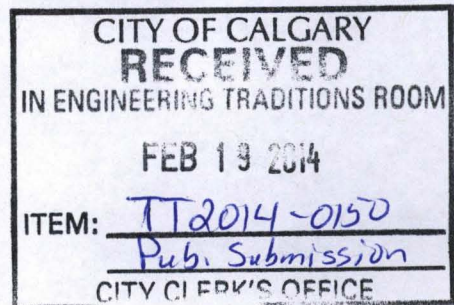


Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health
10025 Jasper Avenue NW
PO Box 1360, Stn. Main
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2N3
Canada
www.health.alberta.ca

February 18, 2014

Mayor Nenshi and Members of City of Calgary Council
City of Calgary
Office of the Councillors (8001)
800 Macleod Trail SE
Calgary AB T2P 2M5



Dear Mayor Nenshi and Members of City of Calgary Council,

I am writing to support the City of Calgary's efforts to make Calgary a safer place in which to cycle and promote cycling as an active mode of transportation. As Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, I provide advice and expertise on issues that affect the health of Albertans. We are currently facing threats to our health that may roll back the gains in increased life expectancy we have achieved in the last 100 years. Rates of chronic disease and injury continue to rise in Alberta and across the country. The number of individuals living with diabetes has almost doubled in the last decade. Heart disease and hypertension are also increasing within the province. The rise in preventable illnesses can also be linked to an increase in health spending, nationally and provincially. In 2013/2014, the Government of Alberta will spend \$17.1 billion on health care, accounting for 45% of total provincial expenditures. If health care spending does not change in the next few years, we could be spending half the province's budget on health care.

Bicycling infrastructure is one aspect of good neighborhood design that can contribute to physical activity and health. The proposed Centre City cycle track network has the potential to provide safer, more accessible bicycle routes for Calgary residents who would like to bike to downtown locations. Providing safer, more accessible opportunities for cycling would encourage more individuals to cycle, and would therefore contribute to the health of Calgarians.

Recently, my office hosted a session in Calgary entitled "*Building Communities that Create Health*", which was attended by leaders from various sectors, including municipal governmental staff, planners, architects, transportation engineers, developers, researchers, and public health professionals. One of our objectives for this session was to explore community and building design approaches that could lead to improved health outcomes for residents of Calgary.

I hope Calgary City Council adopts and implements initiatives that will effectively make cycling safer and more accessible.

Yours sincerely,

James Talbot, MD, PhD, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health