

## CALGARIANS FOR TRANSPORTATION CHOICE

A coalition of NGOs dedicated to healthy, active, vibrant, safe, & sustainable YYC communities that enable walking, wheeling, cycling, transit, carpooling, & carsharing.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Traffic Safety, Walkable Communities, Bike Lanes an Election Issue for Many** *New Coalition of Public Interest Groups Quizzes Election Candidates*

**October 16, 2013**

All Calgarians value the ability to safely travel within their communities and to and from work or school. An increasing number of Calgarians would prefer to carry out at least some of these trips by transportation modes other than the private automobile: on foot, by public transit, via car pooling or carsharing, and by bicycle. Improving the transportation options open to Calgarians and the safety and convenience of those who choose alternative modes of transportation is a concern for many --- and in a city mainly designed for travel by car, the lack of options is increasingly an issue of safety and public health. [Calgarians for Transportation Choice](#) is a newly formed coalition of local public interest groups dedicated to achieve the vision of Calgary as a place where kids and adults alike feel comfortable walking, cycling, or taking the bus to school or work.

The first project of Calgarians for Transportation Choice is collecting the responses of candidates for mayor, city council, and school board trustees in the October 21 election to a survey on alternative transportation policy and traffic safety. "Traffic safety and the ability for kids to walk or bike to school is high on Calgarians' minds. Active and sustainable transportation is a topic that is very much on the radar this election, and it's important that we know where the candidates stand on this issue," says Kimberley Nelson, president of Bike Calgary, one of the member organizations of Calgarians for Transportation Choice.

The reason that so many groups are passionate about healthy, active, vibrant, safe, and sustainable Calgary communities is that safe streets affect all Calgarians. Everyone - from parents pushing strollers, to anyone requiring a walker or wheelchair, and everyone in-between - should be safely accommodated on our streets. "It's not just about bike lanes. It's about place-making, people-friendliness, vibrant streets, and safe, healthy neighbourhoods," says Jennifer Black, Calgary CarShare board member and organizer of Calgarians for Transportation Choice.

Gerald Wheatley of Open Streets Calgary feels that initiatives like CTC are much needed: "the future of Calgary, both for our shared tax burden as well as our ecological sustainability, relies on rapidly developing public and low impact transportation".

Early responses to the survey have been promising. Greg Hart of Safer Calgary says "being a politician at the municipal level means having the ability to make a profound impact on the quality of the lives of your constituents. Getting around is one of the central concerns of people living in cities and based on the early responses to the CTC survey, recognition and support for active transportation options seems to be cutting across all political lines with only the

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occasional exception. This is an encouraging trend that bodes well for our city's vibrant, safe and healthy future. We need to keep this thinking at the front of the agenda and CTC is helping to make that happen”.

“Corporations also see the value of a city with well developed commuter options. They are more likely to locate their offices where there is good public transportation, safe and complete infrastructure for walking and cycling and good connections between modes. Likewise, employees rank workplaces higher when they offer convenient choices” says Kathryn Winkler, coordinator of the National Commuter Challenge program since 1999. “Active transportation offers personal, social, environmental and economic benefits for both individuals, corporations and government”.

The next Council will oversee the implementation of a number of City initiatives related to transportation and planning communities for walkability and safety, such as PlanIt, RouteAhead, and the Comprehensive Cycling Strategy.

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