Presentation to The Executive Policy Committee, Thursday, November 25, 2004 on the matter of Proposed Plan Winnipeg Amendment, By-law No. 130/2004

My name is Holly Mackling. I live in Mission Gardens at 22 Cedargrove Crescent. I am a mother of two children, ages 5 and 7, both of whom attend Bernie Wolfe School. I am here today to voice my opposition to the Proposed Plan Winnipeg Amendment to By-Law No.130/2004 considering amending "Policy Plate C, Transportation Concept Plan to 2020 and Beyond, Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision" attached to and forming part of By-law No. 7630/2000 realigning route "A" (the Ravelstone West Option) to Route "B" (the Bradley Street Option/Alignment) for the following reasons: safety, neighbourhood impact, and environmental impact.

Safety:

As a Mother, the safety of my children is my foremost concern. As a friend and neighbour, the safety of all the children in my neighbourhood concerns me, particularly in light of the proposed north-south corridor realignment. I shall hereafter refer to the north-south corridor as "the proposed traffic corridor" or simply the "corridor".

The amendment to the proposed 4-lane, high-speed traffic corridor will mean that it will cut directly across the "people's path" which is located midway between Dugald Road and Pandora Avenue. (Please see the attached aerial photograph where I have highlighted the "People's Path" in yellow.) The children who live east of the Green Space take this path to school. If the traffic corridor is routed across the Green Space, across the "people's path", children aged 5 -14 will have to cross a high-speed four lane traffic corridor, on foot or bicycle, a minimum of two trips every school day. They will also cross the corridor to get to after school extracurricular activities or to visit friends and family. This would be extremely hazardous indeed.

If a pedestrian overpass (such as the one along the Charleswood Trail) was constructed over the corridor, such that the current route of the "People's Path" (and hence a reasonably direct route to school) could be maintained, this poses concerns as well. Long switch-back ramps are tedious and discouraging, especially to the very old and the very young. And what of snow and ice buildup? Who will monitor, shovel and sand the walkway on a timely basis? Who will ensure children do not find imaginative and dangerous ways to exploit the crossover or deign to use it? Parents I have spoken with have serious concerns about the potential for accident. They fear un-escorted children will choose run across the corridor directly, as I have so often have seen them do along Fermor and Bishop Grandin Blvd.

I would like to know, what studies, if any, were done with regards to student trip safety? (I would like to see such studies.) Was the school board apprised of the proposed roadway? Was the school board asked for their expert opinion as to the potential impact of placing a major traffic artery through the middle of the school catchment area? My sources say the school board was not consulted.

If a pedestrian overpass is not provided, east-west pedestrian access will be restricted to controlled intersections only. This would mean pedestrians heading between Mission

THIS IS EXHIBIT " " REFERRED TO
IN FILE NO._____
DATED THIS ___DAY OF ____20___

_____
CLERK

Gardens Two and Mission Gardens Three will be forced to first walk as much as a full kilometre north before they can head east (or west) and then backtrack the distance south again. Please understand, parents and senior caregivers who accompany younger children to school often must take along their preschool age children (toddlers and babies). Caregivers are often pushing strollers, pulling wagons or dragging toboggans. People desire and require a reasonably direct and easy pedestrian route to and from the school I contend it would be unreasonable and unfair to require such an imposition as eliminating the "People's Path"would entail.

Neighbourhood impact:

Whereas Plessis, Regent and Dugald roads form the outer edges of the neighbourhood from within which children walk to school, the proposed high speed traffic corridor will bisect the Mission Gardens community. Children from South Transcona who attend Bernie Wolfe School are bussed to school. While busing all children east of the corridor to school might seem a safe solution to the safe passage to school issue, that only takes care of passage to and from regular school hours, not extra-curricular activity nor Summer Holiday times. Mission Gardens two and three are one community, built in two phases. We are one neighbourhood. Parents, through their children, are linked to the parents of all their school chums. We are one community, bound together through our families and friends. Community is more than just the people who live on your street.

Our neighbourhood is ideal for raising a family because it is a quiet residential neighbourhood without high speed streets dividing it, because it offers wonderful schooling, playgrounds and green space for people to exercise and play. The Green Space that the City has proposed to convert into a major traffic corridor is currently used not only as a major east-west pedestrian route, but is also used for recreation and play. People walk dogs here. Children fly kites and model airplanes and ride their bicycles here. Three city playgrounds back directly onto the Green Space. Should an object sail out of a playground into the Green Space, children currently can safely retrieve it. After the corridor is built, children may well feel compelled to enter the danger zone in a bid to retrieve lost possessions. Right now, our children can safely walk or cycle to school, visit their friends and family. The proposed high speed traffic corridor will change all that forever.

On the whole, our neighbourhood is fairly peaceful and quiet. Heavy traffic goes all around our neighbourhood, but right now, it does not go right though it The centre of our neighbourhood is an oasis of peace and calm, a safe and desirable place to live and raise a family. Houses in this area sell very quickly as the desirable nature of our neighbourhood is easily recognized. That to will no doubt be changed forever if the proposed corridor is built.

I believe the corridor will negatively impact property values in our neighbourhood, and that is certainly not a small matter when one's life savings have been invested into a home in a neighbourhood.

Environmental impact:

The proposal will route a high-speed traffic corridor North South along the Western border of the Rotary Prairie Nature Park. This Wet Tall Grass Prairie Preserve may potentially be damaged by emissions and salt. What environmental impact study, if any, has been done as to the potential impact of the realignment? I wish to see the report, if any. What is the

expert opinion as to the impact of this roadway? What ameliorative measure will be employed to assure the safety of the preserve? What is the budget for same? The briefing notes say "to address potential environmental impact on the park, mitigation measures would be investigated". Does this means an environmental impact study has not been done? If there exists such a study, I would like to see it. Does this also mean the capital cost for said mitigation measures is unknown and therefore not a part of the projected budget?

Option "B" will create noise pollution in the heart of Mission Gardens. Berms or walls might be constructed to muffle the noise, but these do not eliminate the noise and do nothing to address vibrations from heavy traffic. Option "B" will not serve the residents. It will serve industry. It is my contention that Plessis should be improved to better facilitate north-south residential traffic. Trucks such as those from the intermodal facility should be directed either West to Lagimodiere Boulevard or East to the recently completed Perimeter Highway. We do not need nor do we desire an additional high speed traffic corridor running north south when we already have two such corridors, set only a few kilometres apart.

In order to better understand the ramifications of the proposed traffic corridor, I decided to investigate the subject of pedestrian safety. The following excerpts shed a little light on this matter.

A University of Ottawa study [1] says:

"Pedestrian injuries are one of the greatest risks to children in terms of morbidity and mortality. In Canada, children being hit by a moving vehicle while walking, playing in the street, or travelling in a stroller accounted for 116 deaths and 1,763 hospitalizations between the years 1990-1992 (Health Canada, 1997). Especially at risk are children between 5 and 9 years of age, where the highest rate of pedestrian deaths and injuries occurred (Health Canada, 1997). It has been suggested that this age group is at particular risk because their exposure as pedestrians increases at a time when their skills and judgement levels are deficient (Howarth, Routledge, & Repetto-Wright, 1974). Along with an increased exposure to public roads, behavioural and developmental factors which may influence pedestrian injuries, particularly in boys, include their level of attentiveness, traffic speed judgement, impulsiveness and risk-taking behaviour (Sandles, 1995; Salvatore, 1974).

Sixty to 70% of the pedestrian injuries in children under the age of 10 years are the result of the child either improperly crossing intersections or dashing or darting out in the street between intersections (Harbourview Injury Prevention and Research Centre, 1997). Most of the time (72%), the child injures his/her head, neck and lower limbs (Health Canada, 1997). Hospitalization rates reported from the Canadian Hospitals Injury and Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) have shown that at least 40% of pedestrian injuries result in hospitalization." (Like the unfortunate accident on St Mary's Road just this fall.) .

Another study [2] says:

"Travelling to, and particularly from, school is a crucial time for road safety with the peak time for child casualties being weekdays, from 3 pm to 5 pm, at the end of the school day, and Friday being the peak day.

Social disadvantage has also been shown to be a factor with child pedestrians in the lowest socio-economic group being over 4 times more likely to be killed than those in the highest

socio-economic group. Ethnicity is another factor associated with accidents: children from ethnic minority groups are more at risk of being injured in an accident than other groups"..

Another study [3] notes children ages 5-12 have increasing independence but still require supervision. They have poor depth perception and are susceptible to dart out/intersection dash. Children ages 13-18 have a sense of invulnerability and are susceptible to intersection dash. Only by ages 19-40 are people active and fully aware of the traffic environment. From ages 41-65, there is a slowing of reflexes and from age 65+ there may be street crossing difficulty, poor vision and difficulty hearing vehicles approaching from behind and high fatality rates.

Pedestrians most likely to be involved in collisions are also the ones who most rely on pedestrian travel for transportation — children and older adults. [3]

Clearly, the implications for pedestrians in our community who seek to move in an east-west direction are not good. Indeed, the implications of this traffic corridor are grim. I am personally not opposed to the route "A" from Policy Plate C (which is the Ravelstone West option) as this would not, to my knowledge, split asunder a community, run right through the middle of a school catchment area forcing children to face increased risk to life and limb on a daily basis as route "B" will.

But what about the intermodal truck traffic? The impact of intermodal truck traffic on South Plessis has been ameliorated via the construction of an upgraded roadway which routes the trucks west, well behind the homes, through to Dugald Road. From Dugald Road, the trucks may travel west to Lagimodiere or east to the Perimeter Highway. Should a third north-south route be deemed necessary, then I believe the Ravelstone West Option should be undertaken, but before capital funds are dedicated to such project, Plessis should be upgraded and twinned as it was originally designed to be.

So there we have it. Decreased safety. Decreased quality of the neighbourhood. Decreased property values. Increased risk to life. Increased traffic noise. Increased risk to the environment. For these reasons, I am adamantly opposed to this proposal.

As an addendum or footnote to my presentation, I would like to note that this has been an eye opening experience for me thus far. I am amazed at the apparent lack of transparency and openness associated with this proposal. When my neighbour wanted to build a garage somewhat larger than regulations allow, he had to clearly post signs front and back on his property which advised the neighbourhood as the variance requested, advised how opposition could be registered and provided for a meeting which was well advertised. I find it simply amazing, that two little ads in the local papers are considered sufficient public notice for the Amendment to Plan Winnipeg, especially in light of the scale of the project and the implications of the proposed changes to residents.

In addition, I was frustrated in preparing for this submission. All the pertinent minutes I attempted to access for detailed information about this matter lead me to "In camera" - dead ends. I requested information from the Planning, Property Development Department which made available to me limited information (Briefing Notes) on the eve of Monday, November 22nd where I finally learned the scope of the project. I requested copies of the supporting reports to the briefing notes and was denied as they were presented at an "in camera" meeting. This, I find, unacceptable. I have it on good authority, that in other cities, such

reports would be available to the public. Public roads are public. Information as to their planning, detailed budget estimates, expert opinion, traffic reports and studies, all should be public. How is one to make adequate representation when one is denied the facts?

Further, I would like to put on record, the scheduling of this meeting is highly inconvenient for public participation. Another resident who is greatly troubled by the proposed realignment went door to door trying to alert the neighbourhood as to what was happening. Had he not come to my door, I no doubt would have remained ignorant of these proceedings. This neighbour collected 100 signatures on petition in opposition to the proposed Plan Winnipeg Amendment before personal crisis stopped his efforts. He very much wanted to attend and make a submission here today, but was unable to do so, as it was impossible for him to book off the entire morning, let alone the entire day from work.

Bibliography:

(1) The Effectiveness of Virtual Reality for Promoting Children's Pedestrian Safety, University of Ottawa
http://www.mcrlab.uottawa.ca/research/crosspoint.htm

(2) Safely to School, A Study of Safer Routes to School in the Classroom, Scottish Executive Social Research, 2003, Valerie Wilson, The SCRE Centre
Tony Graham, ODS Ltd
Kevin Lowden, The SCRE Centre
John Hall, The SCRE Centre
Katy Fyfe, ODS Ltd

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/srstc.pdf

(3) Georgia Government Document "About Pedestrians", Washington State Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan, 1994

http://www.dot.state.ga.us/DOT/plan-prog/planning/projects/bicycle/ped_facilities_guide/about_pedestrians.pdf

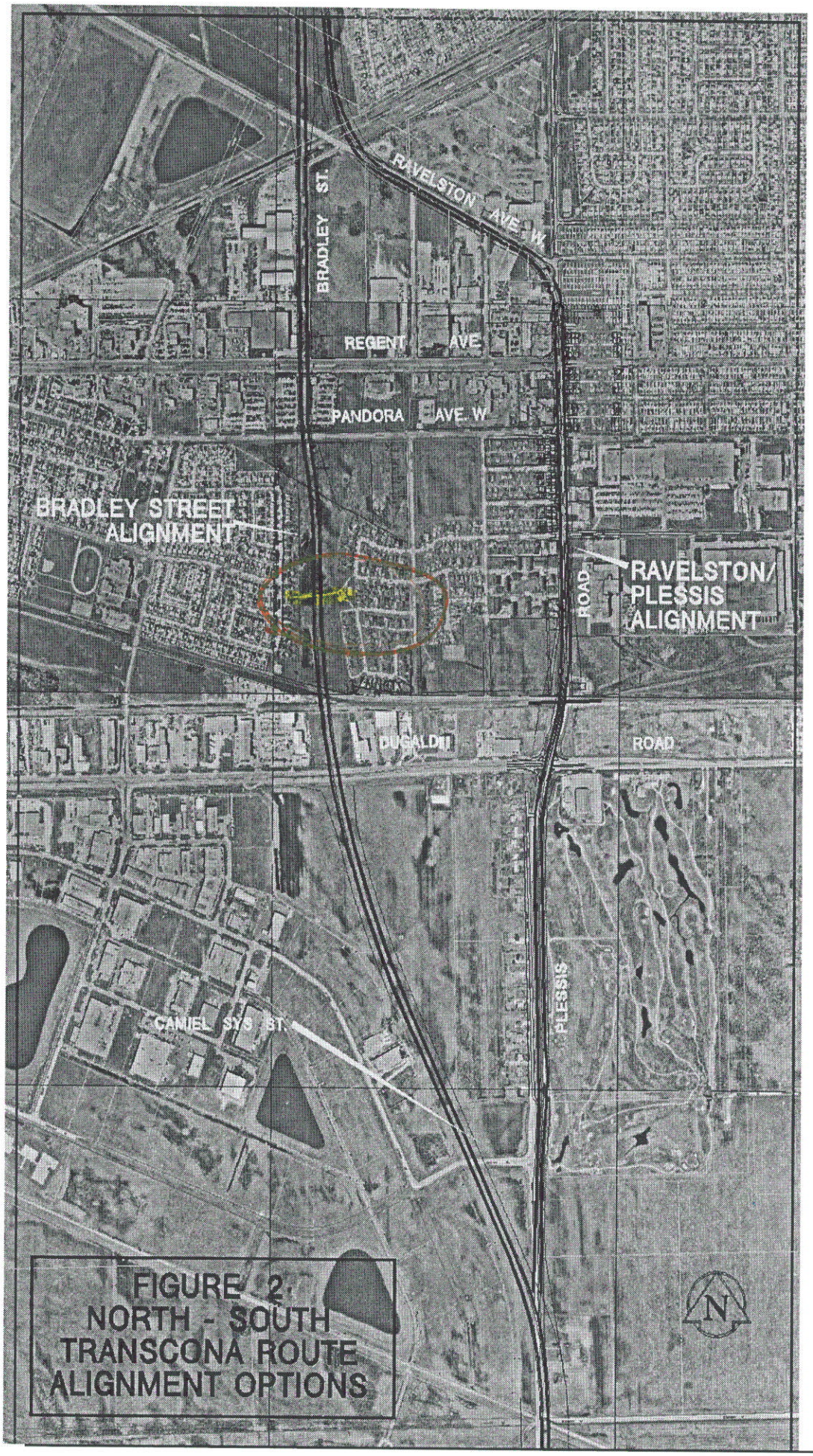


FIGURE 2:
NORTH - SOUTH
TRANSCONA ROUTE
ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

The "People's Path" - pedestrian east-west route is highlighted in yellow and circled in red.