

Council Minutes - July 10, 1991

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT OF THE
COMMITTEE ON WORKS AND OPERATIONS

The Executive Policy Committee has had before it the Report of the Committee on Works and Operations, dated July 10th, 1991, has concurred in the recommendations contained therein, and submits same to Council for approval and adoption.

On motion of Councillor Lorenc, the Report of the Committee on Works and Operations, dated July 10th, 1991, was considered.

West Committee Room,
Council Building, Winnipeg.
July 10th, 1991.

His Worship the Mayor and Councillors:

Your Committee on Works and Operations submits the following Report and recommends:

**At-Grade Pedestrian Crossing at the Intersection of
Portage Avenue and Main Street.
File SC-3.2.1**

1081 - 1. On June 19th, 1991, Council referred back to the Committee on Works and Operations Clause 9 of its Report, dated June 4th, 1991, with the following instructions:

- "1. That the Committee on Works and Operations present a plan for implementing a trial opening of Portage Avenue and Main Street, effective August 1st, 1991, through to September 30th, 1991, inclusive, by the next meeting of Council;
2. That this plan identify costs;
3. That the Law Department be requested to contact Trizec Manitoba Ltd., with a view to securing their consent to such a trial opening;
4. That the Committee on Works and Operations present the results and further recommendations within 90 days of September 30th, 1991."

On June 25th, 1991, the Committee on Works and Operations reconsidered its Clause 9 and decided to have a special meeting on July 10th, 1991, to consider an administrative report regarding the above, and instructed the Law Department to contact all signatories relative to 3. above.

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The idea of providing pedestrian accommodation below grade at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street originated in the mid to late 1960s, immediately following an announcement of development of the Richardson Building, which it was estimated would greatly increase pedestrian volume at the intersection, particularly during peak periods.

Council subsequently took the decision to construct a 1,000 car parkade adjacent to the south-west corner of the intersection further increasing pedestrian activity at the intersection and overloading the intersection peak periods. The only possible means of moderating the increasing pedestrian and vehicle volume/capacity relationship was seen as the separation of pedestrians and vehicles by providing a separate level for the accommodation of pedestrians.

Consideration and discussion of construction of a below-grade pedestrian concourse beneath the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street continued for ten years involving the major property owners at the intersection.

The contracts for construction of the Main Street Parking Garage and of the Portage and Main pedestrian concourse were awarded by Council on December 16th, 1976 - with the pedestrian concourse estimated to cost \$5, 037,654.00, and the four adjacent property owners contributing as follows:

- Royal Bank	\$ 175,000.00
- Scotia Bank	175,000.00
- Bank of Montreal	350,000.00
- Richardsons	350,000.00
- Toronto-Dominion Bank	225,000.00
- Marathon Realty	175,000.00
	\$1,450,000.00

Construction of the concourse and connecting links followed construction of the parking garage and was undertaken and completed during 1978 and early 1979.

The purpose expressed in the report, recommending award was:

"The reconstruction of the pedestrian concourse of Portage and Main is a keystone to the opportunity for totally enclosed pedestrian system for downtown Winnipeg: underground from Portage Avenue and Main Street to the City Hall; and +16 from Portage Avenue and Main Street west and south to Eaton's, the Library, the Convention Centre, the Bay and the Woodsworth Building on Broadway."

The agreements entered into between the adjacent corner property owners and the City of Winnipeg contain slight variations in wording but, in effect, require the City to use its best efforts to promote and make maximum use of the Concourse for pedestrian purposes and shall, concurrently with the official opening of the Concourse, pass (in the case of one Agreement, maintain) a by-law prohibiting surface pedestrian crossings of the intersections of Portage Avenue and Main Street.

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On February 26th, 1979, the Committee on Works and Operations adopted the following traffic regulations:

"A prohibition of at-grade pedestrian crossings at the intersections of Portage Avenue and Main Street:

- to provide pedestrians with the safest and most comfortable environment for crossing the intersection, and
- to improve vehicular traffic operation at the intersection."

With the exception of the Richardson Agreement, which extends from 1979 to 1999, the agreements executed in 1976 expire in 2019. On January 20th, 1988, Council approved a request from the Toronto-Dominion Bank/Bentall Properties Ltd. to extend the term of its agreement for a further forty (40) years beyond 2019.

The current traffic and transit arrangements at the Portage Avenue and Main Street intersection can be summarized as follows:

NOTE: See Appendix "1"

1. Southbound Approach on Main Street

There are five traffic lanes. Vehicles operating in the three eastern-most lanes must continue to southbound Main Street. Vehicles operating in the two western-most lanes must turn right at Portage Avenue.

Buses leaving the southbound bus stop immediately north of McDermot Avenue are permitted to use the second lane from the curb to travel through to southbound Main Street. Only transit vehicles are permitted to use the second lane for this purpose. All other traffic in this lane must turn right at Portage Avenue. This priority measure eliminates the need for buses to change two lanes to the left to proceed south on Main Street. Buses leaving the southbound bus stop south of McDermot Avenue remain in the curb lane and turn right at Portage Avenue.

2. Eastbound Approach on Portage Avenue

There are five traffic lanes. Vehicles operating in the curb lane must turn right at Main Street. Vehicles operating in the second lane from the curb can turn right at Main Street or proceed through the intersection to Portage Avenue East. Vehicles operating in the third lane from the curb must proceed through the intersection to Portage Avenue East. Vehicles operating in the two northern-most lanes must turn left at Main Street.

Buses leaving the eastbound stop immediately west of Fort Street are permitted to use the third lane from the curb to turn left at Main Street. Only transit vehicles are permitted to use the third lane for

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this purpose. All other traffic in this lane must proceed through to Portage Avenue East. This priority measure eliminates the need for buses to change three lanes to the left to turn north on Main Street.

3. Northbound Approach on Main Street

There are four traffic lanes. Vehicles operating in the curb lane can turn right at Portage Avenue East or proceed through the intersection. Vehicles operating in the other three lanes must proceed through the intersection to northbound Main Street. There are no transit priority measures on this approach to the intersection.

4. Westbound Approach on Portage Avenue East

There are three traffic lanes. Vehicles operating in the curb lane must turn right at Main Street. Vehicles operating in the second and third lanes from the curb must proceed through the intersection to westbound Portage Avenue. There are no transit priority measures on this approach to the intersection.

On June 20th, 1990, Council referred the following motion to the Committee on Works and Operations, namely:

"That the City of Winnipeg re-open Portage Avenue and Main Street, street-level pedestrian crossing."

In a report dated August 7th, 1990, the Commissioner of Works and Operations advised of the following pedestrian, vehicular and passenger volumes at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street:

- Pedestrian volume below grade is currently approximately 21, 800.
- Between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, vehicular traffic volume at this intersection has grown from 41,500 in 1966 to 61,500 in 1990 (an increase of 48% in 24 years).
- Since the opening of the pedestrian concourse, the vehicular traffic volume has grown by 19%.
- The following is a summary of the pedestrian, vehicular and passenger volume:

	On a Weekday (24 hours)	Annually
Pedestrians (below grade)	21,800 (12.9%)	5, 900,000

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Vehicles (other than buses)	89,200	30,100,000
Passengers (other than Transit)	107,900 (63.9%)	36,500,000

- Between 1979 and 1990, peak period vehicular travel upon Main Street through the Portage Avenue intersection has increased by 25% to 40%, making the Portage Avenue and Main Street intersection the most important cross City arterial highway, connecting Henderson Highway to the north, St. Mary's and St. Anne's Roads to the south.

The Commissioner of Works and Operations also advised of the following pedestrian crosswalk locations:

- Removable panels were installed upon the opening of the pedestrian concourse in 1979 to allow "temporary" at-grade pedestrian crossing should fire or flood render the pedestrian concourse unavailable to pedestrian usage for some time.
- Only at the north-west corner of the intersection are the removable panels at the normal location at the corner of the intersection.
- The south removable panels are a considerable distance from the signalized intersection.
- The east panels are still farther because the sidewalk is much below the elevation of the adjacent roadway.

In the same report, the Commissioner of Works and Operations reported the following traffic collision incidences:

Type of Collision	Time Period	Number of Collisions
Pedestrian	1971 – 1978	11
Pedestrian	1980 – 1987	2
Vehicle	1971 – 1978	584
Vehicle	1980 – 1987	332

The Commissioner of Works and Operations further advised of the following effects upon vehicular capacity and transit service, when the intersection is re-opened to pedestrian crossing:

- Require that the phases of traffic-controlled signal operations be amended to afford adequate time for pedestrian crossing of Portage Avenue and Main Street.
- With the south and east crosswalks so far removed from the intersection, a significant lengthening of the combination of amber and "all red" clearance intervals.

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- In order to provide pedestrians with crossing free of conflict with turning vehicles, the southbound and eastbound right turning vehicle movements reduced to the usage of one phase of the traffic control signal operation, rather than two phases. (See Appendix "1")

The above changes, as well as a reduction in phase availability to the southbound and eastbound right-turning movements would significantly alter the assignment of time to vehicular movements and generally reduce the vehicular capacity of the intersection.

The following is a summary of the consequences upon vehicular traffic in the peak periods:

A.M. Peak Period

- Southbound right-turning vehicular movement would back up to approximately City Hall imposing 3 to 5 minute delays to approximately 1,270 vehicle passengers and 3,000 transit passengers.

P.M. Peak Period

- Southbound through vehicular movement would back up to City Hall or beyond imposing an additional 2 to 4 minute delays to 2,100 vehicle passengers and to 850 transit passengers.
- The southbound right-turning vehicular movement would back up beyond City Hall imposing 3 to 5 minute delays to approximately 880 vehicle passengers and 1,650 transit passengers.
- The eastbound left-turning vehicular movement would back up well beyond Eaton's imposing 3 to 5 minute delays to 1,000 vehicle passengers and 5,000 transit passengers.
- The eastbound right-turning vehicular movement would back up beyond Garry Street imposing 1 to 2 minute delays to 600 vehicle passengers and 1,600 transit passengers.

The Commissioner of Works and Operations, in his report, suggested that a detailed study be undertaken prior to the re-opening of the Portage Avenue and Main Street intersection to pedestrian traffic and offered terms of reference for said study.

The Committee on Works and Operations, at its meeting held on September 4th, 1990, laid over consideration of the Commissioner's report, awaiting advice from His Worship the Mayor regarding the responses from the signatories to agreements with the City of Winnipeg.

Eight original signatories to the participation agreements were contacted. A summary of the replies received indicated that James Richardson and Sons, the Bank of Montreal and the Royal Bank had each indicated that they did not object to the removal of the pedestrian prohibition. The Scotia Bank, Trizec Manitoba Ltd. and Bentall Development/CN Real Estate/Toronto- Dominion Bank advised they were not in favour.

On March 27th, 1991, Council referred the following motion to the Committee on Works and Operations:

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"THAT the City of Winnipeg Law Department negotiate with parties to the agreement to close Portage and Main, to have said parties agree to the re-opening and report to Council within 42 days."

On May 8th, 1991, Council referred the following motion to the Committee on Works and Operations:

"THAT Council instruct administration to negotiate with the parties to the agreement to close Portage Avenue and Main Street with the intent to re-open this intersection to pedestrian traffic and report the results of these negotiations through the Committee on Finance and Administration within 30 days."

At various times, Council granted extensions to the Committee on Works and Operations to report on the above resolutions.

The Committee on Works and Operations considered an opinion from the City Solicitor on the legal ramifications of the City taking unilateral action. He advised that should Council decide to re-open the intersection to pedestrian traffic, it direct the Administration to engage in negotiations to amend the existing agreements to so permit.

The Director of Streets and Transportation made a verbal presentation with respect to the geometric and traffic data, etc., at an Executive Policy Committee meeting, at which all members of Council had been invited to attend.

In a report, dated April 17th, 1991, the Commissioner of Works and Operations recommended that at-grade pedestrian crossing not be restored at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street for reasons of pedestrian safety and vehicular passenger accommodation in peak periods.

The Committee on Works and Operations, on June 4th, 1991, and the Executive Policy Committee on June 12th, 1991, concurred in the recommendation of the Commissioner and submitted its recommendation to Council, and on June 19th, 1991, Council took the action indicated at the beginning of this report.

To date, the implications on the transit system and its users of re- opening the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street to pedestrian traffic have not been discussed.

Current Transit Vehicle and Passenger Volumes Through the Intersection:

- 25 transit routes operate through the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street.
- Over 1,700 buses, carrying about 40,000 passengers, travel through the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street on a weekday.
- Almost 300 buses travel through the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street each hour (one bus every 12 seconds) during weekday peak periods.

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- In the busiest direction, the bus volume is over 125 buses per hour (one bus every 30 seconds).
- 60% of buses in service operate on routes passing through the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street during rush hours and these buses carry 62% of the passengers of the transit system.
- 120,000 transit passengers are carried on buses passing through the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street, i. e., an additional 80,000 passengers could be affected by delays to these buses, etc.
- In the p.m. peak periods, 70 buses per hour leave the bus stop eastbound Portage Avenue at Fort Street and cross two lanes of traffic to make a left turn at Main Street. The 70 buses per hour carry 5,000 passengers in the peak period.

Given the volume of buses and the number of transit passengers that travel through the Portage Avenue and Main Street intersection, it is vital that traffic arrangements at the intersection permit transit service to operate efficiently and on schedule. Not only is on-time performance important for passengers travelling through this intersection, but it is also essential to passengers awaiting downstream of the intersection. If effective traffic control cannot be provided, it is impossible to maintain scheduled service throughout the system and consequently, buses operate at irregular intervals on each route, buses bunch-up, passenger waiting time increases, overcrowding occurs, and some passengers get by-passed by full buses. Unreliable service such as this reduces ridership, reduces passenger revenue, and increases costs.

Over the longer term, any permanent installation of crosswalks at Portage and Main without the implementation of transit priority measures will have a significant impact on the expenditures of the Transit Department. The delays will result in lengthier running times. Most of the routes that operate through the Portage and Main intersection operate on short headways. Consequently, even delays of three to five minutes in each direction will require additional buses to be operated on several routes to maintain existing service frequencies. It is estimated that the annual incremental operating costs of the additional buses will be in excess of \$600,000.00. Since most of the additional buses will be required during peak periods, it will also be necessary, therefore, to increase the size of the bus fleet.

Re-opening the intersection to pedestrian traffic, without any transit priority measures, will cause the transit operations to deteriorate significantly. The following transit priority measures should ideally be implemented as part of the trial:

- Curb lanes on the following streets designated as reserved transit lanes during the 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. time period on weekdays and Saturdays:
- Southbound Main Street between Higgins Avenue and McDermot Avenue
- Eastbound Portage Avenue between Memorial Boulevard and Fort Street

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- A separate transit-only traffic signal phase be established at the following locations to permit buses to safely manoeuvre two lanes to the left:
 - Southbound Main Street at McDermot Avenue
 - Eastbound Portage Avenue at Fort Street

NOTE: See Appendices "2" and "3"

The Highway Traffic Act does not provide any legislated authority to establish a special signal phase for a specific type of vehicle. Consequently, additional time would be required to obtain the appropriate legislative authority to implement the transit signal priority and, therefore, the above special transit measures cannot be implemented by August 1st, 1991.

If the intersection was restored to "at-grade" pedestrian crossings, subject to a trial period, costs are estimated to be \$612,500.00. (See Appendix "4" for the estimated costs of the works to implement the permanent restoration.)

In accordance with the request of the Committee on Works and Operations, the City Solicitor, on June 27th, 1991, wrote to each signatory to the concourse agreements to determine whether any of the signatories have any objections to the proposed trial re-opening. Replies have been received from all the signatories except Oxlea Investments Ltd. The letter to Oxlea Investments Ltd. was returned unclaimed.

Each of the signatories replying, save one, indicated that they have no objection to the proposed trial re-opening. The exception is Trizec Manitoba Ltd., which indicated it is opposed to a trial re-opening. (A copy of each of the replies is on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

The Bank of Montreal qualified its reply by indicating that it had no objection to the trial re-opening, provided "that all costs directly and indirectly, present and future, are for the account of the City of Winnipeg".

The Toronto-Dominion Bank has specifically advised as follows:

"While the Bank is not, in principle, opposed to pedestrian crossings at the intersection, it must be recognized that pursuant to the Concourse Agreement the Bank made a valuable contribution in funding a portion of the construction of the Portage and Main Concourse, and, in consideration of that funding received the aforementioned covenants from the City of Winnipeg. If the pedestrian crossings were to be re-opened on a permanent basis and it was found that the operations of the Portage and Main Concourse or the concourse level branch of the Branch were adversely affected, it would be necessary for the Bank to review its entitlement to compensation for any such injurious effects or other remedies pursuant to the Concourse Agreement which is now in place."

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Bentall Development Inc., has reserved the right to voice a further opinion once the trial period and its consequences have been examined.

The following OPTIONS and COST ESTIMATES are submitted to restore "at- grade" pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street between August 1st, 1991, and September 30th, 1991:

Option "A" - Full Restoration

1. Pedestrian Crossings

The location of "lift-out" panels in the curb line planters at the four corners of the intersection dictate that the four crosswalks be located as shown in Appendix "5".

2. Timing of Phases

The length of the north/south through traffic phase will become set to the time required by pedestrians to utilize the west crosswalk.

The length of the east/west through traffic phase will become set to the time required by pedestrians to utilize the north crosswalk.

The other phase, in which occur the major vehicular turning movements, will operate on a 100-second cycle at all times to afford sufficient time for the major turning movements.

The same 100-second cycle of operation may be necessary at all times at nearby signalized intersections to avoid vehicle storage from the Portage Avenue and Main Street intersection into adjacent signalized intersections. This increase from an 80-second cycle to a 100-second cycle outside of peak periods will increase delays somewhat to all intersection users.

3. Estimated Costs

- installation of pedestrian and vehicle control signals (and post-trial removal)	\$31,000.00
- removal, and later restoration of, the "lift-out" panels in the corner planters, and related works	31,000.00
- installation, and later removal of, crosswalk markings, etc .	5,500.00
- contingency (20%)	13,500.00
	\$81,000.00

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Should this option be selected, the following recommendations would have to be approved by Council:

1. That the Committee on Works and Operations be requested to pass the necessary traffic regulation to allow pedestrian crossing at Portage Avenue and Main Street.
2. That an additional appropriation in the amount of \$81,000.00 be approved for addition to the 1991 Current Estimates of the Streets and Transportation Department for this purpose.

Option "B" - Partial Restoration

With pedestrian usage of the west crosswalk restored, it is necessary to prohibit the southbound right-turning movement in Phase 1, (see Appendix " 1") thereby reducing the southbound right-turning capacity by approximately 60%. This would result in the provision of capacity only 62% and 84% of the southbound right-turning volume in the A.M. and P.M. peak hours respectively.

Restoration of pedestrian crossings in the other three crosswalks results in much less congestion.

With the prohibition of pedestrian crossing in the west crosswalk, the estimated cost would be reduced from \$81,000.00 to \$60,000.00.

If this option is selected, the following recommendations would have to be approved by Council:

1. That the Committee on Works and Operations be requested to pass the necessary traffic regulations to allow pedestrian crossing at Portage Avenue and Main Street, with the exception of the west crosswalk.
2. That an additional appropriation in the amount of \$60,000.00 be approved for addition to the 1991 Current Estimates of the Streets and Transportation Department for this purpose.

The following notes apply to both Options "A" and "B":

NOTE 1: Though desirable at any time to also accommodate those who are physically handicapped, it is not feasible to install wheelchair ramps at crosswalk-ends by August 1st, 1991. (The estimate of cost to provide paraplegic utilization of the pedestrian crosswalks is \$39,800.00)

NOTE 2: There is serious concern for pedestrian safety for the planter tops are approximately 1.2 metres (or 4 feet) above the adjacent curb lane elevation, which is well above the eye height of drivers of smaller automobiles and of some pedestrians, including children.

It is, therefore, physically possible to conduct the trial intersection opening for the period August 1st, 1991, to September 30th, 1991, as proposed by Council on June 19th, 1991, for a cost of between \$60,000.00 and \$81,000.00. Council would be in contravention of the Trizec Agreement. Any permanent restoration would be more expensive but could be considered in conjunction with future

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budgets, depending upon the results of the trial. Notwithstanding the option to proceed, the Board feels an obligation to clearly set out the implications of this proposal as discussed in this report.

After consideration of all aspects, your Committee on Works and Operations recommends:

1. That an at-grade pedestrian crossing not be restored at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street at this time.
2. That a Committee of Council be struck consisting of the Chairman of the Committee on Works and Operations, Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Administration, His Worship Mayor Norrie and Councillor Mendelson to see if it is possible to negotiate with the signatories of the concourse agreements an opening to pedestrian traffic at the intersection of Portage Avenue and Main Street and to report to Council by November 30th, 1991.
3. That the matter of cost implications and assessment be referred back to the Committee on Works and Operations for consideration and recommendation.

Pursuant to the Municipal Council Conflict of Interest Act, Councillor Mitchelson advised Council that he would refrain from entering the discussion and from voting on the clause, as several of his clients are located within the concourse area, and left the Chamber.

Moved by Councillor Lorenc,
Adoption of the clause.

Moved by Councillor Demare,
That the question be now put.

The motion was put.

Councillor Demare called for the yeas and nays, which were as follows:-

Yea: Councillors Boychuk, Brown, Clement, Demare, Douglas, Lorenc, Prystanski, Timm-Rudolph, Young, Yuen, Mayor Norrie and Councillor Wade. 12

Nay: Councillors Diamant, Duguid, Fleisher, Golden, Hyman, Lazarenko, Mendelson, Murray, O'Shaughnessy, Reese, Selinger, Thomas and Timmers. 13

and the motion that the question be put was declared lost.