Good afternoon Mayor and Councilors,

My name is Sylvie Hébert. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. First of all, I'd like to thank you for the work that you do to serve the citizens of Winnipeg. I have attended almost a dozen City Hall meetings and I've noticed that those meetings can last a long time and require you to listen to countless concerned citizens and business representatives, so thank you for your efforts.

I've also noticed that when you begin your meetings, there is an Indigenous land acknowledgement which I find important. I had the honour of listening to Elders at Turtle Lodge in Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba. Indigenous elders came together at the lodge to write the The Great Binding Law. As per the Law (Quote) "Our ancestors prophesized of this time - a time of climate change, a time of crossroads, a time of self-examination, and a time of choice. Our choice is not a choice of words, it is a choice of action. We need to stand strong now in alliance with Mother Earth." (End quote.) I urge you to allocate our public monies towards actions and goals that create a healthy, equitable and sustainable city.

I am a Norwood East homeowner and I have not owned a car for almost 15 years. I choose not to have a car because we are in a climate crisis. I want to reduce my carbon footprint. I want to be an example to others.
I was a delegate at the Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works last Thursday to urge the City to properly invest in transit. I listened to a lot of great presentations and learned a lot. For example, I learned the U-Pass has increased university ridership by 25% removing 7000 cars off the roads. Amazing!

Last Thursday, blog-writer Michel Durand-Wood provided an interesting budgeting perspective which focuses on Return on Investments. I was pleased to see that the things that I value have a high Return on Investments. For every dollar spent on active transportation there is a return on investment of $11.80. Wow! Trees have a return on investment of 8$ for every dollar spent. Parks and Recreation $7 and Libraries $5. Transit has a $3.70 return on investment. On the other hand, roads only have a $1.26 return on investment for every dollar spent.

With this information, we know that we should invest more in Active Transportation. The funding rate for active transportation in the City of Winnipeg is currently 3.8 million/year. However, your award-winning Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategy has a 20-year implementation goal. To attain this goal, the City would need to invest 16.7 million a year, 4 times more than the City currently funds active transportation.

Not having a vehicle by choice, my preferred mode of transportation is my bike during Spring, Summer and Fall. I want bike routes to be safer. At times, it can be very scary to ride amongst cars. But I do it. When it's too cold, too risky or too far to use my bike, I take transit. I have the experience of waiting long periods of time between bus transfers, busses passing me by because they are too full, and waiting at many bus stops in rain or snow storms with no bus shelters. I endure these frustrating experiences because I don't

want to buy a car. With our current transit system, I believe that the majority of vehicle-owners will not switch to using transit. It doesn't have to be that way. We have to make transit appealing at all times of the day and for all riders, especially young folks so that they start and continue to ride the bus as adults.

I want buses to be frequent and accessible and the fares be affordable for all. My idea of transit improvements is not only to add new incentives but also to not remove any existing ones like the U pass and the downtown spirit bus.

I understand that the City is in a tough spot with serious challenges to balance the budget. To help with this budget balancing act, as a homeowner, I'm in favour of a major tax increase. I pay almost $200 monthly for my property taxes.
A 20% tax increase would be an additional $40 monthly for me. I am willing to pay that so that the City can invest in sustainable transportation and other life-sustaining services.

I would like the following amendments to the proposed budget:

1. That you invest 16.7 million/year to reach the 20 year implementation goal set by your Award-winning Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies
2. That you restore the U-Pass and the downtown spirit bus and not make the other cuts to the proposed transit budget
3. That you restore the library hours, and keep at a minimum the Millenium library open on Sundays.
4. That you not cut your community grants by 10%

Mayor and Councilors, this week you have important choices to make that will impact today's society and future generations. My hope is that you approve a budget that prioritizes the environment and the most vulnerable because that approach will benefit everyone. This is your chance to show bold, visionary leadership in the face of the climate crisis.

Thank you for listening. I'm happy to take any questions.