



## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Media Release

#### ***ready to engage!* asking the Mayor for an apology**

**February 25, 2016, Calgary, AB** – We are ***ready to engage!*** a group of volunteers whose mandate is to give a voice to residents and other stakeholders who have had none to date. We are in support of well planned, efficient and cost-effective public transit improvements for all Calgarians. This group was formed in November 2015 following the October 2015 information sessions hosted by the City.

The Mayor's press conference yesterday demonstrates that our municipal government is not prepared to listen to citizens and is trying to stifle them by using accusations of bullying as a diversion tactic to get away from the real issue of fast-tracking a poorly planned and dangerous project that the majority of local residents are opposed to.

"Bully is the man who has the pulpit and uses it to smear citizens without any facts," says Rick Donkers, Spokesperson for ***ready to engage!***, "There was corporate security and media present at Tuesday's information session. If there was an issue, why weren't the police called, why wasn't a complaint filed and why were there no media reports that evening?"

***ready to engage!*** is asking the Mayor for an apology.

"Leadership starts at the top," says Donkers, "The lack of respect from the Mayor's Office has permeated down into the Administration and is reflected in the many controversial projects that we see in Calgary today."

The recent response given by the Mayor and top City officials in response to legitimate safety citizens concerns raised by SW Calgarians regarding a high pressure natural gas pipeline highlights this and is appalling and concerning. According to a decision by the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC), the possibility of interface with the high pressure natural gas pipeline that runs under 14 Street SW could result in injury, death and property damage. When confronted with these legitimate concerns, the Mayor, some Councillors and other City officials response was to publicly mock citizens' concerns in social media (see attached).

On Tuesday, February 23rd, 2016, The City of Calgary organized an information session regarding the SW Transitway and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project at Woodcreek Community Centre for the residents of SW Calgary. The City of Calgary invited citizens by dropping thousands of brochures at the homes of residents of Wards 11 and 13. Approximately 500 residents attended to get answers on the project but few answers were available. The leadership of City of Calgary acted irresponsibly by putting City staff in a position where they were being asked legitimate questions by citizens but had few answers to provide.

The Mayor has suggested that there are investigations ongoing but did not elaborate on who is investigating, what they are investigating and who they are investigating. We believe that the citizens of Calgary who attended this event have the right to know.

Today, everyone is a potential reporter with audio and video capabilities on their cell phones. The media themselves were present during the entire information session on Tuesday evening. With hundreds of citizens in attendance and most media outlets represented, no video or audio has surfaced and no media reports have suggested that what the Mayor said actually occurred.

On January 25, 2016, the Mayor announced in Council Chamber that this project is a "done deal". There are significant problems with the project including lack of public consultation before it was passed, it remained dormant for 5 years before it was re-launched with no known public consultation during that time, no cost/benefit analysis completed, no environmental impact completed, was passed before the SW Ring Road was approved, poses significant safety issues for Calgarians and will result in massive cost overruns. Why are these officials so keen to stifle honest, open, public debate? We believe the answer is that they cannot answer our legitimate questions.

"It is citizens' duty to ask for and receive answers from government about their decisions especially when the decision-making process is flawed as is the case with this project," says Donkers, "Citizens continue to be frustrated because they are asked for opinions but know full well that their opinions are ignored because the decision has been dictated by the Mayor and the City."

Councillor Pincott had his own corporate security officer on site, had access to the media and stayed until the very end of the event which concluded at 9:00pm. He raised no issues at that time with regard to any alleged abuse from individuals of *ready to engage!* who were in attendance. Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart was also in attendance and shared positive comments about the event on social and mainstream media (see attached).

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**For more information please contact:**

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Tweet



**City of Calgary** @cityofcalgary

11 Jan

How do you get around SW Calgary? The new SW Transitway will help make transit more accessible than ever. Visit [bit.ly/SWtransitway](http://bit.ly/SWtransitway)



**Josh White** @joshyyc

11 Jan

@cityofcalgary @YYC4TranspChoic if it goes over a gas line, I'm out!!  
@YYCTRGM



**Brian Pincott** @bpincott

14 Jan

@joshyyc @cityofcalgary @YYC4TranspChoic @YYCTRGM Kaboom. There was supposed to be a big kaboom.



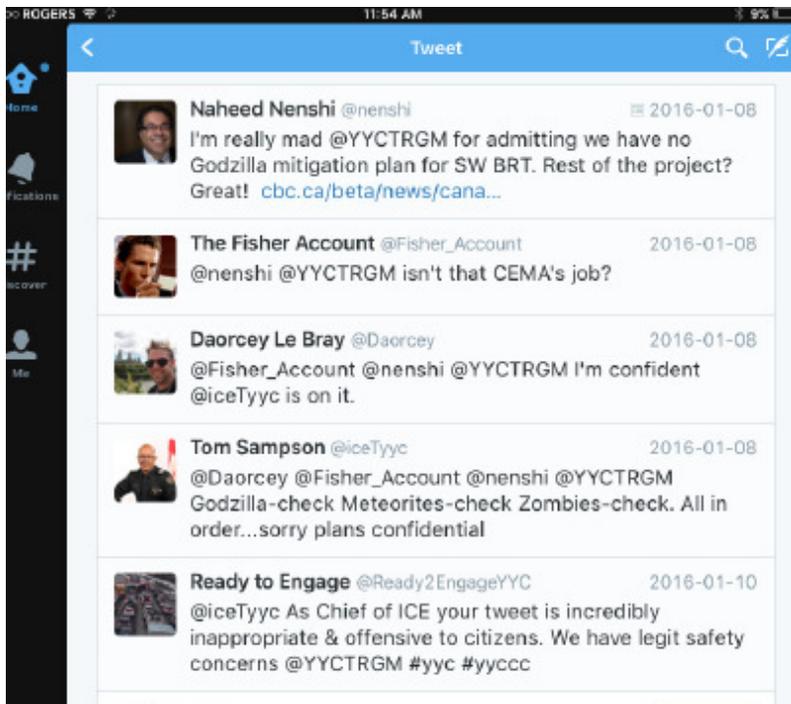
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@bpincott @joshyyc @cityofcalgary @YYCTRGM  
[pic.twitter.com/unPooTcz2V](http://pic.twitter.com/unPooTcz2V)

7:10am - 14 Jan 16







*"I'm going to take back the people of Woodbines' concerns about why this is going so deep into 24th Street and it's not needed. There's no ridership here."*

*- Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart (CTV News, February 23, 2016)*