



July 5, 2016

Dear Mayor Nenshi and Members of City Council

Re: Sliding Scale Fee Structure

Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) would like to recognize the City of Calgary's leadership as it strives to ensure that all Calgarians can access the right supports, services and resources in our city. We believe that implementing a sliding scale within the Fair Entry program is positive step towards achieving the goals outlined in the Enough for All, Calgary's poverty reduction strategy.

While full implementation of the sliding scale within Calgary's public transit system would create the broadest benefit for Calgarians, we support Administration's recommendation to implement the sliding scale up to 100% of the LICO threshold. We also urge Council to alter the subsidy recommended for those with an income below 50% of LICO to a 95% subsidized rate, rather than the stated 85%. Such action will ensure all Calgarians have ready access to public transit. Lastly, we encourage Administration to continue seeking opportunities to fund the full implementation of the sliding scale, up to 130% of LICO, in the near future.

Research cited in the Enough for All report indicated that in 2009 only 11% of households with the lowest incomes accessed a community service in the previous year. The cost of transportation, among other issues, was identified as an obstacle preventing people from accessing Calgary's extensive support system. The sliding scale offers an innovative approach, which enables Calgarians living well below LICO to access the right supports, services and resources in our city.

Given the anticipated cost of implementing the sliding scale, VCC has actively engaged the provincial government on this issue; mobilizing our community, submitting letters and participating in the government's public transportation consultation process. VCC urged the provincial government to provide funding support for the operation of municipal public transit systems. Our message was clear; the provincial government should share the cost of subsidized low-income transit fares for Calgarians. VCC is delighted that the provincial government will now provide \$4.5 million annually over the next three years towards the operation of Calgary's subsidised low-income transit fares.

Affordable public transit is a critical need in our city and we urge City Council leverage provincial funds towards implementing Administration's recommendations and a 95% subsidy rate for those in our city living on extremely low incomes. We believe all Calgarians should have equitable access to public transit and we commend the City as it attempts to create a fair public transit system for all Calgarians.

Sincerely,

Franco Savoia, Executive Director