Resource Conservation Manitoba

A Non-Profit Centre for Sustainable Living

March 12, 2010

To: Winnipeg City Council

Re: Councillor Wyatt's motion #5 to increase sidewalk funding

I am writing to express Resource Conservation Manitoba's support for Councillor Wyatt's motion to increase funding for regional / local sidewalk renewal. Through the Active & Safe Routes to School program, which our organization delivers in Manitoba, we are keenly aware of the importance of sidewalks for children and youth getting to and from school.

Two trends underscore this critical role: (1) The number of children and youth walking to school has declined dramatically over the past few decades from over 80% to around 35% today, and (2) children's health has deteriorated. Only about 10% of Manitoba children meet the daily levels recommended in Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines. Manitoba children are more overweight and obese than Canadian children in general (31% vs 26%).

One of the factors that influences a parent's decision whether their child can walk or bike to school is the availability and safe condition of sidewalks in their neighbourhood. As identified in the Child- and Youth-Friendly Land Use and Transport Guidelines for Manitoba, it is important that pedestrian routes to school be safe and suitable; separated from heavily trafficked roads; cleared of snow and ice; and suitable for tricycles and children's bicycles.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

J. Avent

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