

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Loney to Modernize Winnipeg Transit 'MetroMobility' to be Safer, More Convenient and Greener

WINNIPEG, Manitoba – When elected Mayor, Shaun Loney will expedite safety improvements, accelerate implementation of the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan and modernize transit service by integrating other modes of travel. The new service will be rebranded 'MetroMobility'.

"Imagine that with one touch on your smartphone you can summon an electric shuttle van that you can track online," said Loney. "The van picks you up at a virtual bus stop close to your home and, along with neighbours already on-board, takes you directly to the closest arterial transit station. You then hop on a made-in-Winnipeg electric bus that takes you to your destination on time, all for one easy fare that reduces the need for car ownership."

"The time to create MetroMobility is now," said Loney, explaining that his approach will aim to double transit ridership within 10 years, reduce congestion and decrease the need for diesel-powered buses.

Loney said he's heard from Winnipeggers that they were surprised that last week's [transit infrastructure announcement](#) committed Transit to buying another 135 diesel buses effectively locking taxpayers into an out-of-date transit system for years to come. "Equally disappointing was that the announcement failed to address public safety concerns that are negatively impacting ridership," noted Loney.

Winnipeg Transit is conducting limited testing of transit-on-demand in three pilot areas. However, it sends practically empty diesel powered buses.

"Right now I am forced to drive everywhere because the bus is not a convenient option. I would definitely make use of this if on demand service was available in my neighbourhood", said Kalynd Murdock, who is a local Fort Garry resident.

"My vision is that we lean into ridesharing, transit, walking and biking," concluded Loney. "MetroMobility's mandate will be to bring all these modes together under a single department with one transferable customer fare".

"For me this is also a pocketbook issue," said Loney. "Buying, maintaining and insuring a vehicle is the second largest expense for most households after putting a roof over your head. Record high gas prices underscores that Winnipeggers need better transportation options."

"When elected Mayor in October, I will work with Council to reprioritize the partnership with other levels of government to meet the needs of Winnipeggers who have been demanding better transit service within a safer environment," Loney said.

Loney's **Three-Point MetroMobility Plan** makes sure a future transit system is safer, more convenient and greener as outlined below.

‘MetroMobility’ – The Loney Three-Point Mobility Plan

1. Safer – A more effective approach to safety will be deployed. A main feature will be hiring a new group of Transit Peace Officers who don’t just enforce a code of conduct for transit riders and fare collection, but also to connect people who repeatedly pose a risk on buses to customized support to break cycles of mental health, addiction and other problems.

In addition, priority will be given to launch a mobile app to empower riders to quickly and discreetly report incidents of harassment, crime, violence as well as less urgent issues on transit vehicles and near transit stops that dissuade many from using transit.

Loney has already announced an innovative [plan to address homelessness](#) which commits to ensuring people occupying bus shelters are offered supportive housing.

2. More Convenient – Accelerating implementation of the [Winnipeg Transit Master Plan](#) so that it is substantially completed within 10 years rather than 25 as is the current schedule. Faster trips can be offered sooner by straightening routes, installing both more diamond lanes and transit priority signals.

Ridership in underserved areas will be ramped-up by a major expansion of transit-on-demand using nimble and more cost-effective electric vans that are dynamically routed. On-boarding can be sped up by embracing common payment options such as the digital wallets already on mobile phones. Cash fares would be collected for the unbanked and telephone service available for those without smartphones.

Loney also noted that MetroMobility would increase accessibility as he would work with Council to bring [Transit-Plus fully back in house](#) to improve service levels for people who are unable to use regular transit service because of physical disability. All the shuttle vans would be wheelchair accessible. MetroMobility will offer U-Pass and low-income discounts. All new positions would be unionized and receive fair compensation and benefits.

3. Greener – The 100% transition of Winnipeg Transit’s fleet from diesel to electric buses, currently targeted for 2050, will be significantly advanced. On-demand, dynamically-routed electric shuttle vans will replace larger, conventional diesel buses in underserved neighbourhoods to bring people quickly and efficiently to electric buses running more frequently along arterial routes.

For More Information:

- Contact **Tom Code, Press Secretary** (comms@shaunforwinnipeg.com or 204-223-1290)
- Kalyn Murdock can be reached for comment at 204-998-8009
- See [shaunforwinnipeg.com](#).
- See **Backgrounder**.

Backgrounder

Safer

- Many other cities in Canada and the United States employ transit security forces. However, their experience has shown that many of the public safety issues found on transit systems are out of the control of public transit operators. Loney’s commitments on addressing homelessness and creating social enterprise employment will make a significant difference.
- Creation of a transit security force has been recommended by the Winnipeg Transit Advisory Committee and supported by the Amalgamated Transit Union.
- A Winnipeg Transit Security Plan has been commissioned by the City of Winnipeg but the recommendations have not yet been made public.
- Transit Peace Officers - An [independent review](#) of the Manitoba Police Services Act in 2020 recommended Manitoba enable Peace Officers, based on a model in Alberta.
- Creation of a mobile safety app for riders is recommended in the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan but has not yet been implemented despite growing safety concerns. There are several examples, such as the [‘SafeTTC App’](#) by the Toronto Transit Commission, that Winnipeg Transit can emulate.

More Convenient

- Dynamically-routed, on-demand shuttle vans integrated with mainline transit service is a growing trend across Canada, the U.S. and Europe to boost ridership.
- MetroMobility boosts convenience for riders in underserved areas by combining the advantages of bus transit with dynamically-routed, on-demand shuttles:

| Mode | Advantages and Limitations |
|--|---|
| Bus Transit | High capital costs. Buses are either too full or too empty. Good at taking many people to major destinations. |
| Electric Shuttle Vans / Transit-on-Demand | Lower capital costs. Flexible and responsive. Good at taking fewer people to various destinations. |
| MetroMobility | Dynamically-routed, on-demand shuttles take people to more frequently-running (electric) buses. Right service and right time. |

Greener

- Loney previously [announced](#) he was rejecting the car allowance usually afforded a Mayor and instead will take transit, bike or walk to work and meetings as has been his practice for all his working life.
- He will also review the current practice of free-parking passes that are used by some 400 high level city employees.
- The City of Saskatoon [recently estimated](#) significant lifetime cost premiums associated with the purchase of diesel buses. Diesel buses have a service life of about 18 years.

- Electric passenger shuttle vans are expected to become increasingly available in Canada within two to three years.
- 81 percent of weekday traffic in Winnipeg is personal vehicle travel
- [Council has approved](#) a target of achieving a 17 per cent reduction in GHG emissions by 2030. This requires a mode share breakdown of “50 percent auto-drive, 21 percent auto-passenger, 15 percent public transit and 14 percent walking/cycling.” Currently only 7 to 8 percent of trips are made by transit.

Revenue Sources

Cities across Canada that Winnipeg competes with are making record levels of investment in expanding transit. Results of an April 2021 survey presented to City Council revealed that the City of Winnipeg ranks last among major urban centers in its investment in rapid transit

Revenues needed to support Loney’s MetroMobility plan would come from several sources:

1. Reduced diesel bus purchases in favour of electric shuttle vans which require much less capital and significantly reduced operating costs.
2. Taking better advantage of federal support through the:
 - \$2.75-billion [Zero Emission Transit Fund](#) that is supporting the purchase of 5,000 electric buses over five years; and
 - \$3-billion in permanent, long-term predictable federal transit funding which will be available beginning in 2026/27.
3. Increased ridership from modernization of the transit system and increasing provincial cost-sharing as part of Manitoba’s new Energy Policy Framework.
4. Selling carbon credits from reducing diesel fuel consumption. Winnipeg Transit emits [43,000 tonnes of GHGs](#) per year. Full conversion of its fleet to zero-carbon options will be worth \$7.3 million annually when the minimum national carbon price reaches \$170 per tonne.
5. Dedicating increased property tax revenue from Transit Oriented Developments to MetroMobility.
6. Increased fare collection rate due to enhanced security and modern payment methods.