
CUSHMAN TRUCKSTER

Winnipeg Police Parking Patrol, Unit 1741

Written by John Burchill, President
September 22, 2024. Winnipeg Police Museum



Cst. Don Baker. Winnipeg Tribune, December 17, 1964.

For those who could not make it to the open house at West District Station, I am providing a little background on the Police Museum's "latest" addition to its operational fleet – a 1981 Cushman Truckster – which was showcased for the first time today.

The three-wheeled Truckster was first introduced to the Winnipeg Police in 1964 as a possible replacement for motorcycles (with sidecar), that were used in the winter. With a cab, folding doors (or curtain), and a manifold heater to keep the cab warm, it was the perfect low-cost vehicle to keep officers on the street from freezing – especially at -30° F (-35° C) when it was deemed too cold to drive the motorcycle.

Advertising for the Cushman promoted its narrow width – at just 48” (122 cm) wide, “*it is small enough to maneuver in crowded areas, park without impeding the flow of traffic*”. In addition, its short length, (102”/260 cm), allowed for unique maneuverability to “*weave in and out of congested areas, quickly getting to the heart of a traffic problem and unsnarling it ... [It] can go where no four-wheel vehicle can go ... [its] size enables it to thread through heaviest traffic to reach the scene of an accident in quickest possible time*”. The weather-tight box on the back also made it perfect for carrying traffic cones, radio equipment, a resuscitator, “*stretchers, diving equipment, even a large dog.*” It was also faster than an officer on foot and, of course, it was especially useful for parking patrol – it “*pays for itself in increased parking revenue.*”

Who in police administration would not want such a vehicle!! It was approved by the Winnipeg Police Commission and put into service after a short trial. On December 27, 1967, Patrol Sergeant Edward (Ted) Ryland was interviewed by the Winnipeg Free Press about the new service vehicle. According to Ryland, the Cushman’s primary purpose was to spot illegally parked cars and to check on the city’s Commissionaires during their rounds.



P/Sgt Ted Ryland, Winnipeg Free Press, December 27, 1967

The vehicle was used year-round, between 9 am and 6 pm every day. However, “*its main value*”, said Ryland, “*comes in the winter, as protection against the cold*”. Nevertheless, the Winnipeg Police still had its members riding a motorcycle with sidecar during the winter months into the mid-1970’s.

The vehicles were used until 1985, primarily by Commissionaires for parking patrol and to deliver summonses/subpoenas. However, they were also used by the police at parades for traffic/foot control as they were easy to move around.

The last two Cushman’s were manufactured in 1981, including Parking Patrol Unit 1741 (“17” was the assigned number for the Traffic Division at the time). After they were taken out of service 1741 was put into an unheated warehouse by the City and the second vehicle was sold off.¹

In 1997 the Winnipeg Police Museum took possession of 1741 and moved it to another storage building with plans to restore it. The second one was acquired by the Museum from a private seller in 2006, again with the hopes of restoring it.



Winnipeg Police Cushman, Harley Davidson motorcycle with sidecar, and Harley Davidson three wheeled Servi-car. c. Winter 1967

¹ A book of unused parking tickets and one completed ticket found by students inside 1741 during restoration suggests the last day the vehicle was in service was on or about January 22, 1985.

After sitting in storage for more than 25-years, a decision was made by the Museum to finally restore 1741 along with the second vehicle that had been re-acquired in 2006. Besides one engine being completely seized, the Cushman's would also require new cylinders, brakes and drums, brake lines, cables and wiring, as well new flooring and paneling to replace corroded or rusted parts, and a complete paint job and detailing.

With a grant to the museum from the government of Manitoba, and utilizing students from a recognized auto mechanics program, both vehicles were ultimately taken to the [Manitoba Institute for Trades and Technology \(MITT\)](#) to restore them into running order and ensure the body, frame, and all systems (mechanical, steering and braking) were sound. The simplistic mechanical design of the vehicles made them excellent for learning while at the same time, their age and deteriorated condition would require the students to exercise the utmost care and caution while dismantling their components. In addition to the program-based learning, the project presented students an opportunity to give back to the community and take pride in their work by helping to preserve a chapter of Winnipeg Police history.

At the time, Ray Karasevich, President and CEO, said *“MITT is excited about this partnership with the Winnipeg Police Service to restore a pair of its Cushman vehicles. It’s a unique and multidimensional learning opportunity for our students to apply their skills and discover the value of contributing to the community and, in this case, to the proud history of the Winnipeg Police Service.”*

After several years, including staff changes in the school, the COVID lock-down, the difficulty in finding replacement parts, and the need to fabricate pieces they could not obtain elsewhere, the staff and students at MITT were able to restore 1741 to running condition using additional parts salvaged from the second Cushman which could not be restored as a result. ²



MITT Students and staff, Automotive Trades Program. September 19, 2024.

² David Sanders, a MITT student who was involved in the Cushman Truckster restoration, wrote a paper and made the following video as part of his school studies - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwb2ysTZQYs>

In time for the West District Open House, celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Winnipeg Police, and the 50th Anniversary of Metro Police Amalgamation, the restored Cushman was turned over to the Winnipeg Police Museum by MITT on the afternoon of September 19, 2024.

Thank you to the students and staff at MITT for their efforts on this project. Also, a big thank you to Inspector Max Waddell, West District Station, and all the members who made for a great event today, showcasing all the divisions that make the Winnipeg Police a great place to work.

Watch for all the Museum vehicles to be on display at the [Manitoba Hydro Santa Clause Parade](#) on November 16, 2024.



Winnipeg Police Parking Patrol, Unit 1741, flanked by the Museum's 2000 Harley Davidson and a 2014 Harley Davidson (also former WPS vehicles). West District Station, September 22, 2024.

NOTE: With our 150th year (and 50th since Amalgamation) coming to an end, anyone wishing to recognize a police member (or historical event, or unit, or vehicle) they feel made an interesting or substantial contribution to policing in Winnipeg and its surrounding municipalities during the past 150 years is asked to send me a brief description of the details. See more stories on the Museum's [Behind the Badge](#) page.