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Personal information

First name
Steve

Last name
West

Job title (optional)
Chair, City Centre Local Bike Group

Organization title (optional)
Bike Winnipeg

Chairperson Lukes and Members of the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works:

Active transportation advocates, including Bike Winnipeg, have been calling on the City of Winnipeg for safe cycling infrastructure on Wellington Crescent for nearly two decades, even citing your own Council-endorsed policy documents.

Allow me to add a personal aspect to this issue: the stretch of road where a driver killed Rob Jenner a year ago, stealing him from his loved ones the day after his 61st birthday, is the exact spot where a bus driver imprudently changed lanes into me on my bike just weeks later, returning from a Bike Winnipeg meeting. In my case, I saw what was happening at the last second in my peripheral vision and was able to execute an emergency stop; Executive Director Mark Cohoe said that if I hadn't braked so quickly, the back of the bus would have hit me. I avoid Wellington because of the trauma of this near-miss.

In both cases, protected cycling infrastructure could have made a difference. I am certain it will make a difference in the future, saving lives and preventing injuries.

Rob's wife, Wendy, has publicly stated she hopes that his death wasn't in vain and that no other family should face the agony they are. My family came closer than I'd ever wished.

In April, Mr. Cohoe and I were asked to review a draft plan for the bike lane pilot project. We found the plan to be excellent and functional, meeting the intent of the motion, the Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies, and the Osborne Village Secondary Plan. Our expectation was that the plan presented would be amended to reflect our feedback as well as that of others, and that implementation could then move forward so that improvements could be realized in summer 2025.

Given that Wellington Crescent is a key part of the City’s cycling network, with no plans for any

cycling facilities along parallel routes south of the Assiniboine River, it remains a critical and irreplaceable link in the City's planned network. Residents and users of Wellington Crescent have experienced the removal of traffic lanes during construction, similar to the work outlined in the proposed plans for a protected lane in the past, and presumably could do so this summer as well.

Further, departmental officials have advised the committee that they can implement a quick-build option soon after approval is received.

We note that, in the emotional and often heated discussion on Wellington Crescent, communications from the City haven't been as front and centre as we may have hoped for. We are encouraged by the work that has been undertaken by Council and City staff to develop designs for safer cycling along Wellington, though the wider community has not had the opportunity to see that work as it progresses. As the City moves forward, we are hopeful that it can augment resources for both communications and engagement for future projects as they move forward.

Should you grant the extension, we urge Council to restore the original intention of Councillor Rollins' November 2024 motion and immediately reduce the speed limit on Wellington Crescent to a consistent 30 km/hr for the full length of the route, in accordance with the Transportation Association of Canada's recommended speed where cyclists mix with vehicle traffic.

Yours truly,

Steve West