



June 21, 2017

Mayor Nenshi and Members of Calgary City Council
The City of Calgary
800 Macleod Trail SE
PO Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, AB
T2P 2M5



Re: Green Line – Support for Green Line Vision & Phasing Strategy, including Underground Alignment in the Downtown & Beltline

Your Worship Mayor Nenshi and Members of Council:

We are writing on behalf of BOMA, NAIOP and BILD in support of The City of Calgary's Vision for the Green Line and staff recommendations respecting same, particularly the inclusion of an underground alignment in the Central Business District and Beltline, as well as a comprehensive future build out of the line in its ultimate north-south configuration on a phased basis as future funding permits.

The real estate and development industry as represented by our three associations is extremely pleased that Calgary City Council supports building the underground alignment along Centre Street and through to the Beltline to Macleod Trail. Weighing short term potential savings by building the line at grade and/or elevated configurations against future costs that will be required to correct problems incurred with replacing these configurations demonstrates leadership and wisdom. We understand that the cost associated with an underground alignment in Centre City has implications for construction of the full build out of the line likely requiring a phased approach. However, any alignment other than underground will negatively affect the Centre City in the following ways:

- Reduced assessed property values for property adjacent the line requiring these taxes to be collected elsewhere within the City's assessment base

- Create physical barriers and divide communities, such as Eau Claire and Chinatown, as well as in the Beltline, therefore negatively impacting the Municipal Development Plan aims to increase mixed-use, multi-unit residential and retail street-oriented uses and viability in the affected areas,
- Negatively impact retail and restaurant/service uses in the effected areas,
- Result in the less than ideal urban landscape and higher vacancy created along a surface level transitway alignment similar to existing 7th Avenue
- Increase the potential for crime in affected areas where visibility/sunlight is reduced (ie: under elevated structures and around/behind associated columns).

The positive impacts anticipated from transit-oriented development along the entire Green Line, as well as increased transit ridership, will be best achieved by maximizing the desirability of the Centre City as a destination during peak commuting times as well as for evening and weekend visitors and tourists. The underground alignment best ensures the perception of a safe environment with high quality urban street level experiences (including adequate daylight/sunlight) adding to retail opportunity, visitor experience and the assessed value of buildings.

Developing a complete vision for the full Green Line (including all stations north of 16th Avenue to 160th Avenue (Keystone) and south from Shepard to Seton to maximize transit-oriented development potential and ridership) represents a solid improvement on the phased planning processes followed for Red and Blue Lines. Knowing the full alignment now allows for smart, timely acquisition of the required rights of way, in turn leading to more efficient eventual building of these portions of the line. Initial funding can be used to achieve Phase 1 of the Green Line objectives (as adopted by Council at its May 15 strategic meeting) and future funding requests to other levels of government can be made when practical and manageable to realise the complete vision, with increased ridership and the relatively lower cost per kilometer of extending the line north and south making those business cases very compelling.

We do note that the Victoria Park portion of the Beltline alignment (Macleod Trail east to Elbow River) is yet to be settled. And while the preferred alignment would have been underground on 12th Avenue SW to the Elbow River (for the reasons noted above), we respect the complexity associated with evaluating the options. That said, any solution to this portion of the alignment (whether or not it is this preferred option or Administration's recommended Option 4) still needs to address all the local stakeholders' views (including The City, the effected Beltline communities, East Village/C.M.L.C., The Stampede, plans for a new arena, Calgary Transit and the area landowners, including Remington Development Corporation. We would be pleased to remain engaged in this process and fully expect sensible conclusions can be drawn.

We would like also to take this opportunity to commend Fabiola Macintyre, Jon Lea and Joachim Mueller and all the Green Line team for conducting a thorough, comprehensive review of this project, including all the available alternatives, and running an extremely effective consultation process for the visioning of the entire project.

In closing, recognizing the comment noted above respecting the Victoria Park portion of the alignment, we fully endorse staff's recommendation respecting the vision for the Green Line, including underground alignment through downtown and the majority of the Beltline, together with the phasing strategy to be employed to ensure completion of this project as quickly as possible as funding is made available. The Green Line vision is an important step in the evolution of the City of Calgary and demonstrates a commitment to forward thinking and attainment of Municipal Development Plan goals. We recommend Council approve same.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your support.

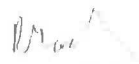
On behalf of BILD Calgary Region, BOMA Calgary and NAIOP Calgary:

BILD Calgary Region



Guy Huntingford, CEO

BOMA Calgary



Richard Morden, Treasurer

NAIOP Calgary



Chris Ollenberger, Chair, Government Affairs