



Calgary

Jyoti Gondek, Mayor

March 15, 2022

Chair Shawn Cornett
Calgary Police Commission
615 Macleod Trail SE
Calgary AB T2G 2M1

Dear Chair Cornett,

Thank you for your service on the Calgary Police Commission, and for your leadership during some challenging times in our city. I am sending you this correspondence on behalf of Calgary City Council in an effort to: 1) **confirm** roles and responsibilities **as we navigate the Beltline protests**, 2) advocate on behalf of our constituents, and 3) request regular updates from the Commission to Council regarding ongoing protest activity in the Beltline.

To begin, Council is sending this letter at the urging of Beltline residents and businesses to provide you with the perspectives of the Calgarians we represent as elected officials. We implore you to consider the damaging impacts to Calgarians who have been exposed to persistent protest activity over a prolonged period of time. While we do not have the authority to direct either the Calgary Police Commission or Calgary Police Service, we have a responsibility to provide you with information that facilitates your oversight role as a Commission.

Residents who live in the Beltline have been subjected to disruption of their lives by a sustained, mobile protest that moves through their neighbourhood every Saturday afternoon. **Council Members'** offices have received hundreds of letters and submissions from Calgarians as these protests have escalated in recent weeks. The level of noise from protestors' vehicle horns and chanting is negatively impacting quality of life. Harassment from protestors has left individuals and families shaken in their own neighbourhood. Businesses are reporting revenues are down between fifteen to twenty per cent. Patrons are fleeing restaurants by 1:00 pm or avoiding the area altogether for fear of being trapped inside as the protest overtakes local parks and entertainment areas. The mental health and wellbeing of Calgarians in the Beltline is regularly being destroyed.

As Calgary City Council, we must speak up for our citizens and ensure that the oversight function of Calgary Police Commission is properly informed by citizens' lived experiences. This means sharing impact statements which include the following sentiments:

- We are trapped inside our own homes and neighbourhood, with an impending sense that something worse will come each week.

- Our children are exposed to people screaming at them to remove their masks, and it results in us staying home instead of being active in our own community.
- I have changed my Saturday routine in the past year to ensure I do not have to leave my home. My ability to enjoy my community has been stripped of me.

Further to impact statements from those regularly affected by the protests, we have now received more public messages regarding an escalated situation on Saturday, March 12, 2022 which presents further challenges to the narrative of safety for Calgarians. We've received correspondence from people who are confused and dismayed about what they experienced and witnessed at the protest. If we are to regain public confidence, we must be better aligned in our **shared** mandate for public safety.

It is clear that an organized and sustained protest in the Beltline cannot continue. In our capacity as a local government, we provide safe options for people to stage protests. As with other events, the City of Calgary is able to provide information to protest organizers so they can obtain the appropriate permissions to demonstrate and have their position heard in designated places. We can also provide enforcement efforts to curb illegal activity, but this must be done in concert with the Calgary Police Service to ensure our bylaw and peace officers are supported.

By offering this type of cooperation, Calgary City Council further acknowledges that we must work in collaboration with Calgary Police Commission and Calgary Police Service in the interest of prioritizing public safety while allowing for peaceful protest. As active partners in this process, we are respectfully requesting that Calgary Police Commission structure a process or schedule that allows for updates and engagement between our two organizations. As a starting point, we are seeking an update opportunity prior to March 19, 2022.

As we tread together through the uncertain nature of these regularly scheduled protests, we need to be united in our understanding of the situation and our communication with Calgarians. To that end, Council is seeking Commission's assistance in briefing Council on the steps being taken by Calgary Police Service taken to ensure the physical and psychological safety of Calgarians in response to the ongoing protests in the Beltline.

I am grateful for the briefings we have had to date, and appreciate your consideration of Council's request to further formalize the process of relationship-building and information sharing so we can better **collaborate** to serve our citizens.

Regards,



Jyoti Gondek
Mayor of Calgary