

For Immediate Release
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Functional Transit Winnipeg Responds to City of Winnipeg Budget

WINNIPEG -- The 2020-23 City of Winnipeg budget proposes devastating cuts to key public transit programs, while insufficient increases to operating funding creating significant obstacles for the introduction of a frequent service model, Functional Transit Winnipeg President, Derek Koop said today.

“It’s disappointing that the City does not recommend the full implementation of a frequent service model, and turns its back on riders by proposing cuts that were opposed by the Infrastructure and Public Works Committee and riders across Winnipeg,” said Koop. “Mayor Bowman and City Council have ignored the demands of Winnipeggers by proposing further austerity on a transit system that is already cut to the bone.”

The budget proposes moving forward with \$20.5 million of operating funding cuts that will impact bus replacements, significantly reduce service on 15 bus routes, end the free Downtown Spirit route, and eliminate the popular UPass for post-secondary students. Moreover, the proposed annual average increase of 2.5 per cent over four years leaves transit barely keeping pace with inflation, creating significant barriers for the possible implementation of the recommended frequent service network.

“If Mayor Bowman is serious about building a city for a million people, we have to build a public transit system that is frequent, affordable and accessible,” added Koop. “It’s time to turn the page on the failed approach of austerity, and look to the future with the full implementation of a frequent service network. The plan is on the table. It’s disappointing that there is no political will to get the job done.”

Functional Transit Winnipeg is a volunteer-run, member-based organization representing riders from across Winnipeg.

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Media contact:

Derek Koop, President
204-791-2006
derek.koop@functionaltransit.com

Functional Transit Winnipeg is a group of Winnipeggers interested in improving public transit in our city. Visit us at www.functionaltransit.com