

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE Charleswood – Tuxedo Ward

Kevin Klein

1. Public transit was identified as the most important issue facing Winnipeggers in the 2019 budget consult, followed by active transportation and roadway construction and maintenance. In your opinion, why is public transit deemed the number one priority?

Why? Because a stable, reliable and safe transit system can empower many people that live in our community. If we want our city to grow and prosper, expand our tax base as opposed to increasing our taxes, transit is a key component of a thriving city.

2. If you could give Winnipeg's transit system an overall letter grade, what would it be? What do you feel is holding the current transit system back from getting a better grade? If you could sum up your vision for the future of Winnipeg's transit system what would it be?

I would have to say a C-. I don't blame people, I blame the system. I've heard from many people, answered several emails on this topic, including my sister-in-law who is dependent on transit. I'm told repeatedly that the level of service is not getting any better. People in Charleswood, Tuxedo and Westwood have all said it takes over an hour to get anywhere on transit, we can do better, much better.

3. Safety is an increasing concern for transit riders and drivers, alike. What do you feel contributes to the lack of safety in the current system? How would you improve safety?

Winnipeg is not the first city Canada to have safety concerns on transit. The answer is not simply putting police officers on buses at random. The cost would become prohibited and that type of solution would not last. Many other cities the size of Winnipeg have developed strategies that have proven to be effective in reducing transit safety concerns. We need a long-term strategy that will deliver positive results and be cost effective.

4. If you could sum up Winnipeg's current transit system in 3 words, what would it be?

Can do better

5. Cities like Ottawa and Edmonton contribute over \$220 million to their transit networks, while the City of Winnipeg contributes just \$65 million. To match these other cities in per capita terms, Winnipeg should be contributing \$170 million. How will you fight for more funding towards transit?

I will stand up, but first I would like to see transit start implementing better management practices, because the system isn't working as it should right now. It takes one of our kids over an hour and a half to reach Red River Campus downtown from Charleswood. Clearly it's not efficient. Career politicians have voted for bandaid solutions over the years, that doesn't fix anything. We need a long-term, strategic, efficient and cost effective solution that will improve service for ALL of Winnipeg.

I would push for a local task force to review internal and external operational issues and needs. And I would ensure that transit riders are on the task force, to make sure all voices are heard. This task force needs to be a local group consisting of actual bus drivers, maintenance members, passengers, route/scheduling personal and an outside expert that can provide examples of alternative effective solutions. We have some of the best professors in the country at our Universities in Winnipeg, and I would invite them to participate, bring students and make it part of their curriculum for the semester. The task force would then have a set deadline to propose solutions that will improve service, reduce the environmental footprint of transit, and be more financially sustainable.



Focusing on ways to use existing resources as efficiently as possible will improve service and finances and give taxpayers confidence if you have to ask for more funding. We already know electric buses will reduce expenses and help the environment, and as we move in that direction we also need to have a purchasing strategy to ensure there is no loss selling or retiring the current diesel buses.

Once we've resolved the current issues, I would re-engage the province and revisit the current funding.

The City currently has an antagonistic approach to dealing with different levels of Government which doesn't appear to be effective. Let's clean up our own backyard (questionable spending practices & lack of accountability) and once that happens we'll be in a much stronger position to negotiate more funding. I'll work with others including the province in a collaborative, cooperative and inclusive manner.

We're all in this together, a stronger focus on using current resources more effectively can help bring improvement to Transit and many other departments for Winnipeggers. After all it's taxpayers money being spent and they should be confident we're spending it wisely before we ask for more.

Bonus question: What is your favourite Transit App and why?

Full disclosure, I don't have a Transit APP. In fact I have only a few selective Apps on my phone, books, communications, calendar, hockey rules and my grandson prefers gaming APPs, so I accommodate his requests on occasion.