NORTH END
women's
centre NEWC

P: 204.589.7347
F: 204.586.9476
E: info@newcentre.org

394 Selkirk Ave.
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 2M2

June 14, 2022

Mayor Brian Bowman and all Councillors,

North End Women's Centre opposes the motion to remove infrastructure from bus stops in Winnipeg as moved forward by Councillor Shawn Nason and the majority if the IRPW committee on June 9th 2022.

North End Women's Centre (NEWC) is a long-standing community resource for women and non-binary people in the North End of Winnipeg. We have provided basic needs, outreach to unsheltered people, housing and supportive programming for almost 40 years within a largely Indigenous community.

We ask that this letter be submitted into record regarding the motion to remove infrastructure from bus stops on Regent or anywhere else in the city. We thank Main Street Project for coordinating a community response that we have endorsed along with almost 30 other agencies that respond to community need on a daily basis with proven track records.

The lack of safe consumption sites, transitional housing and shelters operating from a harm reduction approach in Winnipeg, significantly reduces safe options for an already vulnerable group of people.

Evidence based solutions, like safe consumption sites, adequate shelter and transitional housing are needed. Community based research has proven these responses increase both community and individual safety, while the dismantling of bus shelters does is not. This response is punitive, fear based and a totally unnecessary response to poverty and homelessness in our city.

NEWC contributes to research and data collection that shows most unsheltered individuals in Winnipeg are Indigenous, have lived in care and experience physical or mental health disabilities.

We see no alignment with the recommendations of the TRC with this action and its disproportional effect on Indigenous people. The bus shelters are on land we that we share.

The City of Winnipeg needs to continue to invest in housing and read the research and available recommendations about safe consumption sites and harm reduction efforts that exist in many urban centres. Perhaps then we can create a city the responds with equal effort to solve problems for all of its citizens.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Drebot, Executive Director
North End Women's Centre