

Portage and Main Survey: Comments from members

On traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, and confusion

1. "I worked at Portage and Main before and after it was opened and closed. It was a nightmare for pedestrians then and we have much more traffic on the road now."
2. "I remember when Portage and Main was open to pedestrians – it wasn't pretty. I believe drivers have grown more impatient and distracted over the years so the possibility of accidents has sharply increased."
3. "It scares me to think of crossing Portage and Main with cars 'trying to beat the light.'"
4. "What pedestrian would want to walk across Portage and Main in -40C with a wind chill?"
5. "I try to avoid this intersection as it because I already find it confusing. Which lane am I supposed to be in to go straight, turn right or left?"

On Winnipeg Square and signage

1. "I think there should be better signage for tourists to explain the underground walkway as I find it extremely convenient for getting around."
2. "I do not own a car but rent occasionally. As a bus client and pedestrian, I appreciate the corner being closed to pedestrians and safe underground access."
3. "Better signage in the underground walkways should be step one in the process!"
4. "Ridiculous idea to open up Portage and Main. Spend this energy putting up better signage for the concourse."
5. "If people don't want to go underground to get across the intersection, they can simply walk a block over in any direction and cross at the lights."

On tourism

1. "There is no valid reason for tourists to cross that intersection – it's all office workers there."
2. "There is very little of interest at ground level at Portage and Main. It isn't a tourist attraction on the outside. But the underground network could be significantly improved and become a tourist destination."
3. "I would rather see the Exchange District become more pedestrian friendly and keep people out of Portage and Main. The Exchange has lots of historic sites."
4. "I have never heard of any tourist saying 'Let's go to Portage and Main'."

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5. “We walk downtown often as a ‘hometown tourist’. Not sure how much tourism would arise from being able to cross the street at Portage and Main. If the city is looking for a photo op tourist stop, they could work out a deal with the concourse to show people were at Portage and Main – something like a reverse CN Tower floor where you look up, not down. If they improved the concourse entrances with windows, lights, murals and augmented multimedia displays, visitors could “virtually” walk across the corner and get exposed to Winnipeg history and culture, buy a t-shirt, and take a selfie in the bubble without worrying about getting hit by 10 lanes of traffic or getting frostbite.”

On priorities and alternatives

1. “Why would the city want to spend money opening Portage and Main when there are so many other priorities? They have increased taxes enough and their priority should be road repairs.”
2. “We need more analysis and evidence to support opening it up – it seems like they just decided to do it and that’s that.”
3. “Rather than focusing on opening the intersection to pedestrians, I would prefer to see the city focus on creating safer bike lanes.”
4. “I feel the best alternative would be an overpass. I don’t think a ground level crossing would be safe for pedestrians and it would disrupt traffic.”
5. “The city has bigger issues to deal with than this.”

Note: Members answers and comments on this survey were recorded anonymously.

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