

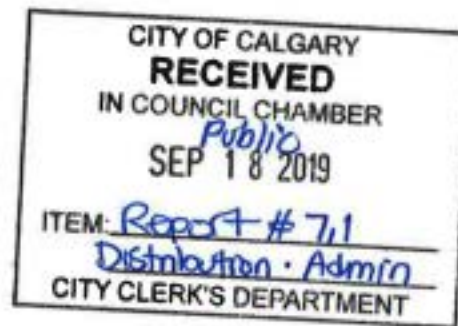


華埠商業促進區

**Chinatown  
District BIA**

Business Improvement Area

Suite 208, 328 Centre Street SE, Calgary, AB, T2G 4X6



CALGARY  
CHINATOWN

2019 September 17

The City of Calgary – City Clerks

Attention: Standing Policy Committee – Transportation and Transit

Members of Calgary City Council

P.O. Box 2100 Station M

Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5

RE: Green Line Q3 2019 Update

The Chinatown Business Improvement Area (Chinatown BIA) advocates on behalf of 200+ business improvement area ratepayers with regards to the Green Line LRT project since 2016. We have also been leaders and participants in Green Line Public Engagement Sessions with other Chinatown community groups in seeking a common outcome of this LRT alignment to and through Chinatown; namely, a Green Line LRT will be a cultural portal to Chinatown and the alignment and portal shall not dissect this community geographically, culturally, socially, nor economically nor bring harm to its residents, visitors, businesses, and real estate values. The Chinatown BIA has expressed this at both the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation and Transit and at Calgary City Council.

This was restated at a Green Line LRT Stakeholder Engagement Meeting with Chinatown stakeholders on July 15<sup>th</sup> just prior to the 2019 July 29 Combined City Council meeting. At this meeting, eleven (11) recommendations were presented to address concerns regarding economic viability and risk, discussed and approved. None of these recommendations were discussed with the community before the Combined City Council meeting.

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, the Chinatown BIA and other community representatives met with the Green Line LRT stakeholder team and were informed of Recommendation #2

*“Direct Administration not to proceed with construction of the Green Line Light Rail Transit Project – Contract #1 (4<sup>th</sup> Street SE to Shepard SE) until the alignment review from 16<sup>th</sup> Ave North to 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE has been completed and any potential changes have been approved by Council;”*

We appreciate the sound accountability of this recommendation as we also want the right and responsible approach before resources, design and construction is committed.

However, we are concerned that this will lead to a rethink of the alignment and approach purely for economic constraint and risk aversion reasons without greater consideration to the potential cultural, social and business impacts. Today, Chinatown is a cultural community and we cannot afford the danger of losing its identity, heritage, economic significance, and public safety if different alignments and technical approaches are considered for Chinatown.

We strongly agree with BOMA and NAIOP's letter to City Council of 2019 July 29 that the Green Line LRT:

- *present minimal impact to members' asset values, existing and future tenants, access considerations and the line's place making opportunities (particularly in Downtown and Beltline) and also at the identified TOD locations;*
- *reject spending the entire \$4.9 billion budget to extend the south or north legs in the absence of a downtown component, as without a direct connection to downtown in a central alignment, support for the employment core of Calgary is significantly diminished (as is potential ridership) and connectivity to other transit corridors throughout the city is lost;*
- *support efforts made to eliminate deep tunneling along the route (cut/cover versus TBM) that could lower cost and bring station(s) closer to the surface so they can better interact with surrounding buildings and streetscape and offer better place making and public realm opportunities.*
- *do not support a deep tunnel based on the significant depth being discussed (7 storeys+) that would impact rider usability, lack of potential connection to existing buildings and infrastructure, and the risk of cost overruns, we do favour tunnelled or cut and cover alignments from south side of the Bow River via 2nd Street SW to at least south of CP tracks as well as under Macleod Trail in the Beltline to meet these objectives, and prefer tunnel through the balance of the Beltline if budgets permit.*
- *do not support elevated structures between 4th street SE and 20th Ave N. These should be avoided if possible, due to the potential for increase in crime/decrease in public safety, and the deleterious impact to street level commercial/retail activity, reduced sunlight at grade in these areas, loss of public realm potential and impact on surrounding real estate values. Cities with elevated structures are removing them for these reasons (New York, Toronto etc.) and other cities are not repeating earlier mistakes by tunneling their newer lines (cut/cover) such as Vancouver's Cambie Street stretch of the Canada Line.*
- *support configurations or alignments that don't create barriers to or isolate a community or unduly restrict connectivity with neighbouring communities (example: Eau Claire and Chinatown).*

Per deliberations at this Combined City Council meeting and as presented to Chinatown at the Green Line Stakeholder Engagement meeting of August 2019, we are deeply alarmed that Centre City and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue 'potential changes' could include a radically different alignment and approach from 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue North through to the Beltline, namely,

- a surface line along Centre Street from 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the escarpment above the Bow River,
- an elevated bridge over the Bow River,
- a surface line in the downtown core from the south shore of the Bow River to a tunnel under the CP Rail tracks to the Beltline, and
- a possible 2<sup>nd</sup> Street LRT realignment to either Centre Street or 1<sup>st</sup> Street SW in the downtown core

Any of these potential alignment and construction approaches will have dramatic, life-long, if not eternal, consequence to Chinatown and its 109-year cultural, social and economic fabric.

As participants in The City's Downtown Strategy, we are working diligently with Calgary Economic Development, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation, and City Planners to ensure the downtown core and its inclusive communities thrive, grow, and engage Calgarians in and adjacent the Centre City boundaries. A Green Line LRT design / construction that dissects downtown east and west at the surface or elevated will debilitate if not destroy chances of realizing this goal. Consequently, we strongly urge City Council not to consider anything other than a tunnel under 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SW from the south banks of the Bow River to the Beltline.

Finally, we understand the cost and technical implications of a tunnel under the Bow River and appreciate a LRT bridge over the Bow River may be necessary. However, we strongly urge City Council not to severely impact the viability of the Centre Street Bridge and the Centre Street roadway from the escarpment to 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. This corridor should be promoted as a Mainstreet corridor for buses, vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians...not an LRT line. A shallow LRT tunnel under Centre Street with mid-point station would be appropriate.

Sincerely,



Grace Su, CBIA Chair



Terry Wong, CBIA Executive Director

pc: Calgary BIA  
Chinatown BIA Ratepayers  
Chinatown Associations and Leaders