themes. Presenting the information in

this manner is also meant to demonstrate that we need to think about people’s movement holistically. Very few people only drive, walk, bike or take the bus and therefore it’s important to think about how the transportation system can improve the connectivity of inter-modal travel.

Affordability Challenges

By far, money was cited as the number one barrier. Many of the young workers in the study said that they buy a 5-day bus pass so they could get to work during the week and then walk on the weekends to cut back on costs. Worryingly though, many said that they often went without other necessities such as food in order to buy a bus passes. Respondents also stated that the 25-cent fare hike on January 1 2018 hit them hard.

In 2017 the Province of Manitoba announced it would freeze funding to Winnipeg Transit’s operating costs at 2016 levels, leading to a \$10

million shortfall in the operating budget. In addition to this Winnipeg Transit saw a decrease in revenue of \$3.875 million primarily related to declining ridership in 2017 and \$2.481 million in 2016.²⁷ In response to the significant budget gap that this created, the City announced service cuts alongside fare increases. In response to public outcry the City reversed the planned service cuts in favour of increasing on-street parking fees.²⁸ Fare hikes of 25 cents per ride went ahead on January 1 2018.

Individuals living at the Market Basket Measure poverty line spend 6.5 per cent of their income on transit, however when the cost of transit and housing is combined that figure jumps to 64 per cent (Table 3). Because people cannot buy a little bit of housing, they have to budget around what is left over after they have paid for rent. Therefore thinking about transit affordability without considering the cost of housing does not capture the true picture of what affordable

TABLE 2 Winnipeg Transit Fare Structure Changes 2017/2018

	Full Fare		Youth		Senior		Post Secondary	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Cash	2.70	2.95	2.20	2.45	2.20	2.45	NA*	NA
Ticket	2.35	2.60	1.64	1.82	1.18	1.30	NA	NA
Max 5 (M-F)	21.15	23.40	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SuperPass (M-S)	23.50	26.00	16.40	18.20	11.75	13.00	NA	NA
Monthly	90.50	100.10	63.15	70.10	45.25	50.05	72.25	80.10

NB: Handi-Transit fares are the same for the above categories e.g. Regular adults, seniors or post-secondary students would pay the same to use Handi-Transit as to use regular transit.

* Post-secondary passes are no longer sold. Instead the U-Pass is offered to post-secondary students at the Province’s universities/colleges as part of their tuition.

TABLE 3 Winnipeg Transit and Housing Affordability

	Annual income (single individual)	Cost of housing (average price of 1BR)	Annual Cost of monthly bus pass	Percentage of income spent on transit	Percentage of income spent on housing and transit combined
MBM	\$18,272	\$10,560	\$1,201.2	6.5%	64%
Employment and Income Assistance (EIA)	\$9,672 ²⁹	\$10,560 ³⁰	\$1,201.2	12%	121%

SOURCE: Authors’ own compilation using data from Statistics Canada 2016 Census of Population and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) 2017 average 1Bedroom rental rates for Winnipeg Manitoba (\$880 per month)

fares means for those living on low-income. Individuals on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) would have to spend 121 per cent of their income, more than they receive, to afford both housing and a transit pass. In reality, those on EIA simply cannot afford a bus pass. This means that many Winnipeggers are making trade-offs between getting where they need to go, having a decent place to live and buying other necessities.

While Transit offers a monthly pass which saves a transit rider 44 per cent over cash fares if used twice daily, many low-income individuals cannot take advantage of these discounts. Most respondents said that they often did not have enough money at one time to purchase a monthly bus pass and therefore relied primarily on the Max 5 pass (Monday to Friday pass \$23.40) or paid fares each time they took the bus (\$2.95). Some respondents stated that they would start out the month with a weekly pass and then would go to paying individual fares as their budget got tighter throughout the month, or walk when they couldn't afford fare.

“I have to ask for tampons at the Woman's Center so yes, definitely, I go without things. We will even go without food just so that we can get where we need to go.”

Many respondents stated that once they paid rent and bought groceries they would sometimes have to walk to work. Or in cases where they worked too far from home, or in varying locations across the city, some stated that they go without groceries in order to afford a bus passes and one woman even said she had to get feminine hygiene products at a neighbourhood resource center because of unaffordable transportation costs:

I have to ask for tampons at the Woman's Center so yes, definitely, I go without things. We will even go without food just so that we can get where we need to go.

The student pass and senior pass categories shows that Winnipeg Transit acknowledges that certain groups of people are less able to afford fares than others and does make accommodation for this. The recent fare increase exceeded the rate of inflation and is much greater than any increases in government income assistance programs or the minimum wage rate. People with lower incomes are paying proportionately more of their income on fares than higher income earners.

One woman we spoke with said

If you only make minimum wage you should have a discount on your fare based on your income. I have a friend who gets an eco-pass [a pass subsidized by employers] and he pays half [of the regular fare]. But he already has a good salary. My employer said they can't afford that. So he pays half of his bus fare but he makes way more money than I do.

This woman's comments highlight how opportunity often begets opportunity. For those stuck in a cycle of poverty, opportunity is often harder to come by than for those who experience greater privilege.

Many people spoke of the struggle of moving, doing laundry, or grocery shopping without a vehicle. Many said they liked the convenience of taking taxis but only did so for certain trips like big grocery purchases and often couldn't afford it, or if they did take taxis they would feel the pinch in other parts of their budgets.

Reliability and Convenience Challenges

All of our respondents also spoke about scheduling representing a major barrier in getting where they needed to go. Many spoke about buses not being on time, either showing up early, late, or not at all. This is supported by statistics. Week-day on-time reliability has declined from a high of 80 per cent to 74.8 per cent in 2017.³¹ This means that more than a quarter of buses are not on schedule. The number of buses on the road

has not sufficiently grown relative to population—resulting in reduced Transit capacity and more ‘pass-ups,’ where buses are so full they bypass people waiting at bus stops.

While the conversation about improving transit services usually centres around how to attract choice-users, the important point from an equity standpoint is that many riders who have no other choice but to use transit are not receiving adequate service to meet their basic needs. Yet one of the most important factors in transit service is that it needs to get people to where they want to go when they need to be there. Any mismatch in demand and supply of transit service for residents who depend on transit to meet their daily needs increases the barriers that these populations experience in other areas such as education, employment, food security and access to healthcare services.

Many minimum-wage workers are employed in shift work and it can be challenging to get to work during off-peak hours on the bus. When asked if a lack of transportation options ever made accessing scheduled employment more difficult, one woman responded:

Oh yes, because when I was doing healthcare work, on Sundays I couldn't get there for 6:30 am. And on Saturdays the bus only takes me to The Bay, so I had to walk the rest of the way.

Others stated that they worked in different parts of the city depending on the day. For example, in the construction industry or as temporary labourers where jobsites are scattered across the city. For those who are transit dependent, being on time can mean the difference between keeping the job or getting fired.

One senior we spoke with said he often had trouble remembering when schedules changed (between summer and winter) and was sometime checking the wrong schedule. Many respondents stated that since they did not have a computer and sometimes do not have a working phone or a phone with data, that they would just wait at the bus stop until it came, even in the winter time.

One respondent spoke of how her son still has lingering effects from frostbite he got while waiting for a bus in the cold last winter. Winnipeg has on average, 62 days per year with wind-chill below minus 20 Celsius and 27 days with wind-chill below minus 30 Celsius.³² This means that when a bus is late, it can be more than just inconvenient.

Recent work shows how in some respects, living in the Inner City is actually quite convenient when it comes to taking the bus when compared to the outer regions of the city.³³

While it is true that Inner City residents enjoy greater convenience — as conceptualized as frequency of bus departures from an accessible bus stop (500m) — participants stated that there are other aspects to how they experience ‘convenience’. These include perceptions and realities of safety getting to and from bus stops and not being able to afford to get on the bus. For people with disabilities or mobility issues walking even 500 metres can be a challenge, especially in the winter months.

Additionally, while a high number of service stops do exist in the Inner City, many respondents said that the routes did not necessarily take them where they needed to go. Many respondents spoke of wanting to get to big box stores so that they could take advantage of price discounts, however in order to get there they often had to transfer multiple times, sometimes walk long distances between the bus stop and store, and struggled to carry groceries onto the bus, as well as the distance home. People said they needed places on the bus to stash their groceries but that the area at the front of the bus, which has more space, is reserved for strollers or those with mobility issues. Many stated that in order to do large grocery shops they would take taxis home, even though they couldn't really afford to do so. For those with larger families they said that it was actually cheaper for them to take taxis once they added up all the bus fare for themselves and their children. For individu-

als taking Handi-Transit they are only allowed to take two bags, which obviously presents major challenges in getting everything they need in one trip. In short, if a person can't afford to get on the bus or it doesn't take them to where they need to go, it doesn't matter how close they live to the bus stop or how many lines run through their neighbourhood.

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Respondents also spoke of wanting to visit family and friends who live in the outer areas of the city. Many stated that they couldn't do so as often as they would like because of the time it takes to travel there and back again. New areas of the city are often not serviced as well as more mature neighbourhoods.

While this research focused exclusively on the experiences of people living in the Inner City, poverty advocates warn that there are deep pockets of poverty in the suburbs and that low-income people in these areas face major transportation challenges because the distance between services is much greater, and bus service in the suburbs may mean longer wait times because less buses are servicing the area and more connections are often required to get to destinations.³⁴

Given the increasing popularity of ride-sharing in other cities, we also asked informants about their experiences. At present, Winnipeg only has one ride-sharing company — TappCar. None of the respondent interviewed had ever used this service, perhaps because it is relatively new. While ride-sharing companies have been slower to take off in Winnipeg than other major urban centres, it's important to understand how a greater reliance on this form of transportation can affect marginalized populations. Firstly, these platforms only work with a smartphone app and

many lower-income individuals often struggle to afford the high monthly bills associated with smartphones. Secondly, ride-sharing apps require credit cards to become a registered user. Both the requirement of credit card and smart phone puts these services beyond the means of many low-income individuals. While ride-sharing has been slow to take off in Winnipeg it stands to reason that usage will likely increase.

In terms of active transportation options, many people we spoke with said that they liked walking and biking because they could reliably predict when they would arrive at their destination. One woman said:

The reason that I love biking is the exercise and the freedom. I also know that I'll be there at a certain time. With the bus I never know if I'll get my connection, if I'll be there on time, so I either have to leave super early or maybe be late.

But many people said that bike paths are not connected and sometimes even disappear halfway to their destination. In the winter they said they didn't know which paths would be ploughed and sometimes got stuck having to ride through snow halfway to their destination. When asked if they felt safe biking in traffic alongside cars, most said they didn't unless there were physical barriers between themselves and the cars.

A strategic goal of *Our Winnipeg* is a "transportation system that supports active, accessible and healthy lifestyle options"; however we are a long way from achieving this goal. The construction of the city's downtown separated bike lanes is only now beginning three years after the *Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies* were passed in July 2015.³⁵ Recent reconstruction work to both the Osborne Bridge as well as Selkirk Avenue failed to incorporate protected bike lanes. While some argue that cycling and walking is a middle-class concern, safe and convenient walking and cycling can have a profound effect for low-income communities like improved mobility, connectivity, health outcomes and air quality.³⁶

Safety Challenges

All our respondents spoke about feeling unsafe at times. Many spoke about fears about walking alone at night, walking to and from as well as waiting at bus stops, and some spoke about concerns about other riders on the bus—although they were in the minority. Most people said they felt safe riding the bus.

Some respondents noted that while they live very close to a bus stop, they didn't feel safe walking to that stop as it went past houses or through blocks that felt unsafe to them and therefore they would walk many blocks out of their way to go to other stops. One young Indigenous woman even spoke about how she was almost abducted walking by herself at night in the Inner City;

I don't feel safe at night. Once, I got kicked out [of her home] and I was walking around and this guy, he pulled up close to me, and he tried to grab me so I punched him and I just ran.

Safety around taking taxis was also something that our community partners asked us to investigate. Reports of inappropriate behaviour from Winnipeg taxi-drivers have made headlines.³⁷ These reports include a driver who allegedly assaulted a transgender man and offered him money to drop his complaint; an Indigenous woman that was allegedly drugged and assaulted after taking a taxi; a young woman reported that she refused a proposition by a taxi-driver, then was propositioned again by a passenger of a second taxi waiting in front of her house.³⁸

Many of our interviews took place near the intersection of Sutherland and Main Street in Winnipeg's North Point Douglas Neighbourhood. It is an area where many Indigenous women and girls have gone missing, been assaulted, or murdered. The body of Tina Fontaine, a 14 year-old girl was discovered just a short walk from here. The location is a stark reminder of how we have not done enough to protect Indigenous women and girls from violence. Over twelve hundred Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or been mur-

dered in Canada and advocates have said that this number is likely undercounting the actual number.³⁹ A deep understanding of the magnitude and systemic dimensions of the issue is needed by those who are developing transportation policy in Winnipeg. All people should have the right to feel safe from violence when walking down the street, waiting for the bus, or taking taxis.

Racism was another issue which emerged during our conversations and that we categorized under safety, as experiencing racism can cause a person to feel less safe in their community. Some informants stated that they either experienced or witnessed racism on the bus:

Some drivers treat people badly especially if you're not white. I think sensitivity training for the bus drivers is really important.

Another participant spoke of racism that they experienced first-hand on the bus:

One time there was a young girl and she was sitting beside me. When the bus bend around a corner [sic], I put my hand on the seat next to hers to catch myself and she pushed my hand. She said: "You aren't supposed to touch me, you are black." And that was very hurtful.

Some of the Indigenous participants said that when they are taking taxis they are sometimes asked to pay up front. None of the white respondents reported this. Experiences of racism and micro-aggression are often dismissed as a one-time or unfortunately event that minorities should be expected to put with. Yet people feel less safe walking, bicycling, wheel-chairing or taking the bus when they are worried about experiencing racism (including micro-aggressions) which can have serious effects on both their physical and mental health.⁴⁰

Physical Mobility Challenges

Six seniors with various mobility issues and one person that is wheelchair dependent were inter-

Terms: Physical Mobility vs Accessibility

While the term *accessibility* is used to refer to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities, *physical mobility* refers to the ability of humans to move around their environment. The two terms are similar, however in addition to physical disabilities, physical mobility includes restricted mobility due to aging, physical disability, physical or mental illness — all of which can be important factors in restricting people's mobility. Because many respondents stated that they struggled to get where they needed to go due to age, physical disability and also mental disability (for example, cognitive impairment, panic attacks or high levels of anxiety when out in public) we decided to categorize these reports within the broader theme of physical mobility but with special attention to accessibility challenges.

viewed about the barriers they face in getting to where they need to go. Again, affordability and scheduling were the two biggest barriers mentioned. Many seniors and people living with a disability have fixed incomes, which makes getting where they need to go, at times, unaffordable. Many also spoke about feeling isolated and lonely, especially during the winter months. People with disability and the elderly often struggle to carry groceries which means food security is also at risk.

Handi-Transit users also cited scheduling as a major barrier. Staff at a senior's home we spoke to said that many of their residents depend on Handi-Transit to get to medical appointments but because of the high demand for services, people are often required to get to their medical appointment hours early and wait long after they are done. For people who need to stick to a scheduled eating time, or even for those with incontinence issues, this presents dangerous and humiliating challenges. One elderly woman with congenital heart failure told us she was dropped off at her medical appointment half an hour early and forced to wait outside in the middle of February because the driver had to pick up another customer. Not only was this inconvenient for her, but potentially deadly when the temperature in February regularly drops below minus twenty. She reported her complaints to Handi-Transit have been ignored.

The report of the Task Force Reviewing Handi-Transit Issues adopted by Winnipeg City Council on Sept 21 1994 defined the characteristics of a

transportation service for physically disabled persons that is reasonably equivalent to the service provided to able-bodied persons by the regular fixed route system.⁴¹ What we heard from both Handi-Transit users as well as advocates is that the service currently provided by Handi-Transit is nowhere near equivalent to the service that able-bodied persons receive.

The Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) is an organization that supports and promotes citizens with disabilities to “make choices and take responsibility for the development and management of personal and community resources”.⁴² In 2016, the ILRC submitted a complaint to Manitoba's ombudsman. The complaint alleges that Handi-Transit fails to serve its customers, follows unfair policies and sometimes even violates human rights.⁴³ The complaint lists specific cases including one user that missed their family member's funeral; an alleged driver insisting on hugs from customers; and a passenger soiling themselves because they weren't able to get home in time after their medical appointment. One particularly shocking allegation includes a Handi-Transit driver intentionally dropping off a person who was blind in a random location after a dispute with a driver. These allegations are disturbing however the City refused to wait for the Ombudsman findings before awarding the Handi-Transit contracts in September 2018. The allegations are still under review by the Ombudsman.

Many people we spoke with said they often felt socially isolated especially seniors and people with physical mobility challenges. One woman in a wheelchair spoke of wanting to hang out with her friends but stated that because Handi-Transit does not prioritize social visits her requests for these outings are often put at the bottom of the list. One woman with a disability spoke of how despite not being able to work a full-time job she liked to volunteer within her community, but is no longer able to do so because she cannot afford the transit fare to get there and back.

Seniors suffering from social isolation have been found to be at higher risk of negative health behaviours including drinking, smoking, being sedentary and not eating well; having a higher likelihood of falls; and having a four-to-five times greater risk of hospitalization.⁴⁴ One staff member at a facility for elders said that many of her residents get depressed from not being able to be more social. She also said that over-consuming alcohol is a way that many of her residents cope with feeling lonely and isolated.

There were a surprising number of young people who spoke about severe anxiety restricting their movements. When asked about whether or not they felt comfortable taking the bus, one young person responded:

No but that's kind of my own problem I have PTSD and I don't like being in small spaces. But other than that I feel safe... the other people on the bus are fine.

Those with mobility challenges particularly struggle in the winter months. One senior we spoke to

had had a fall the previous winter and hit his head. This resulted in a concussion with lingering effects on his cognitive ability. A person who relies on a wheelchair to get around didn't feel comfortable going out in the winter because at times, sidewalks are only ploughed halfway to their destination and there is no way for them to predict which routes will be ploughed and which ones won't. Many people would not qualify as disabled or senior also mentioned challenges regarding snow clearing. Some said they worried about falling and many others stated that poor snow clearing at and near bus stops made boarding the bus dangerous.

One woman said:

It's very hard when they don't plough at the bus stop. I worry about falling and I believe that the bus driver does too. The majority of them try to drop you off somewhere safe, but some just expect you to jump over the snow!

In Stockholm, they have taken a different approach to snow clearing; one that prioritizes active transportation and women. When they get two to four centimetres of snow, they clear the pedestrian lanes and cycling lanes first. When they get about six to eight centimetres they start with the streets.⁴⁵ In Sweden, women are less likely than men to drive therefore the strategy works to improve gender equality in the city. In Winnipeg, prioritizing projects that improves walking and cycling infrastructure in areas where major socio-economic challenges are present could go a long way towards making our city more equitable and accessible especially for those who have physical mobility challenges.

Recommendations

Winnipeg needs a transportation system that supports better access to employment and education opportunities, supports health and encourages physical activity, and ensures that everyone can get to where they need to go safely and conveniently. But to get there we will need to make some changes in how we plan our transportation system as well as increases to transportation investment at the municipal and provincial levels. We will also need policy and programs focused on improving equitable outcomes for those who are most likely to suffer from transportation disadvantage. These include a low-income bus pass, improving both transit and active transportation services, addressing safety concerns, and reducing barriers for those with disabilities.

Embed Transportation Equity into Planning and Design of Both Transit and Active Transportation Planning

The first overarching recommendation is that equity planning should be embedded in both transit and active transportation planning. We currently have an opportunity to develop more equitable transportation policy in Winnipeg. The Winnipeg Transit Master Plan call-for-proposals

just closed and the *Our Winnipeg* plan—which includes a section on sustainable transportation—is currently being updated. Encouragingly, the most recent *Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies* includes an equity analysis of the current system and equity as one of its guiding principles.⁴⁶ It does not however include achieving greater equity as one of its stated goals. In Winnipeg, a city with a high level of urban Indigenous poverty, transportation equity should also be considered an essential part of urban Indigenous policy.⁴⁷

While one of the stated goals of the current Winnipeg’s Transportation Master Plan includes “safe, efficient and equitable transportation system for people goods and services” nowhere within the document does it define equity.⁴⁸ Nor do indicators used to measure this goal include any special consideration for people experiencing transportation disadvantage.⁴⁹ If equity is not defined or established as a measurable outcome it is not surprising that we are failing to achieve it. A recent analysis of the BRT in Winnipeg, Ottawa and the York Region in Ontario found that transit equity was rarely considered in the design or planning stages of these projects⁵⁰ showing us that significantly more effort in embedding equity into transportation policy is needed.

Other Cities Embedding Equity in Policy

Other cities are making a commitment to increasing equity in transportation planning and policy through cross-sector collaboration. In 2004, Denver voters approved FasTracks, a \$7.8 billion transit expansion, adding 122 miles of new light rail, 18 miles of bus rapid transit, and enhanced regional bus service to the region.⁵¹ Mile High Connects (MHC) was formed shortly after to help ensure that considerations of equity went into the planning of newly built transit lines. MHC is a cross-sector collaborative of non-profits, foundations, businesses, and government leaders in the Denver region that makes an explicit connection between public transit and health equity. Their goal is to ensure that Denver's new transit development benefits low-income communities and communities of colour by connecting them to the services they need the most such as jobs, healthcare providers, schools, grocery stores, parks and other essential destinations.

Ottawa is a Canadian example of a city that is embedding equity and inclusion into all municipal decision-making processes.⁵² The Equity and Inclusion Lens is a tool that is used in the City of Ottawa to be consistent and coherent in their efforts to embed equity and inclusion in their services. The Lens is promoted as a means to generate better solution by incorporating diverse perspectives; take positive steps to remove systematic barriers and promote inclusion; create a more positive and respectful work environment; and achieve improved client satisfaction.⁵³

Given that a Transit Master Plan is in the works, the time to embed equity policies into transportation policy is now. To reduce barriers to transportation for the most transport disadvantaged, equity principles embedded in policy should be progressive with respect to income and improve access for those with disabilities as well as seniors. The Transit Master Plan should also include a deliverable on equity assessment and analysis.

Meaningful Consultation

Achieving meaningful consultation with marginalized populations can be a challenge. As previous State of the Inner City Reports have shown, it takes all day to be poor and asking people to engage in unpaid labour in their evening hours does not always result in drawing out the most marginalized. Consultation methods, if not designed thoughtfully and with participation from the community will remain superficial without accommodation.⁵⁴

Other cities are making an effort to bring communities of colour and low-income people to the transportation decision-making table. Nashville's turns to its Citizens Advisory Com-

mittee for feedback and recommendations to help ensure its proposed BRT project benefits everyone.⁵⁵ The degree to which these kinds of partnerships are effective at improving equity outcomes lies however in the extent that planners allow input and guidance achieved through them to shape decision-making. A participatory budgeting exercise could also be helpful in determining where transportation investments should be made.

As part of meaningful consultation, the City should also co-ordinate with employers to identify specific transportation issues for workers. Many jobs are simply not available for transit-dependent people because they have variable work sites (construction), shift work or remote locations. Consulting with employers may help the City to understand how to help with the journey to work.

A dedicated budget will be necessary to ensure that the consultation process is adequately funded.

Land Use Planning Policy that Connects and Protects Low-Income Communities

Economic development goals of transportation planning can be beneficial to marginalized groups

if explicit strategies are developed. Infill growth along major transit corridors should contain a mix of housing types as well as services such as grocery stores and health services to improve access for marginalized communities. Linking equity to transit oriented development could improve equity outcomes.

Policy tools such as inclusionary zoning should be embedded within transportation planning as a means to incentivize developers into providing safe, affordable, and quality housing in these corridors with specific requirements for affordable housing. Protecting existing affordable housing is important, especially renter-occupied housing units, because these households are more likely to be transit dependent. Preserving and building affordable housing near transit would help low-income households save money on both transportation and housing. Embedding equity principles in land-use and transportation planning can avoid the potential of negative gentrification, displacement, and encourage economic viability along these corridors.⁵⁶

It is worth noting that transit is publicly funded and increases in land-values associated with transit development should result in greater public good.

Monitoring and Better Data Collection on Transportation Disadvantaged Populations

One of the big problems in better understanding transportation disadvantage in Winnipeg is that we don't know how many people in Winnipeg qualify as transport disadvantaged nor what their experiences look like. Statistics Canada currently tracks other indicators including low-income, poor housing, homelessness etc, yet transportation disadvantage is not tracked. The data only comes out every five years, is oriented towards employment travel modes, and not fine-grained enough to be useful in fully understanding transportation disadvantage.

The City should undertake an analysis of Winnipeg Transit user demographics as is required

in the U.S. under civil rights legislation. Rigorous and consistent monitoring will allow for a better picture of who and which areas are suffering from the greatest transportation disadvantage, which in turn will be helpful in fine-tuning policy to address this. Monitoring this data will also be an important part of determining whether or not equity planning is achieving desired outcomes.

Increase Investment in Transit and Active Transportation Options

The second overarching recommendation from this report is to increase investment in transit and active transportation options in Winnipeg. Unfortunately, we have seen the opposite take place. In 2017 the Province of Manitoba announced it would freeze funding to Winnipeg Transit's operating costs at 2016 levels, leading to a \$10 million shortfall in the operating budget. In response to the significant budget gap that this created, the City announced service cuts alongside fare increases. In response to public outcry the City reversed the planned service cuts in favour of increasing on-street parking fees.⁵⁷ Fare hikes of 25 cents per ride went ahead on January 1 2018.

Alongside insufficient funding for transit, other challenges that Winnipeg Transit experiences include the growth of the city, which has required service to be provided over a more dispersed network. Often, service has been funded in new areas by reducing service in more established parts of the city. As the city decentralized investment did not keep transit in competition with other modes in terms of travel time, which has resulted in a lack of competitiveness and in turn has made it difficult to attract new users and new revenue to transit. As ridership suffers and the quality of service declines, a vicious cycle occurs where everyone who can drive will drive, and those who cannot have to simply 'like it or lump it'.

All levels of government must prioritize transit. Other cities are investing in transit and it's paying off. While Winnipeg spends approxi-

TABLE 4 Total Operating Expenditure by City: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Ottawa

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Winnipeg	\$130,453,362	\$139,637,691	\$140,303,379	\$146,336,024
Ottawa	\$342,349,975	\$349,699,432	\$368,917,126	\$361,412,924
Edmonton	\$281,040,462	\$283,890,963	\$299,749,512	\$311,928,057

SOURCE: CUTA Canadian Transit Fact Book-2016 Operating Data

TABLE 5 Transit Trips per Capita: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Ottawa

	2015	2016
Winnipeg	70.5	69.5
Edmonton	99.13	93.48
Ottawa	111.34	110.34

SOURCE: CUTA Canadian Transit Fact Book-2016 Operating Data

mately \$207 per person on transit, Edmonton spends closer to \$334 and Ottawa spends over \$386 per person (table 4). One very visible result of this investment is a higher ridership than Winnipeg (table 5).

Encouragingly, in June 2018 the Province and the Federal governments announced a bilateral cost-sharing agreement that will see a \$530 million investment to public transit infrastructure in Manitoba municipalities. This is great news. This funding however is only for capital projects and if the operational budget is not increased, we will simply be building a bridge to nowhere. The Province of Manitoba needs to step up and restore the 50/50 funding agreement for Winnipeg Transit operating costs. A recent poll shows that four out of five Winnipeg voters are in favour of this.⁵⁸ Additional investment is also needed: the *Alternative Municipal Budget 2018* recommends an investment of \$25 million per year over four years in order to reach parity with these other cities.⁵⁹

Prioritizing projects that improves walking and cycling infrastructure in areas where major socio-economic challenges are present could go a long way towards making our city more equitable. As it stands, the current budget devoted to active transportation is \$5.4 million per year which amount to less than 40 per cent of the \$14

Seattle is the darling of bus ridership success stories. Despite a 15 per cent increase in population since 2010, Seattle has managed to avoid gaining more cars in its most congested areas. It did this not by investing in some fancy rail system but by simply providing more frequent and affordable buses.⁶⁰

million per year that was recommended in the City's own *Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies*.⁶¹ *The Alternative Municipal Budget* recommends increasing this amount by \$0.667 million per year over the next five years with the expectation that this amount be matched by the two senior levels of government.⁶²

While the Province's *Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan* states that one of its goals is to 'support greater use of active or public transportation', it remains unclear how this will be achieved. The recently scrapped Manitoba Carbon Tax would have represented an incredible opportunity to raise revenue for investment in Winnipeg Transit operations as well as improving active transportation options like developing more bike lanes and accessible pedestrian infrastructure. One option is commuter/mobility pricing and parking lot fees as described in the

2018 *Alternative Municipal Budget*. These two fees could raise a combined \$89 million in revenue for the City. An additional revenue source could include taking advantage of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Municipalities (FCM) for Climate Innovation Program—a \$75 million program that helps municipalities

In the *Alternative Municipal Budget 2018* CCPA Manitoba recommends an investment of \$25 million per year over four years in order to reach parity with these other cities.

prepare for and adapt to climate change and to reduce emission of greenhouse gases. The City can also apply for funding through the FCM's Green Municipal Fund, which is available to all municipal governments and could cover \$5 million or up to \$10 million for a loan.⁶³

Low-Income Bus Pass

Ensuring that people can afford to take the bus is an important tool in fighting poverty and improving health outcomes. It could also reduce conflict on buses. Ninety per cent of attacks against bus drivers involve fare disputes.⁶⁴ A low-income transit pass would help to improve access to transit for people with low-income while contributing towards a safer workplace for drivers.

The specifics of design of the low-income pass should occur in consultation with community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve the targeted population. Low-income individuals themselves should also be consulted to ensure that the pass meets their needs. CBOs should also be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages because lessons learned in other jurisdiction have shown that the structure and design of a low-income pass program determines how effective it is at reducing transit poverty.

Our community partners warned that when it comes to designing programming targeting

low-income individuals, how eligibility is determined matters. Many community agencies have said that their clients have to repeatedly prove their low-income status to qualify for a variety of subsidies and that this continual need to jump through hoops represents major barriers for their clients. The City of Calgary offers the Fair Entry Program, which is a single application process to access multiple programs and services including the low-income bus pass as well as the recreation fee assistance and the low-cost spay and neuter program. We have also heard that some low-income individuals struggle to prove their identity and some municipalities have allowed discretion for CBOs that have good relationships with their clients to administer the passes on an honours-based system.

While most low-income programs generally offer a discount of somewhere around 50 per cent many evaluations of these programs found the cost was still too high for many.⁶⁵ Calgary offers a sliding scale of \$5.15 to \$51.50 per month based on income. Winnipeg should implement a similar sliding scale.

Anyone receiving social assistance should receive a pass at no cost because any amount is too much given the present inadequacy of the basic needs allowance for actually meeting basic needs. Currently there is no allowance for transportation costs in social assistance. This should not result in any reductions in benefits that people currently receive. New refugees should also receive a free pass as is offered in Grande Prairie Alberta. In the case of funding for low-income passes for EIA recipients, the Province will have to step up to cover this cost.

In some cases kids are not going to school because their families cannot afford a bus pass. Low-income families should receive free bus passes for school-aged children. Other options include investigating the viability of a family-pass like they have in Toronto where you can purchase a day pass for \$12.50 which is good for a combination of 1–2 adults and 4–5 youths

who are all traveling together. Any fare reduction strategies should not be limited to travelling in off-peak hours, nor certain days of the week.

Other policy directions that all levels of government should strive to address are the broader affordability challenges that many Winnipeggers and Manitobans face. Simply put, minimum wage is not enough and the basic-needs benefit provided by EIA is insufficient (see table 1, p. 5). When people are paying more than half of their income towards housing and transportation little is left over for nutritious food, appropriate clothing, continued education, medical necessities and finally, but not unimportantly, social activities.

Improving Service for Transit-Dependent Populations

Recent research examining transit exclusion in Winnipeg's North End found that while this area has high levels of physical accessibility to bus stops and hours of transit service, poor frequency alongside a lack of availability during weekend hours presented major challenges for Inner City transit users.⁶⁶ Despite being very close to downtown several bus stops in the North End do not link residents directly to downtown and 'to a large extent' also do not offer easy connectivity to other important locations in the city.⁶⁷ These findings are supported further by participants in this study.

Frequent Service Network

The City should keep its commitment to the development of a Frequent Service Transit Network as set out in a Council motion on Transit Route Planning on June 21 2017.⁶⁸ A Frequent Service Network operates according to a consistent interval rather than a set schedule by using a GPS system to maintain interval regardless of the average speed of each bus. This not only makes taking the bus simpler, it prevents the bunching up of buses during snowstorms or other disruptions. It will improve access to buses for those who have a hard time either accessing or

understanding schedules. Frequent service is a best practice found in other transit agencies like Montreal, Boston, and Portland.⁶⁹

A Frequent Service Network would cover a portion of the overall transit network, however this would require some adjustments to existing routes. Any adjustments should give special consideration to areas that have a high proportion of transit-dependent riders or in areas of the city where people don't have alternative transportation options.

A frequent service network was explained to interviewees and all stated that they would much prefer to know that a bus came every 15 minutes (or some other interval period) than to have to check the schedule.

Improve Handi-Transit Service

During this research both Handi-Transit users as well as disability advocates said that the current service provided is inadequate. The consequences of poor service are severe: missed job opportunities, difficulty getting to appointments, and increased isolation. As advocated in the *2018 Alternative Municipal Budget* Handi-Transit must be considered as an important part of Winnipeg's overall transit policy if we are to achieve transportation equity.⁷⁰ We recommend bringing Handi-Transit services back in house delivered by the City of Winnipeg instead of contracted out, because ensuring accessibility should not be left up to the market.

Various community-based organizations currently fill the gaps in Winnipeg Transit and Handi-Transit service and these organizations should be properly funded. It is neither sustainable nor desirable however to have a piece-meal strategy for transportation in Winnipeg and the end goal should be for Winnipeg Transit and Handi-Transit to meet the needs of those that require accessible transportation to reach their destinations.

Getting Families to Groceries

Low-income families reported that getting to the grocery store was a real challenge: paying

for fares for many different family members, corralling the children during the trip, walking to and from the bus stop with large loads, and a lack of storage space for cargo on the bus were all reported as creating barriers to getting good food. Recent work by the Boldness Project — an organization that works to improve the health outcomes for young children in Winnipeg’s Point Douglas neighbourhood — shows that an expansion of the DART bus service might be one way to help families, especially those with young children, get to the services they need—especially groceries. DART is a Dial-a-Ride service but currently only provides request bus service to residents living selected areas of South and South East Winnipeg.

Other cities are experimenting with on-demand transit service.⁷¹ The model uses transit software where routes are created using the various passenger requests, which tells the driver when and where the riders are to be picked up. The on-demand route then links passengers to a nearby transit station or connecting route. While the pilot being operated in Calgary is focused on improving suburban bus service, investigation into the viability of such a model to reduce food insecurity in Winnipeg’s Inner City should be explored.

Bus Service to the Beach

Many people, when asked where they would like to go that they are unable to, said ‘the beach’. Advocating for access to a provincial park and beach may at first glance seem a frivolous recommendation when people are struggling with employment, housing and food security. There are important positive relationships however between increased access to green spaces and improved over-all wellbeing.⁷² Otherwise some Winnipeggers may never make it out of the city at all and many of the people we spoke with feel that they are missing out on activities that their more mobile counterparts take for granted. Winnipeg Transit should explore a pilot to run a bus

one day a week in the summer months to Birds Hill Park where there is a public beach. Winnipeg Transit does this during the annual Winnipeg Folk Fest demonstrating that it is doable if funding were prioritized. At the planning stages, other ways to reduce social isolation, especially for seniors and people with disabilities, should be identified as an important outcome of transportation system design.

Sensitivity Training for Bus Drivers

Driving a bus is a tough job. It requires both attention to detail as well as providing customer service. Most bus drivers do their job professionally. Some respondents however indicated that they sometimes witnessed or experienced racism or rudeness by transit operators. As with taxi-drivers, mandatory sensitivity training for bus drivers on respectful communication with passengers as well as the specific issues facing Winnipeg’s minority populations could be helpful.

Address Root Causes of Crime

In 2017 there were 126 incidents of violence on or near bus stops in Winnipeg.⁷³ This is worrying for both drivers and passengers. The low-income bus pass will reduce the number of fare disputes drivers face. Installing shields for drivers should also be a priority.

On a broader level, the response to public safety concerns tends to advocate for more police but we encourage the conversation around safety to take a more holistic approach that incorporates an understanding of root causes and crime prevention. Investing in more policing does not necessarily translate to increased public safety, especially for racialized people.⁷⁴ We encourage both city and provincial officials to think about safety in a big picture way and work towards addressing the roots causes of violence rather than the symptoms. This will require cross-sector collaboration. It will also mean implementing strategies focused on eliminating poverty and supporting better and more addictions services.

Excellent policy recommendations for City-led action on eliminating poverty are contained in the 2018 community research report *Winnipeg Without Poverty: Calling on the City to Lead* while strategies that the Province can adopt live in *The View from Here 2015: Manitobans Call for a Renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy*.⁷⁵

Improve Active Transportation Options and Reduce Physical Barriers

Improve Active Transportation Network

The City of Winnipeg has seen major improvements in the biking infrastructure over the past ten years but we still have a long way to go. Many road renewal projects have failed to include walkability or bike-ability in upgrades—the time when it is most economical to do so.⁷⁶ Investments in new and rebuilt active transportation infrastructure should target lower income neighbourhoods and remove physical barriers to active transportation in these neighbourhoods. The *Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies* already advocate for this. Active transportation infrastructure should be integrated well with public transit and encourage connectivity between neighbourhoods, employment areas and services such as grocery stores, medical clinics and areas of employment. Some of the respondents reported struggles with being able to afford bicycles as well as bikes being frequently stolen. In order to encourage greater access to cycling infrastructure the City will have to go beyond simply building bike lanes. Broader support strategies to connect Inner City residents to bike sharing options can encourage greater mobility.

Snow Removal

The *Active Transportation Network Winter Maintenance Strategy* was released by the City this past May. The report recommends re-prioritizing roadways, sidewalks and active transportation pathways to improve a more connected pedestrian and cycling winter maintenance network.

This is a positive step in the right direction. However, the timing of snow removal on sidewalks and cycling paths needs to be sped up and the reliability of snow removal needs to be improved. As it stands, it can take up to 36 hours for sidewalks to be cleared, which translates to those with mobility issues possibly being stuck in their homes waiting for the snow to be cleared.

As mentioned earlier, Stockholm Sweden has taken a different approach to snow clearing — one that prioritizes active transportation and women. Snow removal in Winnipeg should prioritize active transportation, especially in more mature neighbourhoods and downtown where density is higher and more residents are walking and biking. Further, snow clearing at bus stops needs to be prioritized to ensure that those who are taking the bus do not slip and fall while getting on and off the bus.

Safety Phones

Many low-income people struggle to afford phones and the removal of many public pay phones creates additional risks for people walking and biking especially if the trail networks are removed from dense public spaces. In Minneapolis, the Midtown Greenway is a nine-kilometre urban bike trail that has come up with some creative way to address safety concerns of users. The group has worked to install blue safety phones along the trail, which instantly connects users to 911. But the group has also made an effort to take a more holistic approach to improving safety by installing public art, gardens, brighter lighting and volunteer bike patrols. They take the perspective that getting people to use the trail as much as possible is the greatest deterrent to crime.⁷⁷

Addressing Safety for Indigenous Women Taking Taxis

Safety for Indigenous and racialized peoples, especially Indigenous women, has to be given special consideration in the planning process for both bus and active transportation options.

Indigenous women being solicited by taxi-drivers for sexual favours in exchange for fares have made headlines in our city.⁷⁸ It remains unknown how common these occurrences are because little has been done to investigate and resolve this issue. It is a big enough problem however that Ikwe Safe Ride — an Indigenous safe-ride service for women — can't keep up with the demand for their services.⁷⁹

If it is safe for an Indigenous woman to walk down the street at night, then it is safe for all of us.

The passing of Provincial Bill 30—the Local Vehicles for Hire Act—means that the responsibility for regulating the taxi industry now falls to the City of Winnipeg. The City must implement meaningful policy to investigate any claims made against taxi-drivers. In the past, women

were told to go to police or to file a complaint with the taxiboard, a process that was described by the taxiboard's own chair as 'intimidating'.⁸⁰ This is a woefully inadequate response, as many Indigenous peoples have had negative interactions with police and often don't feel safe filing reports. An easy-to-use feedback system for passengers, mandatory security cameras with audio in taxis, and mandatory sensitivity training for drivers on respectful communication with passengers as well as training that informs drivers about the specific issues facing Winnipeg's Indigenous, queer, disabled and immigrant communities could possibly help reduce these occurrences.

As one community leader told us during consultations:

If it is safe for an Indigenous woman to walk down the street at night, then it is safe for all of us.

Endnotes

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