



June 9, 2016
File: 0705-40

Mr. Kevin Mahoney
Chairman, BC Transit
520 Gorge Road East
Victoria, BC V8W 9T5

Dear Kevin,

As you are aware, transit driver safety came to the forefront recently in Kelowna as four transit drivers were reported to have been assaulted on the same day in Kelowna. I have offered my sincere sympathies to those drivers affected by this violence. The issues faced by drivers are severe and need to be addressed.

On behalf of Kelowna City Council, I write to encourage BC Transit to continue to work with the Amalgamated Transit Union and First Bus Canada to find solutions and ensure the safety of drivers and their well-being. As we all know, everyone deserves a safe and healthy workplace.

Transit drivers are the core of our transit service. They need to have a safe and supportive work environment in order to provide the best in customer service and help deliver an effective and efficient transit system.

As local government, our role in driver security is limited to off-bus activity. We do our best to provide private security at major exchanges, and we work closely with RCMP, City bylaw enforcement and other private security providers to make transit a safe and comfortable travel option. We also supported CUTA in their successful efforts to increase criminal penalties for assaults on transit drivers.

The City is committed to working with BC Transit to address driver concerns, and we respect your expertise and commitment to continuous improvement in this area. However, we urge you to advance this work wherever possible, as it appears to be becoming more and more critical, given the number of recent incidents.

The City is aware that BC Transit has extended their one-year pilot to continue studying different safety barrier designs for their buses and collect feedback from operators. We are also aware that the Kelowna buses are scheduled to be equipped with closed circuit cameras next year. In addition, we understand that enhanced driver training will be delivered. The City will cooperate with BC Transit as needed in order to support their efforts in all these areas.

Everyone deserves a safe and healthy workplace. As such, the City of Kelowna supports the work of both the ATU and BC Transit to create a safe workplace for all drivers and staff.

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I hope you agree this is a serious issue and ensuring driver safety is of the utmost importance.

Sincerely on behalf of City Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Basran', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Colin Basran
MAYOR

cc: City Council
Ron Mattiussi, City Manager
Scott Lovell, President ATU 1722