Honourable Irfan Sabir
Minister of Human Services

September 5, 2018

RE: Province Continue to Fund Calgary Sliding Scale for the Low-Income Transit Pass Beyond 2019

Fair Calgary Community Voices (FCCV) wishes to extend our gratitude to the Province of Alberta for funding the Sliding Scale for the Low-Income Transit Pass (LITP) in Calgary. Since the launch of the sliding scale in April 2017 we have seen significant growth in the number of people purchasing the Low-Income Transit Passes. **Prior to sliding scale approximately 17,000 passes were sold each month. This number has increased to over 30,000 passes per month since the introduction of sliding scale. The majority, over 60 per cent, are now being sold to households earning less than 50 per cent of the Low Income Cut Off.** People in this band now pay $5.15 per month compared to $44.00 prior to the sliding scale.

Information from the City of Calgary indicates that since the launch of the Sliding Scale, **22,000 individuals** living in poverty purchased a Low-Income Transit Pass for the very first time.

The City of Calgary undertook a survey of customers in the fall of 2017. This survey showed that the Sliding Scale:

- Increases the ability of people living in poverty to visit family and friends, thereby creating and maintaining strong relationships and decreasing social isolation and loneliness.
- Allows people living in extreme poverty to become more mobile and access areas of our city that they may not have been able to get to in the past.
- Maintains physical health by allowing people to get to medical and professional appointments and go to recreational programs.
- Allows people to access employment, provides more money in people's pockets and enabling them to purchase other necessities such as food, shelter, school supplies etc.

Other important benefits of the Sliding Scale include:

- All members of the family are able to purchase a pass enabling them to travel together.
- A recent study states transit tickets are the most common bylaw fine and an upstream approach is needed to reduce the number of people entering the justice system due to fare evasion fines.
- Creates a more equitable and inclusive city and a community of engaged citizens.
- Helps to alleviate stress and create an improved quality of life for people in poverty.
- Contributes to long term goals of carbon reduction.

We feel The City's recent survey demonstrates that the **sliding scale has greatly improved the quality of life** for people living in poverty in Calgary. FCCV believes that as a result of the Sliding Scale people may eventually be able to move off Alberta Works. Former Calgary City Councillor Richard Pootmans stated that the **sliding scale has unleashed a largely untapped workforce**. We believe that the Sliding Scale is **a great investment** not only financially for the Province and the City but also an investment in the lives of the many people who use the Sliding Scale.

Fair Calgary Community Voices is echoing the City of Calgary's **request that the Province continue their funding of the Sliding Scale** in order to ensure that people living in poverty are able to continue to have an improved quality of life and benefit from the many opportunities our fine City has to offer.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Pacaud and Colleen Huston, on behalf of Fair Calgary Community Voices

On behalf of the following community agencies:

Alberta Seventh Step Society
Alex Food Centre
Calgary Ability Network
Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association
Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre Society
Calgary John Howard Society
Calgary Scope Society
Cerebral Palsy Association in Alberta
Disability Action Hall
HIV Community Link Society
Inn from the Cold
Vantage Enterprises Ltd.
Vibrant Communities Calgary
Women in Need Society
Women's Centre of Calgary

CC: Minister Brian Mason, Minister Shannon Phillips, Minister Sarah Hoffman, Minister David Eggen