WINNIPEG POLICE ASSOCIATION

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To Mayor Brian Bowman and Winnipeg City Council:

The Winnipeg Police Association (WPA) wishes to ensure the members of Council have all of the facts regarding **Item No. 35: Provision of Safe and Secure Parking for Winnipeg Police Service Members** – a recommendation that would ratify the agreement between the WPA, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) and the City of Winnipeg to provide our members with access to a secure parking facility downtown at market rates.

Safe working conditions are a core responsibility for every employer, including the City of Winnipeg. The lack of secure parking downtown has been a long-term concern for our membership, and it is something we have worked on with City officials for many years.

As you prepare to vote on the agreement we have reached with the City of Winnipeg and the WPS, we hope you will take into consideration the following facts:

- The agreement before City Council today represents the outcome of a collaborative negotiation process involving the management of the City of Winnipeg, the WPS and the WPA. This is an issue that predates most members of City Council as well as the current WPA leadership, and we hope you will recognize an opportunity to endorse a negotiated settlement between the parties.

- Some might question why the WPA is focused on this issue; the stark reality is that our members are being specifically targeted due to their employment with the WPS, and the current lack of safe and secure parking downtown puts them at grave risk every time they travel to and from their vehicles.

- These are not hypothetical concerns – the threats against our members are real and serious.

    - In the past few years alone, the WPA has seen a member stabbed, a member attacked and knocked unconscious, and another member nearly shot at close range while travelling between their parked vehicles and WPS facilities in Winnipeg.
    - Members are routinely being surveilled by criminal elements as they walk to their vehicles; they have experienced incidents of violent threats being uttered or directed at them; and they have repeatedly incurred vandalism and sabotage to their vehicles (lug nuts removed or loosened, etc.) – which not only places the member in danger, but also family members who may operate the same vehicle.

- We want to stress that this isn't simply a broad or generalized downtown safety concern; these individuals are being targeted precisely because they are members of the WPS as they leave their workplace.

- Amid these concerns, and this context, the City, the WPS and the WPA struck a Joint Committee in July 2021 tasked with considering the WPA's request that reasonably priced safe and secure parking be made available to members of the WPS who work downtown. This Joint Committee considered numerous factors when examining possible options, including:

    - The risk faced by WPS members in working and parking downtown and walking to and from their vehicles
    - Proximity to WPS headquarters
    - Cost
    - Safety features of the parking structure as well as modifications that would be required
    - Ability to dedicate space to WPS members for sole use
    - Number of stalls available

- WPA members will be paying full market rates for the parking spaces at the Millennium Library Parkade.

    - Each space will either be shared by two WPA members, at a cost of $137.50 per member per month, or used by one WPA member, at a cost of $275.00 per month.
    - Parking agreements are between WPA members and the Winnipeg Parking Authority, and WPA members may not, under any circumstances, share their parking fobs with non-WPA members.
    - The cost of each parking space in the agreement reached between the WPA, WPS and the City will be subject to annual price increases or decreases, as determined by the Winnipeg Parking Authority.
    - Members who wish to obtain a secure parking space shall be required to commit to the cost of the space for a full year.
    - In the event the Millennium Library Parkade is decommissioned or sold, this agreement is no longer enforceable.

- Police and staff members in other comparable jurisdictions are provided with safe and secure parking either at no cost or at a very minimal cost.

    - At the Calgary Police HQ, members pay $27 bi-weekly for safe and secure parking.
    - In both Edmonton and Vancouver, the entire cost of safe and secure parking is borne by the City.

- Every single WPS facility in the City of Winnipeg includes safe and secure parking – except for the downtown and North End locations (and plans for the new North End facility also include safe and secure parking). At all of these other facilities, police and staff park in secure, gated, and razor-wire fenced lots for an obvious safety reason – unlike other City employees, they are targets of the criminal element.

- If **Item No. 35: Provision of Safe and Secure Parking for Winnipeg Police Service Members** is approved, the City and the WPA will jointly establish within 90 days that there is demand for the allotted parking spaces by WPA members.
    - If demand is less than 263 spaces, then the City shall have no further obligation and will incur no additional costs.
    - Survey results indicate that 750 WPA members would be interested in safe and secure parking downtown.

- This is the most cost-effective path forward for all parties involved.
    - Making use of an already-existing parkade immediately next to the WPS downtown headquarters is certainly more cost-effective than trying to build an entirely new facility that would meet the same objectives.
    - There have been previous issues involving WPA labour matters where Council has ignored negotiated paths and, in doing so, cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in penalties. This is not a path we hope to pursue.
    - However, should City Council consider and decline to approve this negotiated settlement, the WPA shall proceed to arbitrate the grievance before an arbitrator. It would be open to the arbitrator to award safe and secure parking to WPA members at no cost or at a cost that is consistent with what is being paid by police members elsewhere – either at the Millennium Library or at an entirely new facility constructed at the City's cost.

In closing, we want to re-iterate that WPA members are prepared to pay full market rates under this agreement – the same rates any other Winnipegger would pay. Our members are simply seeking to be able to park their vehicles where it is safe and secure – which is what the City quite reasonably provides to police and staff members everywhere else across Winnipeg.

While we will not hesitate to act to protect the safety interests of our members, the WPA is hopeful the members of Winnipeg City Council will see the benefit to a negotiated settlement between employer and union – a settlement that is supported by the Chief of Police, that provides our members with access to the safe and secure parking they clearly require, and that ensures the City of Winnipeg receives parking payments at market rates.

Sincerely,

Maurice "Moe" Sabourin
President, Winnipeg Police Association