



December 16, 2015

Ms. Julie Yepishina-Geller
Communications
Transit Projects – Transportation Infrastructure
The City of Calgary
800 Macleod Trail South
Calgary, AB T2G 2M3

Dear Ms. Yepishina-Geller,

RE: Public Engagement - Best Practices

In my letter to you dated December 14, 2015, I refer to the lack of public consultation by The City of Calgary regarding the SW Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project and the lack of information and inconsistencies contained within the little amount of information that was provided by you, City representatives and Councillor Pincott to residents and other stakeholders affected by this project to date.

In our public engagement research over the past month, we have sourced several best practices from a broad spectrum of sources that illustrate effective and transparent ways to engage the public. We have examined the 'engagement process' within multiple civic organizations and all commence with 'Inform' - also referred to as the 'Open House' component.

Most refer to the public engagement process as a "continuum" and those that teach courses in the engagement process would be shocked to learn that The City of Calgary's 'Engagement Department' has convinced The City's internal staff and stakeholders that they can simply select a level of engagement from the spectrum (ie: 'Listen and Learn') as opposed to going through the complete process.

As you will note in *Attachment 1*, Edmonton City Council is provided with the full comments from public consultations not the edited summaries provided by the project team. In some smaller jurisdictions, Council members participate in the process. As can be seen from the attached, even the International Finance Corporation (IFC) has an engagement framework, which is a continuous spectrum. Moreover, on page 22 of their document they illustrate some components of a "good engagement", which are lacking in most of The City of Calgary's initiatives.

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ready to engage! is a group of concerned citizens who have joined together to give SW Calgarians and other stakeholders a voice on The City's *SW Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)* project



In the Cranfield School of Management paper, one finds in the forward, "Stakeholder engagement is crucially different to stakeholder management: stakeholder engagement implies a willingness to listen; to discuss issues of interest to stakeholders of the organisation; and, critically, the organisation has to be prepared to consider changing what it aims to achieve and how it operates, as a result of stakeholder engagement."

As was noted at the Lakeview Community Association meeting that you and representatives of *ready to engage!* attended on December 7, 2015, you stated that you can select one of the remaining four components from the *engage!* Spectrum and believe that The City has complied with the 2003 policy that was amended in 2013. You indicated that some of the project components are at the 'Listen and Learn' level while others are at the 'Consult' level. It is unclear how any part of the project could have progressed along the *engage!* Spectrum when there has only been one set of information sessions (October 27 & 29, 2015) in over five (5) years since the project was passed by City Council.

Moreover, it is shocking to learn that you and your colleagues on the SW Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project team believe that "some items are not up for discussion". I refer you to engagement best practices which can be seen on figure 14 of the Cranfield report which include: be flexible, be open, be realistic, be prepared for change.

It is our view that these basic components of stakeholder engagement are clearly missing from The City of Calgary process and there is no willingness to change which are demonstrated by your statement that "some items are not up for discussion". In Calgary, it appears that we have stakeholder management not stakeholder engagement.

I would like to reiterate that this fundamental misuse of the *engage!* Policy also transcends itself to The City of Calgary's Triple Bottom Line assessment, which all projects have to undertake. In the little information that we were able to gather because information has been so restricted by The City with this project, there is no mention of the Triple Bottom Line and efforts to adhere to that City policy.

We also looked at best practices related to a similar type of project. In our research, we came across this article: <http://ewater.org.au/archive/croch/archive/pubs/pdfs/technical200511.pdf>. On page 25 (labelled as page 17) you will find "identify, describe and screen preliminary options."

As one can see, this step is a critical point in the assessment process as it is the stage with the greatest potential to generate benefits. Consequently, techniques to generate potential options include:

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- brainstorming;
- critical analysis of key components of the issues being managed;
- collaboration amongst diverse groups (e.g. ecologists, town planners, landscape architects, civil engineers, academics, local residents, etc.);
- lateral thinking;
- pragmatic design (i.e. the use of existing available knowledge and methods without innovation).

Furthermore, reference to the inclusion of local residents also appears on page 35 (labelled as 27) of *Attachment 1* as local residents have the expertise regarding their own communities. For example, with respect to the SW Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), residents along 14th Street know of the traffic bottlenecks, they know of the daily accidents on the already constrained causeway, they have observed the low bus ridership and they have other options for consideration that are more practical and lower cost, among other factors.

Although meaningful public consultation has been absent in this project to date, we are hopeful that some of the information in public engagement best practices that we have provided to you with this letter will be followed by you, City representatives and Councillor Pincott as we move forward in the engagement process on the SW Transitway and BRT project.

We also hope that these best practices will be considered by City Administration and eventually adapted and implemented in future City projects so that a similar situation with lack of meaningful public engagement as has occurred with the SW Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project to-date is not repeated.

Sincerely,

Maurice Tims

Chair, *ready to engage!*

Attachment: Attachment 1

C: Councillor Brian Pincott, Ward 11, The City of Calgary
Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart, Ward 13. The City of Calgary
Mr. Jeff Fielding, City Manager & CAO
Mr. Malcolm (Mac) Logan, General Manager, Transportation Infrastructure

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