



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 19, 2009**

Plan It Calgary's key directions sound but challenges remain

(Calgary, AB) – Calgary's business community supports the key directions of Plan It Calgary; however, it recommends that the City work with the development industry, citizen groups and the business community at large to implement the new land use and mobility plan. Several concerns were identified as part of a Chamber submission presented this week to City Council members.

"Plan It Calgary embodies the general spirit of our *Renaissance Calgary* vision - that the status quo of urban sprawl, car dependence and congestion is no longer an option in a competitive world demanding the most efficient movement of goods and people; high quality public space; amenities and cultural experiences; minimal environmental impact, all accomplished at the lowest cost," says Heather Douglas, President & CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce.

During the 2007 municipal election, the Chamber released a *Renaissance Calgary* strategy that offered and encouraged new ideas and approaches to address pressing concerns of traffic congestion, commuting times, housing affordability, environmental challenges and the high cost of living.

"Planning and development in the city play a critical role in developing communities that attract the best and brightest," comments Douglas.

Plan It Calgary is a complex initiative guided by eight key directions for land use and mobility that serve as strategies to achieve its sustainability principles. While these key directions are fundamentally sound, from a business community perspective, to be successful Plan It Calgary must address key challenges, says Douglas. These challenges include:

1. Institute lifecycle cost measurement to determine the true cost of growth (e.g. infrastructure and maintenance costs per unit – single family versus multi-family);
2. Improve transit infrastructure and service levels outside the downtown core to facilitate movement of people and goods to satellite business hubs;
3. Publish criteria to identify communities intended for intensification, and develop a process to support these communities in preparing for and responding to growth;
4. Apply Plan It Calgary growth principles consistently in all Calgary communities to ensure elected officials, developers and residents all adhere to the same principles in developing our city;
5. Ensure there continues to be a 30 year supply of all-purpose developable land within the city to encourage housing affordability;
6. Coordinate Plan It Calgary with the Calgary Regional Partnership's Metropolitan Plan to avoid fringe development and corresponding issues of free-ridership; and
7. Work with industry to implement the plan, which must have a sufficient transition time to allow landowners, developers and communities to adapt.



This position was developed through the Chamber's participation on the Plan It Calgary Key Stakeholder Advisory Committee, its 2008 research report entitled *Municipal Land Development Policies and Regulations and the Impact on Calgary's Housing Affordability*, and through consultations with Chamber membership.

"Building a city is a shared responsibility between elected officials, the wider community and the private sector," states Douglas. "The business community plays a vital role in turning this plan into reality."

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).

"We commend City of Calgary staff for their work in the development of Plan It Calgary," says Douglas. "The new land use and mobility plan holds great promise to develop world-class communities that attract the next wave of talent."

The letter to City Council, *Renaissance Calgary* vision and other municipal policy initiatives are available at the Chamber's website: www.calgarychamber.com

About the Chamber

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is a member-driven, sustainable organization whose mission is to connect, serve and champion the Calgary business community in its quest to excel.

The Public & Government Affairs Department measurably contributes to the Chamber's profile and effectiveness as the leading edge business advocate and forum for debate, and a credible source for policy analysis and issue commentary that advocates new and innovative solutions to improve the business climate on behalf of our members.

– 30 –

For more information, please contact:

Elizabeth Leitch
Communications Manager
The Calgary Chamber of Commerce
403-750-0424
eleitch@calgarychamber.com