Attachment A: Letter from Canadian Fair Trade Network

Mayor Bowman and City Councillors,

Fair trade is a powerful tool that aims to empower marginalized producers to improve their own living conditions. With the proper resources, capacity, and access to key relationships, disadvantaged producers can earn their own means to a better life for themselves and their communities.

The Fair Trade Town program recognizes municipalities demonstrating strong commitment to fair trade from its community stakeholders, including local municipal authorities (such as a city council), businesses, community groups, and individual members. It has a long-term vision for awareness and support of fair trade, and has been designed to address the needs and opportunities available from a range of different communities, large and small, across Canada. The Fair Trade Town program in Canada is part of a global movement that recognizes more than 2,000 communities in over 30 countries.

In February of this year, Winnipeg hosted the Canadian Fair Trade Network National Conference which brought together organizations and individuals from across Canada and the globe. Local participation was strong and included those currently involved in fair trade and others who are interested to incorporate fair trade into their organization. Becoming a fair trade designated city will support those local organizations that are making the change to incorporate fair trade.

The Canadian Fair Trade Network administers The Fair Trade Town program in Canada and requests that all Designated Fair Trade Towns submit an update or renewal on July 1st of each year. This is mostly a check in to see how things are going and to ensure that standards are still being met. The intention is not to pull designation from any town, but rather to work with them to ensure the criteria is up to date.

The current Fair Trade Town criteria includes; political support, product availability, community support, public education and a committee. It is not anticipated that these will ever change, they have been in place since 2001, and with more than 2000 Fair Trade Towns worldwide who all follow very similar criteria, a change would be very difficult. The only change to occur to the programing in Canada will benefit towns by opening the acceptable certifications. The Fairtrade Labelling (FLO) will remain gold standard, and three other certifications will be added; The Small Producers' Symbol (SPP), The Fair Trade Federation (FTF) and The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) will be added in. No other changes are foreseen.

Participating in the Fair Trade Town designation program, is a great way to show support for local organizations who are participating in fair trade. Winnipeg has a strong committee filled with dedicated individuals and organization representatives who have done an excellent job promoting fair trade within the city. The Canadian Fair Trade Network looks forward to having Winnipeg listed as a Fair Trade Town. Please do not hesitate to contact me or the Fair Trade Winnipeg Steering Committee representative Lindsay Mierau (204-986-8598) with any follow-up questions to this letter.



Sean McHugh
Executive Director
Canadian Fair Trade Network