



Dated May 4, 2023

Bruce Graham
Executive Director
Friends of CABR

Re: Passenger Rail in the Rivers District

Dear Bruce,

As the visionary steward of the major redevelopment initiative currently underway in downtown Calgary's east end, and with a keen interest in the broader revitalization of our city's downtown core, Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) strongly supports the creation of a new passenger rail that connects Calgary International Airport, downtown Calgary and Banff.

Since 2007, CMLC has been pursuing the bold vision at the heart of our founding mandate: to catalyze Calgary's urban renewal by redeveloping and revitalizing the Rivers District—approximately 500 acres on downtown Calgary's east end.

We started with East Village, where our investment of \$396 million into infrastructure improvements has so far attracted nearly \$3 billion in private investment and forged a wholesale transformation of Calgary's oldest neighbourhood into one of the city's most popular destinations.

In 2016, with momentum well underway in the East Village, CMLC expanded its city-building focus to include neighbouring east Victoria Park. Guided by the Rivers District Master Plan (RDMP), we are now working with our partners at The City of Calgary and Calgary Stampede to transform east Victoria Park into The C+E—Calgary's Culture + Entertainment District.

To kick-start implementation of the RDMP, CMLC is currently leading \$1.5 billion in city-building



initiatives in The C+E, including:

- BMO Centre expansion (\$500 million), which will more than double the facility's rentable space and elevate Calgary's premier convention centre to top-tier status in the international meetings and convention market (opening 2024)
- 17 Avenue extension & Stampede Station LRT rebuild (\$83 million), which is forging a vital new vehicle and pedestrian connection between downtown's west and east sides while giving Calgarians a much more accessible LRT station (opening 2023)
- Stampede Trail (\$20 million)—a destination retail corridor and festival plaza along four city blocks (opening 2024)
- Arts Commons Transformation (\$480 million)—a dramatic expansion and modernization of Western Canada's largest performing arts centre (breaking ground 2024)

Additionally, Calgary's new Green Line LRT—the largest infrastructure investment in our city's history, with \$5.5 billion in commitments from all three orders of government—will pass through The C+E, with a new stop near the recently announced \$1.2 billion event centre that will replace the aging Saddledome.

With a stop here in the Rivers District, the rail service will connect passengers to innumerable activities and attractions, new and old, here in downtown's east end:

- The C+E's BMO Centre, Saddledome/future event centre and Stampede Park (with its annual 10-day festival—a huge international draw)
- East Village's National Music Centre, Central Library, Music Mile, Fort Calgary and St. Patrick's Island—a revitalized 31-acre recreational playground embraced by the Bow River
- Arts Common and its adjacent gathering and festival spaces—Olympic Plaza and Stephen Avenue
- Two hotels in East Village, and a new one coming soon near the BMO Centre
- The vast variety of events and festivals that CMLC initiates and facilitates—more than 650 last year alone
- Short- and long-term parking for passengers at the new 9th Avenue Parkade.



The stop would be a stone's throw from several LRT stations including City Hall—the nexus of Calgary's CTrain network.

In the collective effort to revitalize and reanimate downtown Calgary post-pandemic, a passenger rail link between YYC, downtown and Banff would bring tremendous benefits. By making downtown Calgary more easily accessible (with the fastest airport-to-downtown service in North America!), it will:

- Bring more participants to downtown events and activations
- Double spending in Calgary by Banff visitors, adding \$1.3 billion+ to tourism spending
- Foster attraction and retention of talent by downtown businesses
- Help sustain and enlarge downtown's post-secondary presence.

Expected to create nearly 10,000 job-years of employment during construction, this new rail line will be a huge economic boon not just for Calgary but for the entire province. When operational, it will sustain 22,500 jobs, add \$6.4 billion of gross value to Alberta's economy and inject more than \$2.5 billion into Canada's GDP, the vast majority in Alberta.

For so many reasons, a new passenger rail line will be a tremendous asset for locals and visitors alike—one that reinforces Calgary's position as an immensely livable city and world-class destination.

Sincerely,

Kate Thompson

Kate Thompson, Architect, AAA, MRAIC

President and CEO, CMLC