March 19, 2020

Written Submission in lieu of appearing at the Executive Policy Committee on March 18, 2020

My name is Anny Chen. I'm writing today as a homeowner in Daniel McIntyre, a lifelong educator, a pedestrian, cyclist, transit user and driver, and a community volunteer and organizer.

I returned from a monthlong trip in Asia on February 29, 2020, and was out in the community for 11 days, carefully following the health care guidelines at the time. There were a lot of hugs left hanging as people welcomed me back to Winnipeg. On Thursday, March 11, I gave my first-ever delegation at city hall to the Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works Committee. I was there with dozens of people when Councillor Allard announced Winnipeg's first presumptive case. There were no COVID-19 protocols in place at city hall at the time.

By the next day, public health officials increased health measures significantly. I immediately instructed my staff to work remotely to minimize their exposure to COVID-19 and possible transmission to their loved ones who are in much more vulnerable positions.

By the weekend, all people who have travelled internationally had been asked to self-isolate for 14 days after returning from travel. Guess what? I am past my 14 days of isolation and I feel great! Guess what else? I am still choosing to stay home because emerging research shows that the virus is staying on surfaces and in the air, and that a small percentage of people can carry the virus past 14 days.

Although I was registered to speak at the Executive Policy Committee meeting on Wednesday, I decided not to attend out of concern for your health and the health of other delegations. I am calmly and thoughtfully doing **more** than the minimum health guidelines that are in place, knowing that this is an evolving situation that requires utmost care and the cooperation of everyone.

I am frankly confused and disappointed in City Council for their lack of humility when confronted with people's concerns about COVID-19. Kudos for putting protocols in place, but I was watching the livestream and could clearly hear people coughing. I could hear that City Council only suggested that people use wipes to sanitize the podium, rather than requiring it.

And this is only talking about the people who were present. There were numerous people like myself who wanted to be active participants in the last few days of this highly debated budget. But we were given no options for official participation, other than sending in written submissions that seem highly unlikely to be read before council votes on the budget on Friday.

It is irresponsible for Mayor Bowman and the city council to push through a budget that fails the most vulnerable people in our city, particularly during a global pandemic that presents heightened challenges to proper community consultations. I ask that Mayor and council make

an amendment to pause all cuts to community services until COVID-19 no longer has pandemic status, so that integral social safety nets, like Winnipeg Transit, Winnipeg Harvest, and Winnipeg Arts Council, continue to see money flowing. Who are we turning to during these times of self-isolation? The workers, the helpers, and the artists. Do not be the people who block this important work.