

For Immediate Release
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Portage Place Community Voices Committee Presses Pause

The purpose of the community voices committee was to ensure that the needs and desires of the community that both surrounds and relies on Portage Place were heard on its redevelopment. This was to be done through a fair and inclusive community consultation that the committee committed to develop and undertake. However, as the committee's work has been misrepresented in the media by Starlight as community support for their proposal, the committee must clarify that it has not met with Starlight since the increase ask in federal government funding came to light and given the pandemic, no community consultations have taken place.

The community voices committee was made up of both community members and community based organizations who hold a variety of opinions on how best to redevelop the mall and the downtown in general. The committee, as a body, has and remains impartial as to which development project proceeds. Our commitment has remained to amplify community voices through consultation with the goal of ensuring the most public good for the amount of public dollars invested.

“Back in September 2019, once the federal government's 30 day hold to allow for First Nations' Treaty Rights on disposition of Crown Lands expired with no other proponents coming forward, the committee formed to do just as the name suggests. Get the community voices heard. The deal still was not finalized but planning began. And then the pandemic hit. Fast forward to 2021 and the picture is completely different.” Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.

“Internally the committee has had many passionate heartfelt discussions on what our downtown could and should be. We haven't always agreed on particulars but we do on the fact that for our downtown to be truly vibrant, it must be open and inclusive of all but especially to those living, thriving in the downtown and those who may only be just able to survive, the most vulnerable. The post pandemic downtown Winnipeg is looking very different so we should all regard this time as an opportunity to do so much better than we have.” Damon Johnston, Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg

“The committee is pausing until there is more clarity on the post pandemic reality of our downtown. Everyone needs this pause to reconsider the project and their involvement.” Val Cavers, MOSAIC

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On behalf of: Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, Fearless R2W, Central Neighbourhoods, Graffiti Art Gallery, Fred Douglas Place Residents' Council, Ethno-Cultural Council of Manitoba and Immigration Partnership Winnipeg