July 9th, 2014

To the Members of the Executive Policy Committee:

As a member of the Wolseley Residents' Association, I would like to express strong support for the proposed by-law limiting travel by all motor vehicles (residents and non-residents alike) to a distance of one block along Sunday/Holiday Bicycle Routes. The current system of recommended closure has, unfortunately, not been sufficient to provide a safe and effective route.

The Wolseley Residents' Association has hosted numerous meetings over the past four years, including meetings with our City Councillor, Harvey Smith, and MLA, Rob Altemeyer, to discuss the Sunday Bike Path issue. Consultations with the community found that many residents held contradictory understandings of the informal rules regarding the closure, a situation which has led to much confusion and, at times, strained interactions between cyclists, motorists and residents. The WRA is very pleased that this new by-law will eliminate this confusion and will set in place clear, enforceable rules-of-use for the Sunday Bike Path routes. It applauds this committee for demonstrating leadership in considering this recommended by-law.

Our association has, however, one serious concern with the proposed plan and that has to do with removing the barricades once the smaller by-law signs are posted. Many of the members have lived in the neighbourhood for years, and so have witnessed, first-hand, the difficulties involved in trying to minimize traffic and so maintain a safe bike path. Given that drivers often ignored the larger barricades, members are most concerned that the smaller signs, alone, will be even less effective in deterring them, and that traffic may, in fact, increase. The Residents' Association firmly supports, then, that the barricades be retained even once the smaller signs are posted.

We realize that an argument can be presented that since the barriers were often ignored in the past, there is no real point in keeping them. We strongly believe, however, that with the new by-law, this rationale would not apply. Our experience has shown that it was primarily the lack of clarity surrounding the rules which led many motorists (local and otherwise) to ignore the barricades – what did 'thru traffic' mean, to whom did the 'rules' apply (residents/non-residents), was there even a law at all?

With a new, enforceable by-law accompanying the barriers, the probability that they will be respected is much greater. Even though, on their own, they were not a sufficient deterrent, they still did serve to dissuade a good number of drivers. Now, in conjunction with the by-law, clear to all, they will be even more effective, and serve a vital role in supporting and reinforcing the new rules. Maintaining the barricades can only lead to a strengthening of the by-law and to increased compliance. Fewer vehicles will travel along the route, fewer infractions will occur, fewer tickets will be issued, and safety will increase, which, of course, is our ultimate goal!

It is also important to note that these barriers serve as an essential reminder to all motorists that it is, indeed, a closure day. People driving home or through the neighborhood along their regular route might do so without being particularly conscious of the day of the week. Barricades placed at regular intervals, especially with wording clearly restating what is on the smaller signs (one-block rule, all along the route), would certainly provide drivers with a helpful reminder. Since the intention

is *not* to issue tickets, but to minimize traffic and violations, it follows that retention of the barricades would best serve this purpose by offering all drivers a clearly visible and unmistakable reminder of what is legally expected of them.

The WRA does understand that this by-law would be enforceable and that violators would be subject to fines. However, the extent of enforcement will depend, of course, on what resources the police have available. As we are all well aware, officers are already spread very thin, having to respond to calls on a priority basis. It's fairly likely, then, that enforcement will be quite sporadic. Given that reality, the Association feels that it would be very beneficial for the City to use the additional strategy of maintaining the barricades to discourage infractions during the many hours not being patrolled.

Members realize that there is a cost involved in continued placement of the barriers, although not a new one, but feel that it is well worth this cost if citizens, especially children, are able to use the path more safely. And, if liability were ever to permit, the neighbourhood could provide many able-bodied residents who would be more than willing to move the barricades into place every weekend, at no cost whatsoever.

Finally, aesthetics has also been presented as a reason to remove the barricades, but I am quite certain that most Wolseley residents would agree that this element should not be factored into the decision, as safety of those using the route must be paramount.

In summary, given what has been witnessed by residents over the years, the WRA believes that maintaining the barricades will significantly increase the efficacy of this important and necessary by-law and that this two-pronged approach will provide the best chance for the proposed plan to be rolled out in such a way as to produce the most positive outcome possible.

Thank you.

Suzanne Lussier
(Member of the Wolseley Residents' Association)