

A major parks system will be one of the most important legacies left behind by Metro. Shown are Kildonan Park (left) and Assiniboine Park (right).



Controversial Metro Gives New City Transportation Study, Development Plan

By DUNCAN McMONAGLE

Winnipeg's Metro government, which took office in late 1969, was designed to perform various local government services that were delivered to most of the citizens in Greater Winnipeg's 19 cities and municipalities.

This it did. And from the beginning there was conflict between Metro and the municipal authorities over the new government's role and the costs of its services.

It was not until the beginning of 1971 that local governments, especially the City of Winnipeg, stopped devoting a major portion of their energies to fighting Metro. For it was just about a year ago that the form of the central city government that will replace Metro and the municipal governments at the beginning of 1972 was made clear by the provincial government.

Since Metro and its self-proclaimed opponents were to cease to exist after Dec. 31, 1971, there seemed little point in continuing the bickering that had characterized relations between the area-wide government and the other authorities for 10 years.

Greater Winnipeg's 12 cities and municipalities began to worry about their places in the new one-tier government to be established, and the provincial government, which officially created the new system, became the object of some of their attacks.

But despite the conflicts, in which Metro councillors sometimes played an enthusiastic role as their municipal counterparts, the area-wide government established itself as the authority in one important area of government activity — environmental planning.

The Winnipeg area transportation study (WATS) and the downtown and Greater Winnipeg development plans, however they are attacked by provincial and municipal authorities, will stand as Metro's most important achievements.

The plans are the first such documents and working guides ever produced for the Greater Winnipeg area by a government with a base in the area.

For several years, Metro has been ordering its activities, especially in the area of land acquisition, under the guidance of these major plans.

Metro has also adopted area-wide standards for zoning controls on land and building construction.

Planning powers for the Greater Winnipeg area were given to Metro in the Metropolitan Winnipeg Act passed by the Manitoba legislature in 1969.

However, municipal governments still had authority to approve and proceed with specific development projects. This split jurisdiction has been a major irritant to both Metro and the municipalities, and has provoked many quarrels between the planning authority and developers public and private.

But the important point in the planning-development disputes is the preparation and existence of such documents as WATS.

Even though its recommendations are being questioned by provincial government consultants, the fact that it was created and is guiding Metro's activities indicates Metro has succeeded in one of the major functions assigned to it by the metro act.

Metro was given charge of the public transit system, and control of all parks of over 15 acres in Greater Winnipeg. It was also made responsible for delivery of water to municipal

governments, which then pass it on to consumers, and for sewage collection and treatment.

Operation of Metro transit was another of the main areas where municipal governments focused their attacks on the metropolitan authority.

Greater Winnipeg taxpayers paid their first direct subsidy of the transit operations for its 1962 operations, and the system has been losing money ever since. The estimate 1972 deficit is \$7.4 million. It has been rising steadily ever since 1960, the first year the operation ran in the red.

An interesting point to note is Metro politicians' attitudes to arguments presented by municipal officials, whether out of concern with the issues or desire for political debating points.

Reading newspaper files, one gets the impression the Metro authorities were on the defensive during the first few years they held office. But after Metro had become firmly established and councillors felt a little more sure of their place in Greater Winnipeg politics, they seemed to become less defensive in their attitudes to municipal governments.

Metro politicians began active promotion of their projects, and near the end of their term of office they became as adept at political ploys as their critics.

In September 1971 Metro politicians turned sod for the latest Greater Winnipeg sewage treatment plant, titled the south end pollution control centre. Politicians and administrators lauded the corporation's sewage treatment program and pointed out improvements made since the area-wide government took office. However, tenders for construction of the centre had not even been called.

The rush to get important Metro projects started before the central city government takes office also featured sod-turning for the downtown convention centre. On that job, excavation is expected to begin shortly, but anyone could be forgiven for calling Metro "the last of the great sod turners."

Briefly, this is the story of Metro, its achievements, and the conflicts in which it was engaged with other governments.

Dissatisfaction among local politicians and citizens with the existence of 19 municipal governments prompted the provincial government to introduce a bill in the legislature that would create a government with certain powers across the whole area of Winnipeg and its suburbs.

The bill was passed in the summer of 1969, and Winnipeg businessman R. H. G. Bonnycastle was appointed the new government's first chairman, by the provincial government. He was to hold the office until 1964, when election for all 10 council positions was to be held.

Mr. Bonnycastle was referred to in the news media as a supermayor, just a Steve Juba was when he was elected first mayor of the central city government. But Mr. Bonnycastle himself asked that those references be stopped.

Elswood Bole, a veteran municipal administrator, was appointed Metro executive director in August, and a 16-member council was elected Oct. 26.

The councillors were sworn into office Nov. 1. Three of them still sit on the last Metro council — Jack Willis, now chairman, Bernie Wolfe and Art Coulter.

Of all the council members, Councillor Wolfe has been getting the most publicity from the news media consistently since his first election. He is an energetic man, always full of plans

for new government programs, and he can be counted on to provide information for a news story on almost any occasion.

The corporation's 1961 operating expenditures were estimated at \$6 million — only a quarter of the 1971 budget.

Conflict between Metro and the City of Winnipeg, and especially Mayor Juba, erupted over many topics. One of the first was Metro's assumption, allowed by the metro act, of control over arterial streets in the city. The mayor asked the provincial government to pick up Metro's operating costs for 1961, so the city and other local governments would not have to kick in for the new government's costs, from their own funds.

But that attempt wasn't successful, and in 1961 Metro decided to take 50 per cent of business taxes collected by area municipalities, in addition to its portion of the property tax, which was assessed against the municipalities on a percentage basis.

Under that arrangement, the City of Winnipeg, with just over half the area's total population, paid 61 per cent of the property levy, and 87 per cent of the business tax.

Also in 1961, Metro administrators, who came mostly from the City of Winnipeg, began talking about the necessity of a subway for the city. There was even talk of such a development being completed by 1970.

That was the year the transit system's deficit began to be a subject of contention among councillors, and also between Metro and other governments. Higher bus fares and service cuts were both suggested as cures, but neither were instituted immediately.

Pollution of the Red River was also a matter of public discussion, and councillors took a ride in a private yacht to see and smell the extent of the problem.

In September, two economists submitted a report to Metro suggesting the corporation's costs be met wholly by the business levy, instead of partly by business taxes and partly by realty taxes. But those recommendations were never adopted, because Premier Duff Roblin decided against it. The provincial government retains a great deal of control over the form and some of the functions of local governments.

But despite many quarrels between Metro and the municipalities, Metro council and committee meetings were quite often calm affairs. A Free Press editorial in October called the process "government not by debate but by conversation."

The first of Metro's comprehensive development plans was unveiled in November, 1961. The blueprint for the Greater Winnipeg development plan called for revitalization of the city's central core and uniformity of zoning bylaws throughout the whole area. The proposed downtown development was later codified in the downtown development plan.

A building bylaw was introduced at a council meeting late in the year, as one of the first steps in setting up uniform building standards in Greater Winnipeg.

In 1962 Metro adopted the idea of a subsidy for the transit system, although councillors have been upset at hearing the aid called a subsidy. They usually point out that public transit systems hardly ever make money, and they say transportation provision is one of the proper functions of a local government.

In July council voted 6 to 4 against a motion favoring amalgamation of all the area's municipalities.

In December Metro released a plan for nine bridges and 133 miles of roads, which would cost between \$100 million and \$200 million to develop. Municipal officials were divided in their reaction to the plan.

Metro's biggest accomplishment of 1963 was completion of the Greater Winnipeg development plan, which outlined physical developments the government considered desirable for the next 25 years. One of the major criticisms levelled against the comprehensive plan by municipal representatives was the cost — they asked where the money for the development was to come from.

In 1964, Metro planners unveiled proposals for a freeway system they said would take care of the traffic they predicted would be generated in the area by 1966.

Council authorized establishment of a special fund for riverbank property acquisition as an aid to a park-development program. Riverbank property would be gradually removed from private ownership and the banks of the Red and Assiniboine would be developed for public use, according to Metro plans.

The first council elections since the government's creation were held in October, and nine of the ten councillors were re-elected. Mr. Bonnycastle said the results indicated public approval of the work the councillors had done, and of Metro's operations. He was elected

chairman for the next two years.

In December news reports indicated Metro and some municipal officials were holding private discussions on the possibility of decreasing the number of municipal units in Metro Winnipeg to four.

At the end of the year five predominantly rural areas, which had been in Metro since its creation left the other 14 areas. Rosser, Springfield, MacDonald, East St. Paul and West St. Paul representatives said they felt their areas did not need Metro's services, but there were no real quarrels. The areas remained in Metro Winnipeg's additional zone which runs around the edge of the city, where the corporation has zoning and planning authority.

In 1965, Mr. Bole resigned as executive director for personal reasons. Finance director James McInnes was appointed to the post of chief administrator.

In 1966 three important development plans were prepared by Metro, marking the year as one of the most important in the development of the area-wide government.

A draft development plan for 700 acres of downtown was made public in January. A general clean-up program, more open space and an enclosed shopping plaza along Graham Avenue were the main proposals.

The first phase of the Winnipeg area transportation study, detailing transportation facilities and practices in the city, was released in April.

The master development plan for Greater Winnipeg was presented to council. Prohibition of unrestricted development around the edge of the city and limitation of residential development in the downtown area were its major features.

Mr. Bonnycastle resigned as chairman effective July 15, citing mounting pressure of his own business work. Coun. L. E. Ostrander was elected interim chairman, and after the October elections Coun. Jack Willis was elected to head council. He has held the position for the last five years.

In February, 1967, councillors revealed a plan to build an underground shopping mall at Winnipeg's most famous corner. The mall under Portage Avenue and Main Street was to be connected with the Richardson development on the northeast corner of the intersection. There were also plans to connect the proposed mall with the main station in the proposed subway system.

In August a proposal by council's planning committee that Metro take over urban renewal functions from the area municipalities had Winnipeg city officials up in arms.

In April, 1968, council gave third reading to the bylaw based on the provincial government. Council approved the bylaw as "a statement of the objective and policies of the corporation designed to promote the orderly growth and economic development within the metropolitan area and additional zone."

In June council unanimously declared itself in favor of one government for Greater Winnipeg, reversing the stand it had taken six years earlier. Council conveyed that proposal to the local government boundaries commission.

In October council held one meeting in the Winnipeg civic centre, and there were suggestions it might hold all its meetings there. But despite the pressure of lack of space at Metro headquarters at 109 Main

Street, councillors decided to keep holding their meetings in the building near the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers.

At that meeting in city hall, Metro council approved a twin-span design for a new Maryland bridge, bringing comments from some councillors that it was favoring the southern part of the city over north Winnipeg, because a replacement for the Arlington bridge, nearing the end of its appointed days, was not going ahead.

In February 1969 Metro officially released the complete WATS report, which called for a \$757 million expenditure on roads and bridges in a plan that covered transportation needs until 1991.

Transit fares finally went up in April, but the bus system continued to show a deficit. Metro efforts to get the provincial government to refund the fuel sales tax were not successful.

In June Metro came up with a more explicit downtown development plan, with recommendations for physical changes in two areas.

The 14-block Broadway-St. Mary sector, where work is under way at present, includes development of the convention centre. The other area is west and south of Central Park.

In May, 1970, council gave third reading to the downtown development plan bylaw, and approved the WATS report as its official policy.

Councillors hailed this as an important step in Metro's development, and in a way it cleared the way for the development of the central city plan. Approval of the development plans indicated an area-wide government could prepare projections for all of Greater Winnipeg, and implement long-term development policies.

The next logical step was one government for the whole area.

In August Metro and provincial government officials jubilantly announced that Lakeview Development Ltd. would be the first firm to begin to bring the downtown plan into reality, with a \$26 million development on the block next to the site of the proposed convention centre.

At the end of 1970, a provincial government white paper on restructuring local government boundaries said Metro had done a good job of providing the services for which it was responsible, but its efficiency had hurt local government in one important area — citizen participation in government affairs.

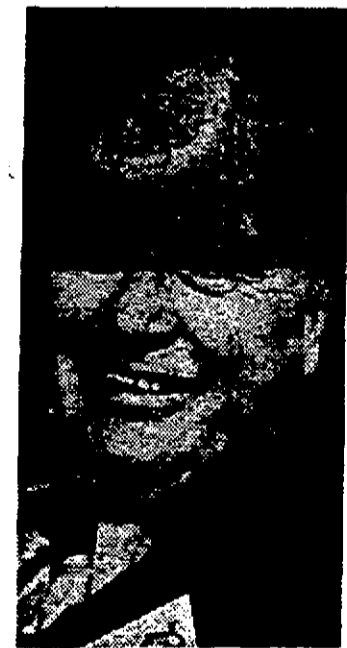
The way was clear for the introduction of the central city scheme.

It was in 1971 that municipalities and Metro began to get along in public better than ever before. A newspaper headline over a story of the annual Metro-municipal consultative meeting, which had often been noisy and argumentative, quipped "Momma Metro Not So Bad, Member 'Mourners' Murrur."

But later in the year a Metro report called "The place of Metro Winnipeg in the economy of Manitoba" roused the ire of some rural government representatives, for its recommendations of more provincial government financial aid to the city.

And now Metro's functions are incorporated into the central city government that will take office at the beginning of 1972.

The new government, which will have many of Metro's long-range planning concerns and will be bound by development plans at present in existence, will be the single governmental authority for the largest single group of Manitobans — citizens of Winnipeg.



JACK WILLIS

THE FINAL COUNCIL

Metro council ceases to exist today after 10 years of operation.

The final council's members are:

- Chairman Jack Willis
- Coun. Andrew Robertson
- Coun. J. A. (Art) Coulter
- Coun. John P. Sulymko
- Coun. Kenneth J. Galan-chuk
- Coun. B. R. Wolfe
- Coun. John W. McGurran
- Coun. Lorne Leech
- Coun. William Hutton
- Coun. Doug Stanes.

Councillors Listed

- A 51-member city council will be responsible for running the new City of Winnipeg.
- The members of the new council, including their community committees and wards, are:
- Mayor Steve Juba
- ASSINIBOINE PARK
- Charleswood Park — Al Coopman
- Tuxedo Heights — Roy H. Parkhill
- Queenston — Warren J. Steen
- FORT ROUGE
- Kelvin — Bill Norrie
- Grant Park — Morris Kaufman
- Riverview — Bob Taft
- Cockburn — Robert Johanson
- Reslyn — Jane Westbury.
- WIDLAND
- Memorial — Bob Wilson
- Westminster — Robert Steen
- Polo Park — Geoff Dixon
- Sargent Park — Bill McGarra.
- CENTENNIAL
- Weston — Alan C. Wade
- Kawatayne — Laverie Cherniack

- Balmoral — Adam Klym
- Ross House — George Munroe.
- ST. JOHNS
- Talbot — Al Skowron
- Riverton — Kenneth C. Cochran
- Norquay — Slav Rebchuk
- Strathcona — Joseph Cropp.
- LORD SELKIRK
- Cathedral — Joe Zuker
- Mynarski — Ken Galan-chuk
- Arlington — Olga Fuga
- Sisler — Norman A. (Norm) Hudson.
- WEST KILDONAN
- Garden City — D. A. (Abe) Yanofsky
- Kildonan — C. W. (Charlie) Baker
- Jefferson — W. H. (Bill) Sasaki.
- EAST KILDONAN
- Miles Wadonell — Stan Dowhan
- Leighton — Jim Smith
- Kilmorth — Alfred Penner
- Springfield Heights — Norman P. Stapan.
- TRANSCONA
- John Gurn — Don Perry
- Kern Park — Paul Kyzato

- Regent Park — Bernie Wolfe.
- ST. BONIFACE
- Tache — J. Paul Marion
- Norwood — C. John Gee
- Langevin — E. J. (Ed) Kotowich
- Winakwa — Michael Den-nychy.
- ST. VITAL
- Glenlawn — Florence Pierce
- Fernwood — Al Ducharme
- Dakota — Lorne Leech.
- FORT GARRY
- Wildwood — Dick Wankling
- Waybank — Harry A. Ems
- University — Gerry Mercier.
- ST. JAMES-ASSINIBOIA
- King Edward — Eldon Kess
- Deer Lodge — Doug Stanes
- Silver Heights — Pearl McConigal
- Rosyth — George Winkler
- Kortfield — William Halimogian
- St. Charles — Don McKenzie.