

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

Fort Rouge – East Fort Garry Ward

Michael Thompson

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?

Public transportation is a need, not a want, for thousands of people who are trying to commute to work and to school on a daily basis. People are depending on this service in order to accomplish what they need to get done in their daily lives. People therefore want a transit service that is efficient, affordable, environmentally friendly and above all, one in which they feel they can safely use.

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?

My letter grade for the system is not as important as the letter grade assigned by you, the riders who use the system most. We need to be adapting and modifying the transit system as people, businesses and areas change over time. When going door to door I am hearing great feedback as to how the transit system can improve so that people will feel less stressed trying to use the service and will therefore start using it or will use it more frequently. My vision for the future of our transit system is one that is safe for drivers and riders and one that meets the needs of the people in the communities they live and work within. This includes increased service frequency, short hub routes, increased budget for more hours and total routes, modified service times prior to and after major events in the city, increased safety for public and drivers, improved technology for fares and transit rider software applications, overall affordability as well as availability of washrooms for transit staff.

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?

I feel that the lack of safety is caused by a combination of factors. Increase in drug use, decrease in mental health services and access to health care, lack of support services for children aging out of foster care, transit drivers are isolated and lack of physical protection.

I am a strong advocate for improving the safety of our transit system. This issue needs to be fully acknowledged and supported by every stakeholder within the transit system. I believe that it will take a concerted effort by all stakeholders, including the public, to work together to improve conditions. I would therefore begin by meeting with stakeholders to listen to each perspective, to discuss the current situation and to identify possible solutions. I would like to establish a dialogue with other cities to learn more about their city transit and their safety statistics in order to learn from those that are leaders in efficient and safe transit.

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

Important, needed and potential.

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 would be a strong advocate for increasing city transit funding to benefit the people in my ward and throughout the city. I would request and vote in support of city budget increases to effect changes in transit to improve safety and efficiency. I would work with other council members and the mayor to lobby for funding from higher levels of government.

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

I currently do not have a favourite transit app. I live in Osborne Village and one of the reasons is so that I can walk to many services and activities. This reduces my need for public transit. When I do take a bus it's typically from the downtown area where I make use of the transit time boards near the major stops for updated route information. I do support improving city software applications to improve the accessibility and efficiency of the system for all transit users.