

**Comments to Regina City Council Regarding
Report to Council About Arcola Avenue Corridor from
College Avenue to Prince of Wales Drive**

Good evening. I am Mike Mepham and have lived on Truesdale Drive in SE Regina since 1989. Truesdale runs parallel to Arcola Avenue from Prince of Wales Drive to University Park Drive. The traffic congestion on Arcola has had a significant impact on Truesdale as drivers use it to bypass Arcola. This has resulted in a significant traffic increase, particularly during the morning and evening rush hour. While Truesdale was designed as a collector street, intended to collect the traffic from the local residential roads and funnel it to Victoria Avenue, University Park Drive, and Prince of Wales, I am confident it was not designed to be a thoroughfare for spillover traffic from Arcola, an arterial road. However this is how it is being used, even by Regine Transit who have routed the new Express route 60 on Truesdale, avoiding Arcola for their express service.

The presence of this spillover traffic has made life on Truesdale and the local streets it was designed to serve much more difficult. The backups at the connecting intersections are increasing, resulting in driver frustration. Pedestrians have a much more difficult time crossing the street as traffic does not always yield to them. Indeed, I suspect that drivers cannot see the pedestrians given the large number of vehicles parked along the road, typical of residential Regina. The residents living on Truesdale itself have to endure long delays trying to get out of their driveways, again resulting in frustration and the accompanying increase in aggressive driving. As further evidence of the frustration felt by drivers on Truesdale I have observed vehicles passing each other on both the left and right hand sides despite Truesdale having a solid yellow line painted down the center.

I suspect, but do not know conclusively, that the other parallel streets, Assiniboine, and Arens are having similar issues.

I was very happy when I heard that the city was studying the Arcola corridor from College to Prince of Wales and I was looking forward to some resulting action to resolve the issues. Boy, was I disappointed.

While the study was to look at the Arcola Corridor it is clear that corridor was interpreted as Arcola Avenue only. There was no examination of the impact of the Arcola issues on the surrounding roads. Appendix A of the report shows that the traffic count increases by about 14,000 vehicles as you cross the University Park intersection. Where did they come from and how did they get there? This is not addressed. This appears to me to be significantly more vehicles than University Park would serve without the spillover traffic.

The report does identify some possible solutions. Item 1a, creating a dual turn at Arcola southbound and Park Street addresses only southbound traffic and would not address the traffic issues south of ring road at all. Item 1b, widening the overpass, is not recommended in part because there was extensive work done in 2010 and this infrastructure would not be worn out for another 20-25 years. In other words, because we spent a lot of money and it did not address or resolve the problem we should not spend anymore on the problem. That is like saying I replaced some shingles on my roof and while it still leaks I won't replace the full roof until the new shingles wear out.

Item 1c, University Park Drive intersection improvements, addresses only southbound traffic and still does not get the level of service to an acceptable level. It may, however, move the intersection off of the top 10 list of dangerous intersections. 1d does nothing at an intersection that, according to the report, needs nothing. And finally item 1e, Assiniboine on ramp, simply moves the problem from Arcola to Assiniboine, another residential collector and only addresses northbound traffic.

The report identifies the completion of the Regina Bypass as a potential mitigation to the problems on Arcola. While it states that there is further information and modeling available, the information and results are not presented. In fact, the report proposes that we wait until 4 to 5 years after the bypass opens to evaluate the impact on Arcola and then figure out what to do. It does make me wonder why modeling is done if it is not going to be used to inform a study like this. As well, I do question the impact the opening of a major east-west expressway will have on a north-south traffic flow. According to the report heavy vehicles comprise only a small percentage of the traffic on Arcola. Some of this small percentage presumably will be headed west and so would take the bypass but any headed into Regina would continue to use Arcola. I expect that

any reduction on Arcola would be primarily the result of traffic originating in the eastern communities outside Regina that may continue to Highway 6 and then turn north to access the downtown via Albert Street.

A further mitigation identified in the report and discussed at the June 7 meeting of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee was the Wascana Parkway Extension, tentatively scheduled for 16 years from now. It was identified at the meeting that the parkway extension would divert as many as 25,000 cars a day from Arcola. That is a 100% to 50% reduction from the current (two year old) numbers but it could be argued that given the expected growth in South East Regina of 2,500 people (and their cars) a year for the next decade the Arcola numbers would be way worse 16 years from now than they are today. In fact, I can envision people deciding not to buy in the south east because of the transportation concerns that have been building over the last several years and that appears to be continuing to degrade well into the future.

The report concludes with a recommendation that a further study be carried out in 2024 with essentially no action before then. This is, quite frankly, unacceptable. The residents and business in South East Regina deserve way better than nothing. With no action it can be reasonably anticipated that with the expected growth the situation will get significantly worse resulting in increased driver frustration and aggressiveness resulting in increased accident numbers. The increased travel time will also lead directly to reduced productivity as people spend more time in their cars and to increased greenhouse gas emissions as those cars spend more time idling in traffic jams.

To be the great city that Regina aspires to be we have to both plan and build for the future. I am asking Council that they direct the administration to review the issue again and return with a concrete, implementable plan that resolves the issues for the present and the future in a reasonable timeframe. I understand that reliable planning and actual construction take time but the proposed timelines are way too long. Let's find a better way to resolve these types of issues, apply them to Arcola Avenue and its surroundings and then move them out to similar problems in the rest of the city.

Thank-you for this opportunity to present my thoughts and ideas.