



June 13, 2020

Mayor and Councillors

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Sandstone MacEwan Community Association, regarding the Green Line Stage 1. We, with others, have been anticipating the LRT coming to our neighborhoods for over a decade and certainly felt extremely optimistic in 2015 when The Honourable Michelle Rempel Garner announced the Federal Government's commitment to this initiative.

As you know, thousands of hours were spent in public consultations to firm-up this ambitious 46km laying of LRT track from the north end of Calgary to the far south. The initial priority of this project was to ensure construction commenced in the north given the higher than average ridership compared to the south.

In 2017 the communities north of 16th Avenue were informed the project was not going forward as originally agreed. Stage 1 would comprise of the laying of the tracks from the south end of Calgary up to 16th Avenue North only due to increased cost projections with the additional scope of a tunnel under the Bow. To hear this was disheartening, to say the least, especially given the significant need identified through numerous consultations and studies. This left the northern communities feeling cheated and left out once again, after watching projects like the West LRT open in 2012. However the northern communities accepted this set-back, assuming the original commitment would proceed prior to any other large-scale projects.

In the past year, a group of influential Calgary citizens met and formed an ad hoc group regarding the Green Line. After hosting a private meeting in February 2020, this group put forward their recommendation to request the City to "pause" the Green Line Stage 1. The request was based on their opinion that this investment was for a "high risk project" that could amount to an "economic catastrophe" and suggested the City should "take its time to ensure this project is done right".

Considering this LRT expansion has been 'on the table' for nearly a decade, with a significant financial endorsement by the both the Federal and Provincial Governments in 2015, one wonders how much time is sufficient? Are these the citizens whose children and grandchildren would be relying on public transit to get to and from work, school, shopping, university and, hopefully one day, the airport?

I am sure you will agree that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our economy in Calgary and throughout the Province and the whole country. Alberta's unemployment rate is at an all-time high and we often hear that 'it is time to get Albertans back to work'. Both the Provincial and Federal Governments have committed to the continuation of this initiative. In fact, the Federal Government has committed to an over 2-billion-dollar stimulus package for city infrastructure projects to jump start the Canadian economy.

The Honourable Michelle Rempel Garner and Councillor Sean Chu have met with our Board and advised us they are 100% behind the Green Line Stage 1 project continuing. Honorable Minister Josephine Pon has indicated she is also in support of this initiative proceeding.

Aside from Council voting to move the Green Line towards construction, our board is also considerably concerned that the vote will not encompass a commitment to continuing with this line through the north to complete the 46km route. We ask Council to please consider the diversity of the northern communities when it comes time to vote on this project. Newer Canadians may not have the means to drive considerable distances through Calgary, or they may have come from progressive and well-established countries where public transit is the primary source of transportation.

Thank you for your time and please consider this an investment critical to the future generations of Calgarians, who will benefit from this transportation line to get to and from work, school, shopping, university, and, hopefully one day, the airport.

Sandstone MacEwan Community Association (SMCA)

Board of Directors

