

LETTERS AND FP COMMENTS

Imagination needed in Exchange

Re: *Public input sought for development on PSB site* (Sept. 21)

As a longtime resident of the Exchange I hope planning for the area near city hall uses some creativity to develop the space in a manner that serves multiple objectives, as illustrated here.

The lack of parking is a major problem in the Exchange. Two massive holes in the ground suggest the possibility of underground parking. Some of the foundation might even be repurposed and use made of the existing tunnel to the Centennial Concert Hall. All that would be needed is a roof.

And a roof that is low or even at ground level can also be used creatively. Google "SAIT grass roof" to see an example in Calgary of a parkade with a grass roof. That roof contains a soccer field, but other possibilities exist. Perhaps the roof would allow ice skating in the winter, much like the popular rink at Toronto City Hall.

Some imagination and thoughtful planning could see the closing of these buildings as an opportunity to further a number of important objectives for development of the Exchange.

JIM CLARK
Winnipeg

Residents know best

Re: *Marion St. project not dead yet, but almost* (Sept. 20)

On Sept. 19, the standing policy committee on infrastructure renewal and public works considered the Marion Street project and presentations by taxpayers in opposition to same. Coun. Janice Lukes, the chairwoman of the committee, stated, "I think we're failing on how we engage the public." No kidding; a councillor is finally admitting to something taxpayers have known for years.

Our local politicians have been choosing, more often than not, to insulate themselves from their communities and neighbourhoods by not holding community committee meetings in the communities they represent, paying consultants and appointing paid boards to deal with matters they

should be handling themselves.

It is councillors whom taxpayers have elected to represent them, not consultants, and councillors have to pay more attention to their duties and responsibilities. They need to consult more with the people who live and work in the community, for it is at this level that the knowledge exists as to what is best for a community. They, and not some consultant, need to "engage the public" in developing acceptable solutions/strategies to improve the quality of life in a community.

Councillors need to work more in their communities and less in that stone-and-concrete bunker on Main Street.

JOHN G. KUBI
Winnipeg

Holding railways accountable

Re: *Rails and relocation* (Letters, Sept. 20)

I highly doubt either railway (CP or CN) that runs its lines through our city could care less about the future of our city insofar as ameliorating traffic issues goes, or the high possibility of a derailment within Winnipeg and the likelihood of a major hazardous-material spill that would occur, considering the volume of hazardous goods carried on the rail lines daily through the city. They are concerned strictly with making a profit and have no desire to relocate because that would cut into their bottom line.

My concern I have to bring to the media's attention is a minor one. As a resident of Garden City, whose home backs onto the CPR's Winnipeg Beach subdivision line, I have been a thorn in their backsides for over 20 years trying to simply get them to cut the grass and weeds that grow on their right-of-way. The right-of-way is the green portion that does not have rail tracks on it but only has the green space containing about 90 per cent noxious weeds.

Over the last number of years, after contacting their toll-free number, usually the grass/weed combo would be cut two or three times a season. This year I was informed through Coun. Devi Sharmas' office that the CPR will no longer mow

the green space because they feel it encourages people to walk along the right-of-way or dump trash on it. This is in total opposition to what all other Winnipeg companies and citizens are held responsible for, namely, maintaining boulevards and green spaces they own.

If every other business or homeowner in the city felt the same, we would be subjected to a total mess. This is following a motion for the City of Winnipeg to spend another \$2.8 million next year to increase the frequency of grass cutting in the city.

What kind of corporate citizen is the Canadian Pacific Railway?

THOMAS BEST
Winnipeg

Benefits, risks of mine need scrutiny

Re: *Diamond mine could help north* (Letters, Sept. 19)

In his letter, **Robin Gibson** raised the potential for diamond mining in regard to the province's proposal to establish a polar bear provincial park. People are interested in polar bears for intrinsic, cultural, ecological and economic reasons, while some are keen on diamonds for economic potential. Diamonds offer no benefit to polar bears, and mining may negatively impact habitat they need for survival.

Manitoba's vast northern landscape provides many opportunities for local communities, including indigenous communities and others to achieve their aspirations. This may include mining and many other economic ventures. Our largely undeveloped north provides an increasingly rare opportunity to plan for a balance of a prosperous, sustainable economy and a healthy environment in this ecologically diverse region.

Diamond mining would contribute to our northern economy for the lifetime of a mine. Rigorous and honest analysis is needed to weigh this in consideration of achieving long-term economic stability for Manitobans and securing a healthy future for polar bears and hundreds of other species in the north upon which many northerners

depend.

The province's Yes! North strategy that is presently being developed could include a polar bear provincial park, as it would be a strong component in developing a successful northern economy for the long term. Ecologically responsible tourism and outfitting, which depend on the healthy ecosystems, are significant local economic drivers as Churchill is recognized globally as a launching point to some of the most unique and accessible wildlife viewing in the world. Created with the support of local communities, including indigenous communities, a polar bear provincial park would greatly enhance this opportunity while helping to protect an iconic yet imperiled Canadian wildlife species.

RON THIESSEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Manitoba chapter

Pro-merger

If I understand correctly, the concept of traffic zipper merging is not working well.

My working theory is that, alas, some drivers are unfortunately afflicted by the dreaded curse of "Damned-if-I-will-let-you-in-it-is." The symptoms are characterized by a thousand-yard stare with the occasional sideways flicker of an eye to ensure some desperate driver is not trying to sneak in front of him/her, moving the car to about one inch from the rear bumper of the car ahead, body rigid and hands in a death-grip position on the steering wheel. And yes, such drivers do have a recognizable mating call consisting of the car horn going honk, honk.

To those drivers who practise the zipper merge, bless you.

To those drivers who suffer from this condition, though, I recommend a large dose of courtesy. You don't need a prescription to remove the curse, the dose is free and you will soon feel much better.

DOUG BRAZEAU
Winnipeg