Hello Councilors,

My name is Alexandra Koslock. First and foremost, I define myself as a helper in the community. I am a student in the faculties of International Development and Urban and Inner City studies at the University of Winnipeg, and a director of the University of Winnipeg's Students' Association. I am a student who has benefited from the UPass program over the course of my four-year degree. As a student living with debt due to the high cost of education, this UPass program is crucial for me. But I recognize that I do hold privilege; I will never have to worry about becoming homeless, dropping out of school for financial reasons, or other financial hardships, simply because of my family's social safety nets - this is something not all students are able to say.

I am shocked right now that Council delegations of the municipal budget are still underway. There are many areas of the budget that frustrate our community, and it is irresponsible for the City to put Winnipeggers at risk of contracting COVID-19. I could never fathom that these proceedings would still continue, at a time when we are encouraged to self-isolate. You are putting our community in danger.

I come here today as one of your partners on the UPass program. We are all partners - Councilors, students, UWSA execs, transit - and this must remain a partnership going forward. The City's current proposal is at a time where we need to increase social capacity and decrease environmental impacts to the natural world. Take ownership of how your decisions could negatively impact lived experiences of students, as well as retract current municipal efforts to reduce carbon emissions. I urge you to not go backwards during these times.

Councilor Mayes - I used the UPass pre-UIC Work/Study program. A program which you have championed for. Many students in that program utilized bus transit around the city during the application process in December - working jobs, volunteering, commuting between main campus and Merchant corner campus on Selkirk Avenue, bringing kids to school and/or daycare. We cannot ignore the fact that many students who are a part of this program are low income and impoverished students who were raised and still live in the inner city.

The UWSA executives did their due diligence to make sure the referendum that you proposed was shared across the university. All of us directors went to our own faculties and students groups to ensure that your message was shared - either the bus pass would increase beyond the rate of inflation OR the UPass program would cease to exist. I personally circled back to my faculty student association and made sure the other nine members understood the referendum process, and we all presented in classes, put up

posters and handbills in the faculty, and circulated emails to over fifteen faculty members and staff to empower them to share this referendum process with students.

The UWSA staff, execs, and directors remained transparent with students to ensure that they were a part of this process. Students showed immense interest in understanding what this referendum process meant, and are confused why their participation was not taken seriously. Some students participated through this micro process of politics as a first time engagement with the government - how will this outcome increase political participation of these students in the future? Transparency is a value deeply held by the UWSA staff and members. We did our work. We did the work that was asked of us, and now you are refusing to do yours.

Over 80% of UW students voted in favour to continue the UPass program with an increase in cost above the rate of inflation. We cannot sit here now, as a partner, and hear that this option is not financially viable - it was an option proposed by the City. If the proposed $24.50 per term increase was financially unsustainable, why didn't you give an option for this referendum that was conducive to transit and the City? We did all of the necessary groundwork, spent a lot of energy on top of our busy schedules, and now we all fear that this work has gone unnoticed and was a waste of time. With over 1000 students voting to keep the UPass program active - how can a handful of Councillors today think it is justifiable to eradicate this program indefinitely?

Ending the UPass program will impact the most marginalized in our community; specifically students who are low income and impoverished. These are students that are trying to break cycles of intergenerational poverty, and scrapping the UPass program places an additional barrier for them to access education. I spoke to students at main campus and Merchant Corner who were frustrated with the $25 increase, yet they still participated in the referendum process to make sure their voices were considered.

Something is broken in the system when a referendum happens, people vote, and our political leaders make a decision that is not what the people want. A democracy must be a process where governments remain transparent with their partners. THIS is not what a democracy is - when the people speak and the government ignores their interests. Students within your electoral districts voted overwhelmingly in favour of this program.

This decision is not simply a part of the budgetary process. The City does not have enough money and the sector/people they select to impact is students, community organizations, and marginalized community members. We are all well aware that there are other means to generate revenue to help our City function - do not attack the next generation in the process. You need to sit down with student unions and draft a

meaningful plan that benefits all partners involved. A plan that supports the growth of our city. A plan that allows us to tread more lightly on the natural world. The Councilors today must take ownership for how their actions impact the people in our community. I urge you to think of the barriers that you had to overcome in order to access education. If you find it difficult to think of any that is because you hold immense privilege in this society. I urge you to use this privilege today, and think of those most impacted by your decisions.