

Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Public Works – November 21, 2023

REPORTS

Item No. 6 Transit Service to FortWhyte Alive Buffalo Crossing

WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the changes to transit service on Route 649 and 650 shown in Appendices 1 and 2 be implemented beginning with the Fall 2024 schedule change, tentatively set for September 1, 2024.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Transit Service to FortWhyte Alive Buffalo Crossing

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Public Works

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Winnipeg Transit is proposing changes to two community feeder routes in southwest Winnipeg. These changes would introduce service to FortWhyte Alive Buffalo Crossing on McGillivray Boulevard.

Routing, schedules, and frequencies would change for Route 649 Chevrier and Route 650 McGillivray. There are no changes proposed to the operating hours of either route.

There are no financial impacts associated with the route change. The proposed changes would use existing resources.

FortWhyte Alive supports the change. Their staff have worked with Winnipeg Transit throughout the design and construction of their new facility. They have invited Winnipeg Transit to use a new bus stop within their drop-off loop during all regular hours of transit service.

Route changes would affect the Whyte Ridge neighbourhood. In one part of the neighbourhood, transit service would be reduced to peak-periods only. Outside of weekday peak periods and on weekends, people may have to walk up to 650 metres to access transit service. The longest walk currently in that part of the neighbourhood is 500 metres, which would remain the same in peak periods. In another part of the neighbourhood, transit would be introduced for the first time. In that area, the longest walk to transit would decrease from 900 metres to 400 metres.

FortWhyte Alive expects their facility to open in August 2024. Transit service to FortWhyte Alive Buffalo Crossing is expected to begin on September 1, 2024.

Winnipeg Transit would notify customers of the route changes by posting a notice at each affected bus stop approximately four weeks ahead of the change. Around the same time, online trip planners would reflect the changed service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the changes to transit service on Route 649 and 650 shown in Appendices 1 and 2 be implemented beginning with the Fall 2024 schedule change, tentatively set for September 1, 2024.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

Changes to transit routings require the approval of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Winnipeg Transit is proposing to modify Route 649 and Route 650 in order to introduce transit service to FortWhyte Alive Buffalo Crossing on McGillivray Blvd. FortWhyte Alive currently has no transit service.

In 2019, Council approved the BLUE rapid transit line service plan, including the Southwest Winnipeg Feeder Network. Service launched on the new network in April 2020.

The Whyte Ridge neighbourhood is adjacent to FortWhyte Alive. Three community feeder routes serve Whyte Ridge:

- Route 649 Chevrier (full service)
- Route 650 McGillivray (full service)
- Route 691 Whyte Ridge (weekday peak period service)

Each route terminates by travelling through the neighbourhood in a one-way loop. One-way loops are often used where transit routes end in suburban neighbourhoods and where no dedicated transit loop is available, but they have several drawbacks:

- One-way loops require some customers to backtrack and add time to their trips.
- One-way loops do not have a clear terminal point, where buses can lay-over without customers on board

Extending a one-way loop beyond a single neighbourhood is avoided, so that transit customers do not have to ride backwards over an unreasonable distance. Routes 649 and 650 have been using on-street bus stops within travel lanes to lay over, which has caused complaints from motorists, adjacent residents, and adjacent businesses.

The proposed route changes are shown in Appendices 1 and 2. Route 649 and Route 650 would both be extended to FortWhyte Alive. The proposed realignment would replace two of the

three one-way loops in Whyte Ridge with more desirable bi-directional service, and establish FortWhyte Alive as the clear terminal point. FortWhyte Alive will offer a dedicated bus stop area within their drop-off loop, along with access to washroom facilities for transit operators.

This proposed change would affect some residents of Whyte Ridge. In one part of the neighbourhood, transit service would be reduced to peak-periods only. In another part of the neighbourhood, transit service would be introduced for the first time.

For a one-kilometre section of Scurfield Boulevard, from Fleetwood Road north to Columbia Drive, this proposed service change would mean:

- Service would be reduced from all day, every day via Routes 649, 650, and 691, to weekday peak periods only via Route 691.
- Residents of the farthest home in the affected area would have to walk about 650 metres to access all-day transit service.
- Students travelling to Vincent Massey Collegiate would have to walk to Route 649 on Fleetwood Road or Columbia Drive, or transfer from Route 691 to Route 649 at Seel Station.

There are ten bus stops (five pairs) in the affected part of Scurfield Boulevard. Currently, in this part of the neighbourhood:

- The longest walk to access transit is about 500 metres, which would remain the same in peak periods.
- An average of zero people per day board a bus outside of weekday peak periods on five of the ten bus stops along this stretch of Scurfield Boulevard. Three bus stops have an average between zero and one person boarding per day.
- The two bus stops with the highest usage (an average of more than one person, outside of peak hours) will remain within 250 metres of all-day service.

This proposed service change would also introduce transit service to parts of Whyte Ridge east of the CPKC Railway La Rivière subdivision. This proposed service change would mean:

- Transit service would be introduced in front of the Whyte Ridge Community Centre for the first time.
- Residents of the farthest home in this area would have their walk distance to access transit service reduced from 900 metres to 400 metres.
- Access to Vincent Massey Collegiate would be improved with a reduced walking distance to Route 649.

It is proposed that service to FortWhyte Alive begin at the start of Transit's Fall 2024 schedule, which is tentatively set for September 1, 2024. This is the first seasonal schedule change after the expected completion of Buffalo Crossing in August 2024. Notification of the route and

schedule changes would be rolled out through notices at each bus stop, beginning four weeks in advance of the route change.

Throughout the process of developing the Winnipeg Transit Master Plan, the public expressed a desire for greater access to recreational opportunities by public transit. The longstanding main entrance of FortWhyte Alive on McCreary Road is several kilometres from the nearest transit route. Extending a route to that location would have required significant operating funding, along with infrastructure upgrades along McCreary Road. The development of the Buffalo Crossing facility on McGillivray Blvd presented the opportunity to introduce transit service directly to FortWhyte Alive.

FortWhyte Alive engaged with Winnipeg Transit early in the development process for Buffalo Crossing. The site was planned and built with transit service in mind. FortWhyte Alive has generously offered to allow bus operators to use their washroom facilities during their business hours. Buses will be permitted to use the transit loop during all hours of transit service, even after business hours. FortWhyte Alive will remain responsible for the maintenance of their roadway, including surface maintenance and winter maintenance, and will endeavour to match the City’s snow clearance policy for transit routes. Transit service is proposed at the invitation of FortWhyte Alive; there are no lease arrangements or cost implications for this access. This invitation is included as Appendix 3. (Note that the construction completion schedule has changed from March 2024 to August 2024 since the letter was issued.) While it is not expected, should FortWhyte Alive rescind this invitation in the future, transit routing would revert to one-way loop service in Whyte Ridge, or another arrangement that responds to the needs of the community at the time.

The east terminal of Routes 649 is also proposed to change, extending from the current terminal at the Jubilee Avenue overpass of Pembina Highway, along the Southwest Transitway to Seel Station. This change enables a new connection from Seel Station to Pembina Highway including Vincent Massey Collegiate, establishes better connectivity between Fort Garry-area feeder routes (642, 650, 690, 691, and 694) as well as enabling the “interlining” of feeder routes that leads to operational flexibility and efficiency. For residents of Whyte Ridge, it creates a single point serving the three feeder routes for the neighbourhood, allowing some customers transferring from the BLUE line to wait in a single place for “whichever route comes next”.

Current and tentative proposed service frequencies are outlined below.

Route 649	Approximate Frequency (minutes between buses)			
	Peak	Midday	Evening	Weekend
Current	26	30	50	50
Proposed	30	35	54	50

Route 650	Approximate Frequency (minutes between buses)			
	Peak	Midday	Evening	Weekend
Current	24	25	48	50
Proposed	25	35	54	50

Both routes overlap within parts of Whyte Ridge and at FortWhyte Alive. Along these combined segments, service frequencies are higher for customers with the flexibility of using either route. This includes customers connecting with the BLUE line. Proposed frequencies along the combined segments are outlined below.

Combined Routes 649 & 650	Approximate Frequency (minutes between buses)			
	Peak	Midday	Evening	Weekend
Current	N/A, routes do not serve the same bus stops			
Proposed	15	17	26	25

No changes to the operating hours of each route are proposed. Schedules and frequencies are subject to change from time to time, as with all transit routes.

The proposed route realignment can be made using existing resources. There are no financial impacts associated with the route change.

The Ward Councillor was consulted during the development of this report and supports the intentions of the Public Service.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: [October 13, 2023](#)

Project Name:

Transit Service to FortWhyte Alive Buffalo Crossing

COMMENTS:

There is no financial impact from the recommendations in this report as the proposed route changes will be accomodated through a reallocation of existing resources.

Laurie Fisher October 13, 2023

Laurie Fisher, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Ward Councillor

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

OurWinnipeg 2045

Goal: Environmental Resilience

Objective 2: Prioritize sustainable transportation as the mobility options of choice.

Transition to a sustainable transportation system that safely and efficiently moves people, goods and services, increases access to a variety of affordable mobility choices, encourages less reliance on personal vehicle travel, reduces travel time, mitigates congestion and related greenhouse gas emissions, and supports the development of denser, better-connected, healthy and complete communities.

Policy 2.9: Reduce Road Congestion

Increase the efficiency, convenience and usage of the active and public transportation system, to improve air quality, provide a viable alternative to the automobile, and reduce current and future road congestion.

Winnipeg Transit Master Plan

Network Goals:

- Enhance Customer Experience
- Increase Ridership
- Improve Downtown Mobility
- Complement Land-Use Development
- Improve Multi-modal Mobility
- Ensure Transit is Inclusive
- Continuously Innovate
- Balance Investment with Affordability

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

This report is in accordance with the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (WCAP) as per Direction 3.1 Increase Use and Efficiency of Public Transit Systems
Relevant actions include: Deliver continuous improvement in transit service with a focus on customer service, reliability, and route connectivity, and public education

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Goal 5(a) Transportation System Equity is Enhanced – the affordability and accessibility of transportation and transit service is increased.

Goal 5(b) Transportation System Equity is Enhanced – improvements to transportation and transit infrastructure and services prioritize areas of higher poverty, and increased interconnectivity to employment and affordable goods and services.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Transit
Division: Service Development
Prepared by: Kevin Sturgeon, Senior Transit Planner
Date: October 13, 2023

Attachments:

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Route Change 649
- Appendix 2 – Proposed Route Change 650
- Appendix 3 – Letter from FortWhyte Alive