



LRT on the Green Foundation
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An Open Letter to Members of the Canadian Parliament

The Green Line LRT is one of the largest and most ambitious transportation infrastructure projects in the history of the City of Calgary. The scope of the project as well as some of the key project facts has been included for your referral in Attachment #1 to this letter. The Green Line will also be instrumental in focussing and shaping redevelopment and intensification opportunities within Calgary.

While the City of Calgary has been successful at leveraging different funding mechanisms to incrementally expand its LRT network, the Green Line suffers from large logistical hurdles that prevent this approach. In the north, this hurdle is the technical challenge presented by the Bow River escarpment and in the south; this hurdle is the distance the LRT must travel before reaching areas of substantial population. As a result, a large amount of funding is required to allow the initial phases of the Green Line LRT to reach a scale that will have a positive impact for Calgarians.

Since the Foundation's inception, we have worked diligently to engage with the communities that represent the over 270,000 Calgarians who live and work along the future Green Line Corridor. As the Green Line LRT will eventually serve the two largest areas of future green-field growth in Calgary we will see this number continue to increase. Throughout our community engagement, we have found a strong demand for this project as it is seen as a solution to some of the largest transportation and mobility challenges facing Calgarians. We have also seen a willingness of people to embrace growth and densification in their communities provided the Green Line LRT can act as a well-designed and timely agent of change. We have included the testimonials of some of these communities in Attachment #3 of this letter.

Thanks to programs such as the Build Canada Fund, the City of Calgary has been able to make some progress in its public transit capital spending. However even with this assistance, we should note that according to the City's latest Route Ahead Transit Plan update, of the \$36 billion invested in major transit projects across Canada between 2010 and 2014, only \$3.0 Billion was spent in Alberta. This accounted for an average total investment per capita of \$325 in contrast to \$2,007 in Ontario.



In 2013, Calgary City Council committed \$52 million of annual tax room vacated by the Province to the Green Line project for a ten year period to help jump start work. We are in the midst of an advocacy campaign to convince the City of Calgary to extend this Green Line funding commitment to a thirty year time frame. If successful, this will mean the City of Calgary will have the means to finance one third of the Green Line's total capital cost over a thirty year period.

The adoption of the "one third capital cost" funding model is something that we have seen in the Vancouver region as well as other areas of the Country and one that we feel is critical to the success of the Green Line LRT. While the City of Calgary has a unique opportunity to fulfil its one third funding requirement, we recognize that budgeting pressures and the current state of economic affairs place added pressures on Federal finances. With this in mind, the LRT on the Green Foundation encourages the Federal Government to adopt one of the following motions:

- ***The commitment of \$520 million to the Green Line LRT by the year 2020 to allow for construction to proceed according to Option 2 in Attachment #2 to this letter. In addition, to commit to evaluate the use of various funding mechanisms over the next thirty years to match the commitment being asked of the City of Calgary. This breakdown was chosen as the initial amount represents one third of the total project funding commitment being asked of each level of Government.***
- ***The commitment of \$990 million to the Green Line LRT by the year 2022 to allow for construction to proceed according to Option 3 in Attachment #2 to this letter. In addition, to commit to evaluate the use of various funding mechanisms over the next thirty years to match the commitment being asked of the City of Calgary. This breakdown was chosen as the initial amount equals the funding committed to the Bloor-Danforth Subway and Sheppard LRT capital projects in the Toronto region by the Federal Government in the year 2013.***

We would like to note that due to the fact that the Green Line LRT remains at the functional planning stage with the City of Calgary, it will be several years before any money committed to the project by higher levels of Government will be required to pay for capital costs. We feel that this allows an additional level of flexibility to manage budgetary constraints as the initial funding commitment can take advantage of a multi-year phasing program.

We encourage MPs to work with each other and make a commitment towards the completion of the Green Line. The adoption of either of our proposed motions will lead to real change in Calgary's growth patterns, mobility and quality of life. We hope the Federal Government takes the leadership role needed for this project's success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Binks".

Jeff Binks

President – LRT on the Green Foundation

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