

November 22, 2019

City of Calgary
Office of the Councillors
PO Box 2100, Station M
Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2M5

Via email

Re: 2019 Budget Review

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Bike Calgary wishes to communicate our support for protecting budgeted allocations for active transport and public transit in Calgary.

Calgarians are facing numerous constraints on transportation options within Calgary, while the need to be mobile in order to find work and services where they are available in the city remains of the utmost importance. Transportation is one of the larger portions of most Calgarians' budgets; cost-effective transportation options can have a significant impact on household expenses.

Impacts to Current Mobility Choices

At this time, Calgarians are facing constraints in mobility choices - Car2Go has pulled out of Calgary, automobile insurers have indicated they will be raising insurance rates, Calgary Transit service frequency is being reduced based on initial budget cuts, and the Green Line is being delayed. At any time, reducing mobility options for citizens can have adverse impacts on job opportunities, access to services, and standards of living; when combined with other external factors, this reduction of mobility choices can be devastating.

Need for Mobility Options

With the recent provincial budget cuts and pending municipal budget cuts, it is becoming apparent that many citizens of Calgary will be out of work, and will need to go to where the work is, regardless of distance or ease of travel to the job. Added to this are further impacts including reduction of services offered by the City or the Province, resulting in more people having to travel to obtain those services where they are still offered, likely with less income to do so. Additionally, active transportation options have been shown to draw in businesses considering where to locate their offices. This was seen explicitly in Amazon's considerations for where to build its second headquarters. Creating a "liveable" city with reliable recreation and active transportation choices will retain and attract more businesses and create more jobs.

Active Transport & Public Transit

Given the increasing need for affordable transportation options, Bike Calgary encourages the City of Calgary to look to its own data around Calgarians' transportation choices. Over the last several years, the City of Calgary has invested in reliable infrastructure for cycling, walking, and other modes of active transport, as well as supporting consistent and convenient public transit. As reported in the "Calgary Transportation Plan 2018 Monitoring Progress Report", active transportation mode share (walking and cycling) has increased from 12.5% in 2012 to 17.7% in 2017, transit mode share has remained steady with 8.5% in 2012 and 8.3% in 2017, and motor vehicle mode share dropped from 79% in 2012 to 73.9% in 2017. The relatively small investments in active transportation choices (especially compared to road infrastructure for motor vehicles) have resulted in more Calgarians making transportation choices outside of a personal motor vehicle. Further evidence of this response to transportation options can be seen in the great interest and use of the bike share and scooter share programs recently introduced in Calgary. Beyond reducing costs to Calgarians, a shift toward active transportation also has benefits in terms of road congestion, road maintenance costs, public health outcomes, and sense of community.

Given the excellent infrastructure for driving already developed in Calgary (<https://www.mister-auto.co.uk/driving-cities-index/>), and the evidence of increased utilization of active transportation choices when cycling infrastructure is built, it is clear that investments in active transport infrastructure and reliable public transit are a cost-effective way to provide mobility options to Calgarians, while relatively small reductions to spend on road infrastructure can satisfy the need to balance the budget.

Given the tremendous benefits arising from the relatively small investments in active transport infrastructure and public transit, Bike Calgary strongly encourages the City of Calgary to avoid cutting any funding for these modes of transportation. We understand that the City must cut some areas to balance its budget. Please consider the cost-effectiveness of all of the City's spend and protect those portions of the budget that bring broad benefits at low costs.

Yours sincerely,



Gary Millard
President, Bike Calgary