

January 19, 2026

Dear City Council,

Re: Lack of Transparency by City Administration Destroyed our Homes

Bureaucrats destroyed our homes by not being transparent with decision makers. They went through the motions of an expropriation, based on a claimed Green Line need. There was a public inquiry and a Council vote. However, the fact that the Green Line was billions over budget – *such that new Council, provincial and federal approvals were all required before anyone could know if our homes would be needed* – was not disclosed, undermining the public inquiry and Council vote.

Having no authority to take homes to advance Harvard’s project, Administration claimed the Green Line as the sole basis for taking our homes, then kept the magnitude of cost overruns a secret until the month after forcing us out (*see attached timeline*). Administration now calls our expropriation “proactive”, because there never was a public need to take our homes.



By avoiding transparency, Administration destroyed our homes to advance a private development. Administration is now undermining the Tribunal process by not disclosing communications with Harvard that preceded our property being effectively assembled into the Eau Claire Market redevelopment, led by City Director Campbell Berry – who previously worked for Harvard.

Council can restore trust by directing the immediate disclosure of all communications with Harvard regarding the Market redevelopment – from the sale to Harvard at under market value up to the recent re-purchase by taxpayers so taxpayers could pay to demolish the Market. Disclosure would allow the Tribunal to be informed of the unusual circumstances of this situation: *our private property was improperly taken to be assembled into the Market redevelopment, making it a more valuable waterfront project for Harvard, under the pretext of a transit need.*

Such disclosure will: (i) confirm elected officials, not bureaucrats, ultimately lead this government; (ii) affirm this Council’s commitment to transparency, the rule of law, and protecting citizens from administrative overreach; and (iii) help move this process towards a fair resolution – *a process already judged to be unfair, high-handed, and lacking good faith in a public Inquiry Report.*

Taxpayers have already spent around \$100 million improving the area near the Market redevelopment, which benefits Harvard. Based on undisclosed agreements, taxpayers may be liable to Harvard for “*at least nine figures*” more – according to former Mayor Nenshi and others. The City’s secret communications with Harvard, that impacted our private property and created such liability, need to be disclosed for the Tribunal to be informed of the facts.

Had the City not interfered with the open market, the River Run families and Harvard may have negotiated a sale based a fair share of the value created by assembling our homes into the Market redevelopment – *at no cost to taxpayers* – as depicted by Harvard below.



The potential value created from assembling River Run into the Market redevelopment, together with our strong bargaining position, may be what motivated Administration to expropriate rather than risk an open market negotiation. They didn’t want our property rights to in any way impact whether the Market redevelopment was transformed into a more valuable waterfront project, so Administration took our bargaining position away and put taxpayers on the hook for compensation.

The 2023 Inquiry Report condemned Administration’s lack of transparency, stating: “*transparent and forthright communication from the city to the owners was in short supply or clearly absent*”. If property rights are meaningful in Calgary, Council will disclose the City’s communications with Harvard that led to our homes being taken to be assembled into the Market redevelopment.

River Run families, and all Calgarians, deserve a City Administration that is transparent and respects the rule of law, which we don’t currently have.

If any of the Mayor, Council or leadership in Administration will talk to us, we’re available.

- River Run Families Committee (Patrick, Tom and Joel)

Timeline of the Destruction of River Run Homes, Benefitting Harvard Despite No Approved, Funded Public Need to Take River Run

Pre-2020 – The Green Line is approved with a \$4.6B budget, initially 46km and then 20km. River Run is not needed for this project. Independent from the Green Line, Harvard and the City privately discuss the Eau Claire Market redevelopment, which City officials refer to as the ‘*crown jewel ...on the banks of the Bow River*’. However, such project is landlocked and will only be transformed into a waterfront project if River Run is taken and destroyed.

June 16, 2020 – Council approves Green Line Stage 1 (*20km for \$4.9B, plus financing*) without a serious cost estimate. Councillor Farkas is the lone vote against, due to the lack of cost information. Independent experts warn costs will be billions more. One condition of approval is that nothing can be built north of Eau Claire station *unless* Shepard to Eau Claire is confirmed to be on budget, which never occurs. River Run is north of such station. The City now depicts the train veering off 2nd Street into our homes, north of Eau Claire station, but Administration confirms in writing the City has no intention to expropriate River Run.

April 3, 2021 – The Rethink the Green Line team again publicly warn of billions in cost overruns, stating “*It is not responsible to proceed with any plan that contemplates tunnels because the risk of substantial cost overruns is virtually certain – likely to be \$2.5 billion or greater – and would be borne by Calgary taxpayers.*”

January 25, 2022 – The Green Line Board Chair confirms the Board has “*a low level of confidence in our ability to deliver all of Stage 1 within our available funding*”. Cost overruns are in the billions and the project, as approved, cannot be built. Three levels of elected officials must be informed of the overruns and they need to decide how to proceed, if at all. Whether any form of the Green Line can proceed – *let alone whether River Run may be needed* – is now unknown and is not within the power or control of Administration. However, Administration does not disclose the magnitude of the overruns, or seek direction from elected officials, until July 2024 – showing an alarming lack of respect for elected officials and taxpayers.

November 1, 2022 – Administration and Harvard publicly announce their new Eau Claire Market redevelopment plans, which involve River Run no longer in existence. Whatever commitments the City made to Harvard that impacted River Run – *without informing or involving the River Run families* – remain a secret.

February 14, 2023 – Cost overruns make the case for taking River Run even weaker than when Administration confirmed there was no intention to expropriate. However, if they wait until after disclosing cost overruns and seeking direction from elected officials, they may lose the ability to claim the Green Line as a pretext to take River Run (*and then Harvard’s project could only become a waterfront project if Harvard negotiates with the families in the open market*). Not knowing if River Run will be needed, Administration files to expropriate.

May 10, 2023 – In a public letter to Council, the Rethink the Green Line team states “*It is simply not possible that the proposed Stage #1 of the Green Line can be built for the approved \$4.9 billion. ...On the assumption that no additional funding will be available from other levels of government, the project will have to be redesigned at that time to fit within a \$4.9 billion budget.*” Despite public speculation that a redesign is needed – which will require new approvals from three levels of elected officials to proceed – Administration remains silent, not disclosing the size of the cost overruns, or seeking such approvals, until July 2024.

July 2023 – A public inquiry is held for an independent expert to assess whether the expropriation is “fair, sound and reasonably necessary” and Administration fails to disclose: (i) billions in cost overruns make it uncertain whether the Green Line will proceed; (ii) whether River Run will ever be needed is unknown; (iii) City Director Campbell Berry worked for Harvard for years before leading this expropriation that benefits Harvard; or (iv) the City has already signed agreements with Harvard based on the Green Line getting to Eau Claire creating liability of “*at least nine figures*” according to former Mayor Nenshi. The Province and some Councillors also confirm such agreements exist. [*When, why and who from the City signed such agreements when it was unknown if the train would get to Eau Claire? How did these agreements impact River Run? Did Council approve these agreements?*]

September 12, 2023 – Administration has Council vote to expropriate based on a claimed Green Line need. It does not appear that Council was informed: (i) whether any form of Green Line project can proceed, and if River Run will be needed, will remain unknown until after elected officials – *Council, provincial and federal governments* – are **finally** informed of the size of the cost overruns and they decide whether to proceed and, if so, how; (ii) Harvard benefits from the demolition of River Run; (iii) Campbell Berry has a conflict of interest; or (iv) the provincial public inquiry process was undermined by Administration not being transparent.

October 25, 2023 – River Run families, who were not informed of or invited to the above meeting, learn they no longer own legal title to their homes by doing a land title search.

June 1, 2024 – **Administration forces River Run families from their homes, not knowing whether the Green Line will proceed or if the River Run land will ever be needed.**

July 30, 2024 – Administration finally discloses the billions in cost overruns. Councillor McLean states his view that Administration tactically withheld this information as long as possible “*They waited to the last minute of the last day before council breaks for six weeks in the middle of the dog days of summer to give out the numbers and the scope of the project.*” Administration proposes a different project to elected officials: only 10km for \$6.24B (*this “stub line” has tunnels downtown which the province, for years, has not supported*). McLean adds, with respect to the cost estimate “*In what world would I believe in that number?*”

September 17, 2024 – Just weeks after the shocking overruns are finally disclosed, the City winds down the entire project. Although Council supports the proposed stub line, the province does not approve the City’s new business plan for the proposed project. Federal funds, contingent on provincial approval, are also not available for the stub line. A revised Green Line project is later revived, which does not involve any approved or funded need for River Run.

Fall 2024 – Administration actively destroys River Run through uses including Calgary Police Service drills where they set off explosives, despite no approved plan to use River Run.

January 2025 – Administration demolishes River Run, despite no approved plan for the property.

January 2026 – River Run families are applying to the Tribunal to set fair compensation based on the unusual circumstances created by the City. Administration has refused to disclose the City’s communications with Harvard regarding the Market redevelopment which, against our will, our private property was taken to be assembled into.

If Administration was transparent, our homes would not be destroyed, and our land would only be assembled into the Market redevelopment if we chose to sell to Harvard in the open market.