August 12, 2003

Andrew T Chimko, P. Eng.,
Traffic Management Engineer
City of Winnipeg,
Public Works Department
Transportation Division

Dear Mr. Chimko,

We appreciate your reply dated July 24, 2003, to our letter of June 13, 2003. We understand that as a traffic engineer your concerns are different from ours, yours being the moving of traffic as quickly and effectively as possible, while our concern is for the safety of the business owners, their staff, the residents, and the visitors to this community, and for the economic viability of our community. We want also for this community to prosper as a residential community, which would be beneficial to the businesses that are here and would encourage new business development. We would like to address some of your comments and points.

1) The $33,000 for permanent concrete bases for the signal poles and the $40,000 for the signal lights *temporarily on loan*, costs for which the city has not budgeted, seems to be a justifiable expense if indeed they are true costs. The investment of $73,000 in this community is only 1/3 of 1% of the budget for the pedestrian bridge. For an investment of $20 million the city must believe that a great many pedestrians will be using the pedestrian bridge and will want Provencher to be pedestrian-friendly to them.

2) Your statement that the traffic lights at Taché and at Aulneau will provide regular stoppages in vehicular flow to allow drivers and pedestrians to cross or enter Provencher Boulevard at St. Joseph safely and efficiently is questionable. During this stoppage the vehicles that would occupy this intersection is not limited to the 615 southbound vehicles as per your study but would also include:

* the 900 left/U-turning eastbound vehicles as per your study,
* the 220 northbound vehicles as per your study,
* an *unknown number* of north and southbound vehicles on Aulneau that on their green would turn onto Provencher and proceed westbound through the St. Joseph intersection,
* an *unknown number* of north and southbound vehicles on Taché that on their green would turn onto Provencher and head east through the St. Joseph intersection,
* an *unknown number* of left/U-turning westbound vehicles.

The regular stoppage time at this intersection would be approximately 220 minutes during the period of your study on which these figures are based. This is generously based on north/south lights being one-half as long as east/west lights. So as you can see <u>just from the numbers we know</u> (615+220+900 =1735) an average of 8 vehicles per minute traveling from different directions would have to clear this intersection during the regular stoppage periods. Remember that in this mix of vehicles are City of Winnipeg transit buses and many large trucks entering and exiting Saint Joseph due to Parmalat Dairies. When all is taken into account you can see that the comment "safely and efficiently" is questionable.

3) Your comments regarding the numbers of collisions would lead the reader to think that the placement of traffic lights at this crossing has greatly increased collisions. While it is true that the collisions have doubled at St. Joseph and Provencher, when you compare yearly averages from 1998-2000 to the year 2002 there are many facts omitted.

* Fact #1: Any time a new traffic control is put in place there is a greater incidence of collisions during a period of adjustment.
* Fact #2: The whole of Provencher has been littered with signage directing drivers, and these signs have been changed frequently as well as sometimes incorrectly, causing considerable confusion to drivers.

* Fact #3: The collisions at Aulneau also doubled to 12 in 2002 from the averages of 6 per year in the period of 1998-2000. Taché, which did not allow any left-hand turns and restricted right-hand turns for part of the year, went from an average of 12 collisions per year in 1998-2000 to 10 in 2002, a reduction of only 2 which one could have expected to have been greater due to traffic-flow restrictions. This fact proves the effect fact #2 had.

* Fact #4: With a *new* traffic control device and a greater number of vehicles using this intersection to enter and exit North Saint-Boniface, the increase of collisions should have been expected. One would have thought the number of collisions would have been higher considering the fact that the increase in traffic from Taché being closed could have brought a large percentage of the Taché collisions east to the new exit/entry point.

Your statement "It is unlikely that traffic control signals would reduce the frequency of collisions at Provencher Boulevard and St. Joseph Street" is based only on the fact that in 2002 while the traffic control was in place the collisions increased from the selected yearly averages before the traffic lights were in place and does not take into account increased traffic, new signals lights, the construction, the confusion that comes with major lane restrictions, nor the fact that collisions also doubled at Aulneau.

4) You mention an additional traffic light on Provencher will increase the potential for rear-end collisions. This is not an additional traffic light as it has been in place for two years and commuters are now accustomed to it. Rear-end collisions can now be blamed, as Autopac does, on the drivers for following other vehicles too closely, for not driving according to road conditions, for allowing themselves to be distracted, or for speeding. This traffic control signal decreases vehicle stop time, traffic delay, and the potential for collisions to the southbound vehicles on St. Joseph and to those exiting the Shell.

5) Also to be taken into consideration should be Whittier Park at the end of St. Joseph Street, where the soccer fields, baseball diamond, and green spaces are seeing increased use. The success of La Maison du Bourgeois and Fort Gibraltar has seen the Festival du Voyageur having a greater number of bookings year round, accommodating up to 2000 guests per event, which increases the usage of St. Joseph. We are at a time in the history of North Saint-Boniface where the potential exists for new housing development (the North of the Highline project, the Rendezvous site, and others) which will increase traffic flow.

6) As for the length of walk signals being timed for the current standard walking speeds of 1.2 metres per second, we would like the walk signals to be timed to accommodate those that cannot walk at that speed: the high numbers of seniors living in the area, as well as the many children from the local daycares who go on outings to places like the library and the park which require the crossing of Provencher Boulevard.

7) When the above information and facts are taken into account,

When part of the cost to put these lights in place has been covered and additional costs will be incurred in removing them,

When the business community and residential community want the lights to stay,

When the City can see justification in placing traffic lights at the end of the Provencher bridge on the west side where there are no crossing streets,

When streets such as Marion and Goulet have traffic signals at each intersection,

How can the City of Winnipeg justify removing these traffic lights and not giving to this community a sense of safety and the quality of life that a community needs to grow?

Tom Scott V.P.
French Quarter Biz

cc Councillor John Angus, Chairperson, Standing Policy Committee on Public Works
Councillor Daniel Vandal, Saint-Boniface Ward
Jim Thomson, P. Eng. Director of Public Works
Bill Ebenspanger, P. Eng., Senior Bridge Engineer
Roland Marcoux, President Old Saint-Boniface Residents Association (with copy of Mr. Chimko's letter)