

## **OPENING PORTAGE AND MAIN NOT A PRIORITY: CAA MEMBER SURVEY**

### *Concerns about traffic congestion, pedestrian safety & public consultation*

WINNIPEG, August 25, 2016 – A CAA Manitoba survey finds an overwhelming majority of its members do not support opening the iconic intersection to pedestrian traffic.

“With much discussion lately on this topic, we wanted to know what our members think,” said Mike Mager, President of CAA Manitoba. “Not surprisingly, survey results show traffic congestion and pedestrian safety are top concerns at Portage and Main, and the majority of our members worry it will worsen if the barricades are removed.”

CAA Manitoba polled nearly 1,500 members, and results illustrate major concerns with the proposal to open Portage and Main. In fact, more than three-quarters of respondents believe traffic congestion would be a significant problem if the intersection is opened. Moreover, 60 per cent of people surveyed said they would be concerned for pedestrian safety if people can cross at Portage and Main.

In contrast to Probe Research data that indicated younger Winnipeggers were more likely to support the plan, just 20 per cent of CAA members aged 18 to 29 indicated they believe that the City of Winnipeg should allow pedestrian traffic to cross at the downtown corner.

When asked whether they believe Mayor Brian Bowman has done enough public consultation on the issue, less than one in four members agreed he has. However, the majority of respondents indicated they would be open to participating in more consultation through online polling, written surveys by mail, and open houses.

#### **Notable survey results include:**

- Over 70 per cent of respondents said they felt opening the intersection should not be a priority for the City of Winnipeg.
- One third of members surveyed believe opening the intersection to pedestrians would not have any effect at all on making Portage and Main a tourist destination.
- People cited current traffic congestion and the intersection being confusing as the main reasons why they avoid driving through the corner at any given time.
- This issue matters to more than just drivers: over 30 per cent of members polled who currently work downtown reported that they typically take the bus, bike, or walk to the office.

Improving accessibility at the intersection for all Winnipeggers can be done more affordably than taking down the barricades. Wheelchair ramps, elevators and signage should be greatly enhanced.

“Many people suggested a simpler, safer way to reduce confusion for tourists and locals at this intersection would be to install better signage at street level and underground in Winnipeg Square to guide people to their destination,” said Mager. “This should be a priority before any talk of opening the intersection.”

“It’s nice for Mayor Brian Bowman to talk about making Portage and Main great again, but safety and public opinion must be part of the conversation, too. It will be interesting to see the results of the City of Winnipeg’s research; but when it comes down to it, opening the intersection is not a priority for Winnipeggers.”

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