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RE: EPC agenda item, Public Works Feb 4, report 2: Council Update on Chief Peguis Design Study

Greetings EPC members and Mayor Gillingham;

Thank you for allowing us to submit comments regarding the latest update on the Chief Peguis Trail Extension. At Green Action Centre, we are disappointed to see this project moving forward given its low return on investment and risk to our municipal finances.

This project will also cement Winnipeggers to decades of personal vehicle reliance by diverting crucial dollars for sustainable transportation initiatives in favour of yet another road expansion. With Winnipeg's leading emissions coming from transportation, we know that tackling our high single occupancy vehicle mode share is crucial, and time is of the essence.

Below are questions that we hope City Councillors are considering.

- There doesn't appear to be an updated "Benefit Cost Analysis" study included here, although it's referenced in the report. If this report is being received as information, shouldn't it have all of the information?
- The original analysis (which also included a Financial and Economic Impact Analysis) showed that above inflation tax increases will be necessary, forever, for this project to break even. Have councillors discussed this tax increase within their wards?
- With above-inflation tax increases every year, it will still take until 2067 for this project to reach that break-even point. At that stage, it is likely that the infrastructure will be needing repair and replacement. The costs of replacement have not been considered here: *"Road replacement costs: properly maintained local and regional roads may only require replacement 75 to 90 years after construction. This analysis only extends 75 years into the future from the present year, and as such, these costs which may be significant are beyond the time horizon analyzed."* (Socio-economic, Financial, and Long-Term Economic Impact Summary, p 22). **With such a low ROI, how will the repairs and replacement be funded?**
- Road expansions are often touted as a benefit to surrounding communities as it is hoped that they will relieve traffic on local roads. Induced demand shows that any congestion relief is short-lived, if it results at all. Other methods to reduce congestion on local roads include: improved transit, connected and convenient walking and biking options to local

amenities, and other lower cost alternatives that have a higher return on investment while also supporting the creation of more vibrant, liveable communities. This report does not give any alternative to city councillors for consideration to relieve congestion in the area. The original BCA says: *"There may be other projects that yield better results, but the outcomes of those projects are currently unknown. This limits the usefulness of the benefit-cost analysis …"In general, benefit-cost analysis (BCA) is most useful when being used to ... compare and prioritize multiple different capital projects."* (Socio-economic, Financial and Long-Term Economic Impact Summary,p.38). **Why are we only considering road expansions to relieve congestion?**

- The report seems to indicate that the housing developments created will be a benefit. Both the benefits of development and its costs (services) are included in the Financial and Economic Impact Analysis... which determined that above-inflation tax increases are required to break-even. Even with those tax increases, the report admits that any "financial surplus after 75 years is marginal" (p. 63). And that, anything less than 2.48% (while assuming 2% inflation) and it will NEVER break even (p. 60). And that's even excluding road replacement costs. It appears we are creating housing precincts that will need to be subsidized, forever, in the operating budget and yet we are accounting for them as "assets". **How are services like parks, snow clearing, police and fire services, water and waste, etc. being funded?**
- While the BCA falls under the Deloitte recommendations from 1.18 to 1.06, it appears to rise with the new traffic modeling from 1.18 to 1.43 (still desperately low). In this section there is talk about the number of new residents adding to the traffic, but it doesn't indicate the anticipated mode split of the traffic in the new developments. **Is the assumption that 80% or more trips in this new development will be by single occupancy vehicle, despite the City's goal to reduce the mode split of personal vehicle transportation to 50%?**
- At the same time, the study notes that there will be no impact on transit in the area. We assume this means that transit services are not going to be extended to Centre Port or the new development precincts?
- **For this modeling to work, it seems that we need to continue to build in a car-oriented fashion in order to manufacture the traffic necessary to create a "benefit" for spending almost a billion dollars to support building a road for the traffic.**

We urge EPC, and all councillors, to consider the long-term financial, health and environmental costs of continuing to pursue this project. Winnipeg is in a critical time, with failing infrastructure in all of our neighbourhoods, from crumbling back lanes, community centers and a transit system that desperately needs investment.

Projects like the Chief Peguis Trail Extension place incredible, long-term strain on capital funding as well as operational budgets. Winnipeg is a growing city that needs infrastructure, but what we build and where is critical to consider. We need projects that are "win-win". Instead of expanding the CPT to relieve congestion, we need the administration and city council to ask

deep questions to find solutions that are “win-win”: reducing congestion while also contributing to our communities.

We look forward to hearing the discussion of this agenda item and hope that we can finally move on from low value projects like road expansions, and towards high ROI projects that reduce our emissions and help us to create the vibrant, healthy communities we all deserve to live in.

Sincerely,

Mel Marginet
Sustainable Transportation Team
Green Action Centre