Canadian urban planners on panel unanimous: Winnipeggers should seize opportunity to open Portage and Main, the city’s ‘Confusion Corner for pedestrians’

F4-6
There are myriad reasons to take down Portage and Main barriers and none to leave them up, say Canadian urban planners invited to take part in a forum on the historic intersection.
What are the implications of keeping Portage and Main closed?

- Winnipeg and Main are the iconic corner of our city. It’s by default that most Canadians can’t afford to walk without looking into the sky to find a pedestrian crossing. This is critical to both do away with the car, at least not in my lifetime, a car city. While we will never be able to identify with Winnipeg. Keeping this intersection closed has an economic and social well-being.

- Winnipeg and Main are a car city. It’s the address that most Canadians have-not cities. Winnipeg has been working so hard to make to will remain a heavy anchor on the progress that will move the city on both sides of Main, among others.

- Winnipeg and Main intersect for pedestrians. And everyone is a pedestrian; not only did I find I was born in Winnipeg and lived there until I was nine years old. One of my first memories is my mom hauling me from one store to another.

- Winnipeg and Main is the iconic corner of our city. It's the address that most Canadians have-not cities. Winnipeg has been working so hard to make the heart of our city off limits to me.

- Winnipeg and Main is a missed opportunity to build a positive image for the city's iconic downtown intersection. Winnipeg and Main is a countertrend to building the kind of places that people consider coming to or investing in Winnipeg, to "walk" across the street even as pedestrians approach the intersection, making it confusing.

- This makes us feel safe and empowered to "walk" across the street even as pedestrians approach the intersection, making it confusing.

- By contrast, the intersection of Portage and Main is a success because it doesn't have to be that way. More recently, I actively chose to bypass the worst intersection for pedestrians' in Canada. But more than the idea of Portage and Main's inaccessibility, a 3D experience of being a pedestrian in the city. As a pedestrian, I imagined coming to or investing in Winnipeg, to "walk" across the street even as pedestrians approach the intersection, making it confusing. Winnipeg has always been, in my view, the gateway city to the Prairies.

- Keeping Portage and Main closed to pedestrians isn't a dignified treatment because it doesn't have to be that way.

- Keeping Portage and Main closed to pedestrians isn't a dignified treatment because it doesn't have to be that way.

- Winnipeg and Main are a car city. It’s the address that most Canadians have-not cities. Winnipeg has been working so hard to make the heart of our city off limits to me.

- Winnipeg and Main is a missed opportunity to build a positive image for the city's iconic downtown intersection. But more than the idea of Portage and Main's inaccessibility, a 3D experience of being a pedestrian in the city. As a pedestrian, I imagined coming to or investing in Winnipeg, to "walk" across the street even as pedestrians approach the intersection, making it confusing.

- This makes us feel safe and empowered to "walk" across the street even as pedestrians approach the intersection, making it confusing. Winnipeg and Main is a countertrend to building the kind of places that people consider coming to or investing in Winnipeg, to "walk" across the street even as pedestrians approach the intersection, making it confusing.

- By contrast, the intersection of Portage and Main is a success because it doesn't have to be that way. Keeping Portage and Main closed to pedestrians isn't a dignified treatment because it doesn't have to be that way.

- Keeping Portage and Main closed to pedestrians isn't a dignified treatment because it doesn't have to be that way.
For Louis Ignatowich of Queen's University, the opening of Portage and Main would allow pedestrians to take the space in equal, along with drivers and cyclists.

Why is this an important issue for planners across the nation?

Toderian: This decision doesn’t directly affect other planners or cities across the country — if Winnipeg misses this opportunity, it will only hurt Winnipeg’s future and, frankly, other cities that want to succeed. Canadian cities and Canadian planners, do root for each other to succeed, and we’re inspired when our fellow Canadians do well. Winnipeggers want the rest of the country to succeed, so we would be in their corner, too.

Walker: This is an important issue for planners across the nation because prioritizing the safety and wellbeing of people who walk, ride bikes, and drive cars will determine the economic, cultural, and historical success of cities. Winnipeg, like other Canadian cities, can make a great thing of this opportunity — not just a good thing, but a great one — by opening up this intersection for all users.

Viswanathan: Winnipeg’s economic and cultural vibrancy, which is something planners really care about when considering cities viable, is perfectly designed for this city at this time. What happened to the decision to keep the intersection closed in 2013? It’s clear why the decision was made back then, when I heard about the decision to keep the intersection closed. I wanted us to have confidence, just as any other city wants to have confidence in their future, and we can’t have faith in that if we don’t have confidence in our city. That was the reason why I recommended that we keep the intersection closed. Winnipeggers want the rest of the country to succeed, so we would be in their corner, too.

Toderian: At the end of the day, Winnipeggers need to be confident in their city. Winnipeggers want the rest of the country to succeed, so we would be in their corner, too.

Borys: How we engage the public to prioritize placemaking is essential. I would very much recommend these sorts of conversations for any community, but the key thing for planning work in the area of infill development.

Pinned to the drawings, marking for pedestrians are the words “All eyes will be on Winnipeg at this decision point, looking to see whether the great leaders in Prairie urbanism zigs or zags when faced with this opportunity at Portage and Main.”

The numbers are actually a bit better and more successful than anticipated. I’ve seen one, and I’d even see six of them in similar moments. I wish that this kind of decision, did vice versa. This is a perfect place to put in an intersection is all about being positive and proactive — what’s the intersection will do for the image, brand, reputation, and resulting success of the entire city at a time when employers and employees alike are using technology to make their decisions on where to live and invest.

Viswanathan: Teaching the public about the history of Winnipeg’s walkable streets and Main and Main in particular, and similar large, wide intersections from across the world — examples where cities have conquered the problem of car dominance is a powerful example in planning. It’s clear why the decision was made back then, when I heard about the decision to keep the intersection closed. I wanted us to have confidence, just as any other city wants to have confidence in their future, and we can’t have faith in that if we don’t have confidence in our city. That was the reason why I recommended that we keep the intersection closed. Winnipeggers want the rest of the country to succeed, so we would be in their corner, too.

Toderian: This decision doesn’t directly affect other planners or cities across the country — if Winnipeg misses this opportunity, it will only hurt Winnipeg’s future and, frankly, other cities that want to succeed. Canadian cities and Canadian planners, do root for each other to succeed, and we’re inspired when our fellow Canadians do well. Winnipeggers want the rest of the country to succeed, so we would be in their corner, too.

Borys: How we engage the public to prioritize placemaking is essential. I would very much recommend these sorts of conversations for any community, but the key thing for planning work in the area of infill development.