



Better Idea #4:

Calgarians will have convenient, quick access to their airport.

Naheed Nenshi is the only candidate with a concrete plan to get the tunnel built as well as to ensure that the Calgary Airport meets the needs of Calgarians now and in the future. That's how this better idea will lead to a better Calgary.

The problem:

Twelve million passengers use the Calgary International Airport per year, and 18,000 employees work there every day. Transit service is terrible for such a major activity hub, and the impending closure of Barlow Trail will significantly increase the commute for the majority of employees, who live in East Calgary – perhaps an additional 60,000 km or 1000 person-hours per day wasted.

Calgary City Council, in a complete failure of governance, has dropped the ball on the Airport Trail Tunnel. Despite affirming again and again that this tunnel is an important part of Calgary's transportation network, they failed to adequately fund it or make it a priority for other levels of government. Now we are in a situation where we don't have the money earmarked, but the tunnel must be built now, or we face a tripling or quadrupling of the price. Further, the Calgary Airport Authority management has been ambivalent at best about this, implying that access for their employees and travelers is not a high priority and calling into question their commitment to citizens.

What Naheed brings to this issue:

Naheed has been working on bringing the Airport Trail Tunnel to the forefront for several years. He exposed the mismanagement of Council on this file in a number of columns in the Calgary Herald, volunteered with the Airport Trail Access Committee, and made the issue of the tunnel a major part of his response to Plan-It, helping get the tunnel back into the Calgary Transportation Plan after bureaucrats removed it. Naheed is also an expert in the field of nonprofit governance and has seen firsthand how the governance structure of the Calgary Airport Authority has been failing Calgarians.



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What Naheed would do:

It's clear that the Airport Trail tunnel must be built, and that Council must now face the consequences of its previous dithering and procrastination. However, we must also use this time as an opportunity to get ahead of the issue and make the changes needed for Calgarians to feel confident that their airport serves them.

1. Build the Airport Trail tunnel now, concurrent with the building of the runway.

- a. Borrow the money now, in the realm of an additional \$250 million (part of the consequence of City Hall dithering is that no one has a real cost estimate). It appears that the City has the debt capacity currently, and our discussions with provincial officials have suggested that they are willing to approve this funding.
- b. Explore options for paying back the loan, including partnerships with the federal and provincial governments, as well as with the Calgary Airport Authority. Both senior levels of government have indicated that they need a signal that the City takes this tunnel seriously, and moving forward would certainly provide that assurance. (Interest rates are still low, and a 10-year loan through the Alberta Capital Finance Authority would cost about \$50 million in interest, so there is an incentive to paying back early where possible).
- c. Negotiate to delay the closure of Barlow Trail from April 2011 to summer 2011, when Metis Trail is complete. Although the Airport Authority has said it is not willing to negotiate, the City has leverage that it has not yet chosen to use.

2. Immediately improve transit service to the airport.

- a. Implement two Bus Rapid Transit lines, similar to those in Montreal and Toronto – one from downtown using Deerfoot Trail and one from the McKnight-Westwinds station serving those traveling from east Calgary. This can be done quickly and cheaply, with no retrofitting of stations, for a pilot period of one year, after which they will be re-evaluated.
- b. Implement a BRT through the new tunnel once opened, with provision for a future LRT.

3. Improve the relationship between the Airport Authority Management and the people of Calgary.

YYC is one of the only airport authorities in the country that has a Board that is not made up of a majority of government appointees, representing citizens. We also, perhaps not coincidentally, have amongst the highest airport improvement fees in Canada, and amongst the highest business and ancillary fees in North America.

- a. Work with the existing Board to help bring the views of stakeholders and citizens to their deliberations, perhaps through the use of Stakeholder Advisory Groups, or through the appointment of new board members representing user groups.
- b. If this does not prove successful, petition to change the make-up of the Board to include more representatives of democratically-elected governments, as well as employees and other stakeholder groups.

Learn more about Naheed Nenshi at www.nenshi.ca. Contact the Nenshi for Mayor Campaign at info@nenshi.ca