Christina López

03 December 2024

Re : Executive Policy Committee, 04 December 2024
Agenda item: Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works dated November 29, 2024

Greetings, Mayor Gillingham, Executive Policy Committee members, and delegates.

At its 29 November 2024 meeting, the City of Winnipeg Standing Policy Committee on Public Works (SPCPW), made recommendations relating to speed limit reduction on Wellington Crescent, including the following : “that the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to reduce the speed limit on Wellington Crescent, from River Avenue to Academy Road, to 30 kn/h” (Disposition of items, item 20, recommendation 1).

I agree with the SPCPW recommendations.

I argue for lowering the speed limit on all streets in Winnipeg, and not just on Wellington Crescent. I live in Winnipeg and I am a frequent pedestrian, a seasonal bike-rider, a public transit user and an occasional car driver. On foot and on bicycle I have had frequent opportunity to make the following completely unscientific observations, that I feel are nonetheless valid and believable :

- there are more motor vehicles on the road
- more motor vehicles on the road are large SUVs
- there are more inexperienced, distracted or aggressive drivers on the road
- there is more speeding and other unsafe driving practices, including following other vehicles too closely ; running red lights and otherwise not obeying traffic signals and signs ; not yielding to pedestrians when making right or left turns

Neither are anecdotes considered scientifically reliable evidence, but the much greater availability of dangerous experiences with road traffic alone lends credibility to their value. Consider the following recent personal examples of interactions with road traffic in Winnipeg, noting that in each case I was a pedestrian :

- **Monday, 02 December 2024, ca 2:10 pm, intersection of Graham Avenue and Main Street** – I was on the southwest corner of the intersection waiting for the green light to cross east on Main Street. The light turned green and the “walk” signal came on. Looking both ways and checking over my left shoulder to ensure it was safe to cross, I proceeded and did cross the four lanes of south bound traffic, crossed the island, and ensuring that northbound traffic was indeed stopped, I continued to cross. I crossed three lanes of northbound traffic, and then I stopped in front of a stropped car in the third lane because an approaching vehicle in the curb lane seemed to be going too fast. That driver in the fourth lane sailed clean through the red light without slowing down. The light had been red long enough that I was able to cross seven lanes of traffic on foot, so the driver was not running a yellow light, but cleanly cruising through a red light. Had I not stopped in front of the car in the adjacent lane, I would have been flattened. At least if the car had been travelling at a lower rate of speed than 50 km/h, the driver maybe would have had time to see me and stop before hitting me.

- **Saturday, 30 November 2024, ca 3:30 pm, intersection of Cambridge Street and Grant Avenue** – I was waiting on the northwest corner of the intersection to cross Grant southbound. Around 20 eastbound cars were lined up on Grant in the left turn lane intending to turn north on Cambridge. Westbound Grant traffic was heavy and the left turn eastbound drivers were making their turns dangerously with unsafe time allowance for oncoming traffic. As the east- and west-bound lights turned amber, three more cars made northbound left turns onto Cambridge. A fourth vehicle, a white passenger van, was so intent on catching a last chance to turn before the light turned red that it entered the intersection as a westbound route 66 Winnipeg Transit bus at full speed was intending to go through the amber light. The van continued to make its turn, and I fully anticipated a collision with the bus, but the busdriver slammed on its brakes in the middle of the intersection and sounded the horn loud and long. When the bus continued I noticed it did not stop at the but stop immediately beyond the intersection, so indeed, that it appeared to be travelling at full speed was because it had no need to stop at the bus stop. If the speed limit were lower than 50 km/h, the collision that would have occurred had the busdriver not stopped would have been severe.
- Thursday, 28 November 2024, ca 5:30 pm, intersection of Cambridge Street and Grant Avenue – I was on foot crossing the intersection and I witnessed the aftermath of what must have been a spectacular collision. Two southbound vehicles – one an SUV, the other a sedan car, were smashed up on Cambridge Street south of the intersection, but in the northbound lanes, ie, on the opposing direction the cars were facing. A Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service fire truck was diagonally stationed on Cambridge south of the intersection to attend to the collision. Traffic at the intersection continued to make unsafe left turns from southbound Cambridge onto westbound Grant Avenue. If the speed limit on Cambridge was lower than 50 km/h and if drivers were travelling at a speed lower than 50 km/h, drivers would have been able to stop in time to avoid the collision, or the collision would have been less catastrophic.
- Sometime in the third week of November 2024, westbound Grant Avenue between Cambridge Street and Oxford Street – The Manitoba Hydro pole right by the routes 66 / 65 bus stop on the north side of Grant Avenue was smashed into, and let us assume it was a motor vehicle that collided with the stationary pole. The bus stop sign was mangled and as of 03 December 2024 the mangled signage continues to lay at the bus stop and the Hydro pole is stabilized by a temporary unconnected pole. Residents in the area, of whom I am one, have received telephone notices from Manitoba Hydro that power will be shut down in the are on Tuesday, 03 December 2024 from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm to fix the damaged pole. The Hydro outage map shows 51 customers are affected by the outage. I have no way of knowing, but I believe motor vehicle speed was a factor in the damage to the Hydro pole and bus stop. See the attached photos of the Hydro pole and bus stop.
- Friday, 08 November 2024, ca 4:45 pm, Fort Street between Graham Avenue and Portage Avenue – I was leaving work and I had exited Winnipeg Square at Fort Street. Fort Street is a one-way street with traffic travelling north. Northbound traffic coming from Graham Avenue had stopped at the red light at Graham Avenue. I checked both ways, and I lifted my foot to cross the street, though I was in the middle of the block between Graham and Portage. There was no traffic coming so I felt it was safe to cross. I felt a whoosh of air in front of me and put my foot back down as a speeding white Mercedes van driving backwards screeched to a stop right in front of me. I repeat, the white Mercedes van was driving backwards, ie, southbound, on a one-way street that runs northbound. I should have been flattened by the vehicle, because the driver had gunned the motor – he was not rolling slowly backwards. I learned two lessons – never jaywalk,

despite that it appears safe to do so ; always check both ways, for drivers doing crazy things where you don't expect it. Who expects a driver speeding backwards in the wrong direction on a one-way street ? and yet, it happened.

The above anecdotes all involve speed, and the consequences were or could have been catastrophic injury to human life and damage to property.

I conclude by quoting below from an authoritative source, the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, about the problem of speed on roads and lowering urban speed limits.

Thank you for your time and attention. Do the right thing – lower the speed limit on Wellington Crescent to 30 km/h. And may God bless the soul of Rob Jenner.

USA, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Countermeasures That Work : a highway safety countermeasure guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, 11th ed, by Kirley, B. B., et al., Report No. DOT HS 813 490. (Washington, DC : NHTSA, 2023) at section 4 "Speeding and speed management", pp 4-2 – 4-4.

> Quite simply, speeding is dangerous, and can increase the risk of crashes and the severity of injury when a crash occurs. Research is clear that higher speed is related to increased crash and injury risk at both the individual driver level, and at a road section level (Aarts & van Schagen, 2006; Elvik et al., 2019). Small changes in average roadway speed can have a large impact on safety (Elvik et al., 2019) for all crash types. The higher the impact speed, the greater the fatality and injury risk to pedestrians and other non-motorists, and this risk starts rising dramatically at speeds above 20 to 25 mph (Tefft, 2013)....
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> Managing speed is therefore an essential aspect of a systems approach that aims to prevent the worst outcomes (death or serious injury) when other parts of the system of users, vehicles, and roadway fail to prevent a crash. .... Accordingly, speed management is widely considered an essential pillar of a Safe Systems approach to road safety (Dumbaugh et al., 2019; FHWA, 2020).
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> ... The trend of increasing vehicle size (while providing greater occupant protection) means higher kinetic energies are also absorbed by others involved in crashes with larger vehicles (IIHS, 2021b). In addition, the power to weight ratio of vehicles has been increasing in auto models over time.
> ...
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> Roadways are designed for specific operational purposes, but changes in land development and roadside context can cause discrepancies between the intended purpose of a roadway and its actual function. For example, higher speeds tend to be anticipated in rural contexts, but as land adjacent to rural or suburban roadways are developed to provide more access to residential or commercial facilities (or to accommodate the needs of other kinds of road users), the originally intended operating speed on the roadway may no longer be appropriate (Stamatiadis et al., 2018). ...
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> Speed is an important element of roadway design because it directly links to other specific geometric features (e.g., curve radii) and because it can be influenced by roadside features (AASHTO, 2018). While roadways are designed and built to nominal standards and to accommodate human factors, in the United States and abroad, these

designs historically did not always account for human injury tolerance (Peden et al., 2004) and some speeds that are safe and appropriate in some contexts (like straight segments on freeways) may result in unsafe operating conditions or crash energies that exceed human injury tolerance in other contexts (such as at horizontal curves or where pedestrians and bicyclists are present). The research literature verifies that systemwide crash risk is associated with specific environmental conditions—including the road's cross-section, and roadside elements, like building setbacks—that may contribute to crash-producing mistakes (Dumbaugh & Li, 2011). Performance metrics, however, used to identify problems related to congestion may lead to designs that actually increase the perceived operating speed drivers interpret as safe but actually may not be suitable or appropriate (Lee et al., 2017; Kumfer et al., 2019). Some agencies are now moving away from the kinds of land use analyses (such as assessing vehicular delay) that trades congestion mitigation for safety impacts (Caltrans, 2020). This shift in priority aligns with the U.S. DOT's (2022) goal of prioritizing safety and safe speeds over vehicular throughput.

USA, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, *Countermeasures That Work : a highway safety countermeasure guide for State Highway Safety Offices*, 11th ed, by Kirley, B. B., et al., Report No. DOT HS 813 490. (Washington, DC : NHTSA, 2023) at section 4 "Speeding and speed management", pp 4-11 – 4-.

Lower limits in urban areas

Convincing evidence exists that lowering speed limits can reduce average travel speed and crashes in urban areas, even if no or few changes are made to the roadways. However, results achieved may depend on having sufficient enforcement and supporting publicity and communications that reinforce the lower limit and enhance speeding deterrence.

Several North American studies have evaluated the effects of lowering default city-wide speed limits, including from 30 to 25 mph in New York City. A crash evaluation in New York City estimated total crashes were reduced by an average of 39% on streets that fell within the statutory default speed limit change (unposted streets) compared to streets where the speed limit was unchanged (those with posted limits) (Mammen et al., 2020). Vision Zero-related publicity was used to emphasize the speed limit changes in New York City. An evaluation also found that crashes declined in Toronto, Ontario, in response to lowering city-wide speed limits from 40 to 30 km/h (25 to 19 mph) (Fridman et al., 2020).

Several robust evaluations of the effects of reducing posted speed limits in Edmonton, Alberta, found that speeds and crashes on collector and local streets in residential areas decreased significantly when posted limits were lowered by 10 km/h (~6 mph). These changes in posted limits were supported with extensive publicity and enforcement, but no changes were made to the roadway. These reductions in speed limits were associated with a 50% reduction in fatal and injury crashes, a 26% reduction in total crashes, and an 18% reduction in PDO crashes (Islam & El-Basyouny, 2015).

Other international studies provide additional support that lowering urban limits can reduce speeds and road trauma. Crash-based studies (with comparison groups) from Bristol, U.K., estimated that crashes were reduced in response to lowering city-wide speed limits from 30 to 20 mph (Bornioli et al., 2020). More case studies (for Australia,

Denmark, Hong Kong, Norway, and others) are presented in the International Transport Forum (2018). Conversely, when urban speed limits were increased from 50 to 70 km/h (from 31 to 43 mph) or from 70 to 80 km/h (from 43 to 50 mph) on urban road segments in Hong Kong, crashes increased by 20 to 30% (Wong et al., 2005).



