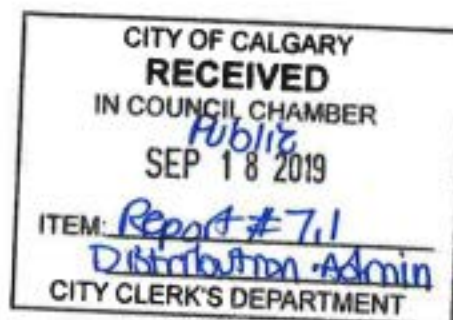


SPC on Transportation and Transit
Office of the Councillors
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5

September 16, 2019

RE: Green Line Q3 Update



Dear Councillors,

This past spring the LRT on the Green Foundation was supportive of the decision to split Stage 1 of Green Line into two phases. We continue to be supportive of that decision and are pleased to see that the RFQ for Phase 1 has proceeded to market with the endorsement of the Green Line Technical and Risk Committee. It is now more critical than ever that Phase 2 is delivered properly. With that in mind, the Green Line Q3 Update brings with it some areas of concern for the LRT on the Green Foundation.

Green Line Stage 1 isn't just about building LRT. It was designed to solve three of the most important challenges holding back Green Line; the distance to the large population in the south east, building things correctly through the centre city and getting the line north of the Bow River and up the escarpment to allow for expansion into the north central corridor. Any change to Stage 1 that re-introduces one or more of these challenges into future Green Line stages should be seen as unacceptable and we urge Council to keep that in mind as discussions around the centre city phase of Stage 1 evolve.

The LRT on the Green Foundation is supportive of the roadmap for community engagement that has been laid out in the Q3 Update. We feel that the City of Calgary should be commended for proactively engaging the critical stakeholders in the centre city area and that the process will adequately capture their input given the budgetary and technical challenges facing the project. That being said, the Foundation also feels that the process as outlined only captures half of the conversation that Calgarians need to have concerning Green Line. More needs to be done.

The logo for "LRT on the Green" features the text in a bold, green, sans-serif font. Below the text is a stylized graphic of a green hill with a white and red LRT train on a track. In the background, there are green silhouettes of city buildings, including the Calgary Tower.

LRT on the Green

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All of the community engagement discussions that lead to the final vision for Green Line approved by Council in June 2017 were made independent of the overall project budget to ensure the best project vision was created. Calgarians are now being asked to make cuts to the Green Line vision they helped build so that the project can be delivered within a budget that is constrained only by Council's five year old belief that it would be enough. At the very least Calgarians are owed the answer to the question of what budget adjustments are required to deliver the original project vision as intended? This is the missing half of the Green Line Stage 1 conversation that needs to happen as well over the next few months.

While we recognize that the City of Calgary is currently facing a period of austerity, it is noted in the Q3 Update that the additional \$640 million (\$23.7 million/year) dedicated to Green Line Stage 1 financing by Council in November 2017 has now been approved for use towards capital costs as well. This Council decision means up to \$5.543 billion and not \$4.903 billion is now available for Green Line Stage 1, dramatically changing the balance of the project's original cost-sharing. The funding break down for the available funding is now an almost unheard of 40% municipal funding, 30% federal funding and 30% provincial funding.

Under the 2014 New Building Canada Fund the "maximum federal contribution from all sources will be up to one-third of the total eligible costs of a project with the following exceptions... ..for projects in the public transit category, the maximum federal contribution from all sources will be up to 50 per cent of the total eligible costs" (<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/cs-pc-eng.html>). Due to the City of Calgary's additional contribution, Green Line Stage 1 funding now fails to meet the basic one-third level of cost sharing outline by the federal government, let alone half. To our knowledge, neither Council nor Calgarians have had an opportunity to have a conversation with their elected representative at the federal level to look at re-balancing the cost sharing for Green Line Stage 1 through additional federal funding.

The Q3 Update states that Green Line Stage 1 was found to be over budget by 10%, or approximately \$500 million. This number might be reduced if cut and cover tunnelling is used instead of the bored tunnelling option. An additional federal funding contribution to cover the budget shortfall would re-balance the cost sharing so that the federal government is providing approximately 40% of the funding, well within the guidelines they have laid out. However in order to get there, Administration must be transparent about the cost to deliver the approved Green Line vision and Council must ask.



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Therefore we are urging Council to amend the process outlined in the Green Line Q3 Update and to adopt a two-pronged approach to the centre city phase of Stage 1. Council should continue to support refining an alternative alignment for the centre city phase using the engagement model proposed in the Q3 update however Council should also direct Administration to refine the original Green Line centre city project vision and deliver a revised cost number, even if it's outside the current budget.

With both the ideal Green Line vision and the cost-restricted Green Line vision presented to them, Calgarians can then have an open and transparent conversation with their elected representatives in all orders of government about what they feel is best for our city. If politicians in other orders of government decide the political cost of maintaining the approved funding is still better than the additional capital cost of building the ideal version then so be it, each and every Calgarian can make their own judgement on that and the City of Calgary still has the option of building the cost-restricted Green Line Stage 1 to deliver the project on time.

Green Line Stage 1 is a 100 year infrastructure project that needs to be built. It also needs to solve the challenges of reaching the population in the south east, transiting the centre city and reaching the top of the escarpment north of the Bow River. If there are two different ways to do all of those things then Calgarians need to know the cost difference between the two. It's time for a transparent conversation about Green Line Stage 1. We hope Council takes steps to ensure Calgarians and their elected representatives can have that conversation.

Best Regards,

Jeff Binks
President
LRT on the Green Foundation



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