



The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is a volunteer driven, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to lead and serve the Calgary business community, valuing its diversity.

August 7, 2008

His Worship Dave Bronconnier
Mayor, The City of Calgary
Historic City Hall
700, Macleod Trail South
Calgary, AB - T2G 2M3

Re: Improving Housing Affordability Critical to Plan It Calgary Initiative

Dear Mayor Bronconnier, *Dave*

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of more than 3,200 members of the business community, appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Plan It Calgary consultation paper *Towards a sustainable city: key directions for land use and mobility*. Enclosed is our response which contains seven recommendations focused on improving housing affordability, and establishing greater certainty for the real estate industry.

City expansion and growth management, transportation, fiscal management and the quality of the environment are top municipal priorities for Chamber members. Members recognize that planning choices made today affect transportation mobility, the environment, housing affordability, and the costs required to service and maintain communities in the future.

Plan It Calgary's emphasis on higher density, mixed-use, transit oriented developments has the potential to improve many of these areas. Our members support the need to move to a more sustainable urban form. In a 2008 Leger Marketing survey, Chamber members indicated a preference for higher density (76 per cent support), mixed use of residential, commercial, and retail properties (67 per cent support), and an orientation towards public transit use, cycling, and walking (77 per cent support).

While this is a desired outcome, supported by all Calgarians in imagineCALGARY and reflected in the Chamber's Renaissance Calgary vision (released in October 2007), the Chamber encourages the City to keep housing affordability forefront, and work with the real estate industry to develop realistic timeframes for transition and strike the appropriate balance of development in established and greenfield communities. Indeed, the Chamber's first recommendation to City Council is to add the principle of affordability to the 11 Sustainability Principles currently guiding the Plan It Calgary initiative.

The Chamber's Plan It Calgary response draws heavily from its 2008 report titled *Municipal Land Development Policies and Regulations and the Impact on Calgary's Housing Affordability*. In this report, both City and development industry representatives identified the need for Council to set clear policy direction for growth and development. Other important recommendations, which are reiterated in our Plan It Calgary submission, include:

- Council develop city-wide consultation protocols for all major land use applications, and that local community group input be part of broader, citywide consultation and context.
- The City continue its policy of maintaining a 30 year supply of land within its boundaries to encourage land cost affordability.
- Plan It Calgary coordinate with the CRP Regional Land Use Plan to ensure shared land use and mobility objectives, and to develop a regional transportation approach.

The Chamber has appreciated past meetings with key leaders of the Plan It Calgary initiative, and looks forward to ongoing dialogue on this important initiative. We are also actively working with the Urban Development Institute - Calgary and the Canadian Home Builders' Association - Calgary Region to develop a Municipal Financing Symposium to bring new ideas to the municipal funding challenge.

The Chamber's housing affordability report and Renaissance Calgary vision are available at www.calgarychamber.com

Yours truly,



Heather Douglas
President & CEO

*Hope all's well
in your world*