



December 28, 2015

The Honourable Brian Mason
Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation
The Province of Alberta
Alberta Legislature
320 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Mason,

RE: The City of Calgary - Southwest (SW) Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project

I am writing to you on behalf of **ready to engage!**, a group of Southwest Calgary residents who have joined together over serious concerns regarding The City of Calgary's SW Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project (the "Project"). Our group includes residents and other stakeholders from over 14 SW Calgary communities who will be significantly impacted by this project.

The conceptual design for the Project was passed by Calgary City Council five (5) years ago (February 2011), before the approval of several major Provincially funded capital expenditure programs to improve mobility in and around the city of Calgary, e.g. the Southwest (SW) Ringroad, 4-car Light Rail Transit (LRT) trains and the Green Line. The decision to proceed was not only based on 2010 dollars and a conceptual design cost estimate of +/-50%, but it was based on an incomplete and inaccurate functional planning study, flawed communications and a non-compliant public engagement process, which are all part of the public record.

As a result of your September 4th 2015 announcement of \$187 million in public transit funding (GreenTRIP) for The City of Calgary and outlying communities, the Project was re-launched in October 2015. However, none of the aforementioned deficiencies have been corrected and the capital requirements for this project are still based on an out-of-date and flawed functional study. Further, the approval process does not comply with The City's 2013 approved requirement to complete pre-design studies that refine information provided in the functional plan and create a +/- 30 % design plan (see page 229 of The City of Calgary's RouteAhead Strategic Plan).

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Moreover, according to The City's RouteAhead 30-year transportation plan, the total estimated capital cost/conceptual design estimate for the SW Transitway and BRT projects referenced in your September press release is \$224 million (Note: this conceptual design capital estimate does not include anything related to the LRT upgrades and new buses mentioned in the press release). As part of Action Plan 2015-2018 (The City's four-year budget), under program 566 (RouteAhead Rapid Transit Corridors), The City has apparently approved \$78 million for this \$224 million mobility project. This represents 34.8% of the total design cost but this cost estimate is only based on "conceptual design estimates" that have a high degree of uncertainty. The private sector would not approve major capital projects based on highly inaccurate conceptual design numbers, they would insist on more accurate front-end engineering and design (FEED) estimates that lower the risk of cost overruns and so should the City and Province. Minister Mason, The City does not have this capital, and property taxes only cover 50% of Calgary Transit's operating budget. Consequently, the capital for program 566 has to be secured from the Province's Municipal Sustainability Fund and other sources, such as GreenTRIP. Accordingly, this issue is not just a Municipal issue it is a Provincial issue.

More importantly, we now live in a capital constrained environment where oil & gas tax and royalty revenue is significantly curtailed. Consequently, on December 21, 2015 Alberta's Minister of Finance advised the Canadian Press that low oil prices may force him to hit the brakes on millions of dollars in initiatives promised by the NDP Government, such as child-care benefits, school fee reductions, student hiring and environmental retrofits.

Minister Mason, if this "traditional carbon intensive" transportation project (non-green) proceeds based on a flawed and out of date conceptual design information, where capital overruns can be significant, what will you say to the single mother who did not receive the additional child care benefits and the reduction in school fees?

Minister Mason, with your support, we believe that there is a better way ahead. Because this Project requires funding from the Province, we believe that you can mandate that The City of Calgary explore alternative, more cost effective and greener options that can achieve the same objective. For example, The City's approved 30-year strategic transportation plan demonstrates on page 97 of the RouteAhead document that other low cost options exist for BRT infrastructure that can achieve the same objective, e.g. in-street with Transit priority (\$0.5 - \$2 million per kilometre) and BRT in HOV (\$1 to \$5 million per kilometre), which are far lower than the \$10 - \$20 million per kilometre for BRT's in a separate right-of-way. Given that these options were never shown to the public at the so-called engagement sessions, given that no environmental impact

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assessment has been undertaken, and given that a cost benefit analysis that includes a full life cycle green house gas assessment has not been developed for any option, we believe that the “funder”, the Province, can insist that this work be undertaken before additional capital is granted to this Project by the Province.

Minister Mason, we could write pages and pages about breaches in policy, lack of proper public engagement, repeated requests for project data, delays in receipt of information, inaccurate and misleading information, potentially serious health and safety issues related to relocating high pressure gas lines and an oil line within the 14 Street SW corridor, insufficient ridership to warrant construction of the Southwest Transitway, failure of the Project to take into account the effect of new technologies (e.g., fuel efficient vehicles, ride sharing, etc.), a design that is not compliant with the approved RouteAhead 30-year transportation strategy, recent transportation improvements (e.g., 4-car LRT trains on a green-energy transit system and the provincially-funded Southwest Ringroad) etc.

Due to the unusually fast timeline with construction expected to commence in the Spring of 2016, and the several significant impacts that it will have on all Calgarians, we feel that it is very important to urgently meet with you to discuss this issue face to face. I can be reached by email at info@readytoengage.ca to schedule a mutually agreeable date and time. I wish you and your family an enjoyable holiday season and prosperous 2016.

Sincerely,

Maurice Tims

Chair, *ready to engage!*

C: The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, MP Calgary Heritage
The Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta
The Honourable Joe Ceci, President of Treasury Board, Minister of Finance
The Honourable Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks
The Honourable Danielle Larivee, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister of Service Alberta
The Honourable Kathleen Ganley, Minister of Justice, Solicitor-General
Ms. Anam Kazim, MLA Calgary Glenmore
Mr. Dave Rodney, MLA Calgary Lougheed
Mr. Brian Jean, Leader of the Official Opposition
Mr. Rick McIver, MLA Calgary Hays
Calgary City Council
Mr. Jeff Fielding, City Manager & CAO, The City of Calgary

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