



C a l g a r y
**Chamber of
Commerce**
in business together

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.

June 11, 2009

Mayor Dave Bronconnier
City of Calgary
Office of the Mayor
The City of Calgary
P.O. Box 2100, Station M
Calgary AB T2P 2M5
Canada

Re: Support for Motion to Reduce ParkPlus Short-Term Rates

Dear Mayor Bronconnier:

Dave

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of 3,200 members of the business community, offers support for Alderman Mar's June 22, 2009 Notice of Motion to reduce ParkPlus short-term parking rates by 25 per cent.

The Chamber recognizes the importance of accessibility and reasonable cost of short-term parking to the convenience and growth of business downtown. With many downtown businesses struggling, high parking rates that discourage customers from traveling to the core can be the difference between survival and collapse. Given these challenging economic conditions, City Council should do all that it can to reduce the tax and fee burden on Calgarians.

Exorbitant short-term parking rates do not encourage people to travel to the core and work against the Centre City Plan's goal to create a "livable, thriving and caring place." Chamber membership surveys indicate concern with transportation and in particular with downtown parking rates. We believe that rates have gone too high and are now an impediment to business development.

The Calgary Parking Authority (CPA) maintains a monopoly on street parking and with its technically advanced ParkPlus system can easily make the parking rate change and immediately improve the downtown business environment.

As well as a roll-back of on-street rates, the Chamber urges City Council to roll-back all CPA short-stay parking, and consider removal of on-street parking charges for Saturdays. This could be viewed as a form of 'municipal stimulus' to make it easier for people to come downtown and encourage spending and business activity.

Chamber members have expressed further concern about the ability of courier and delivery service vehicles to access short-term parking. We welcome the parking review currently underway and the potential for more loading zones and easily accessible loading docks in the downtown core. Alternatively, an exemption for courier and delivery




vehicles would also ensure service companies have access to this critical area of the city.

Finally, the Chamber urges a stronger commitment to improving transit capacity. Increasing parking rates have been a conscious decision to encourage alternative modes of transportation such as transit, walking and cycling. City Council can only justify increasing parking rates if revenues derived therein are directed to significantly improving the level of transit service, to ensure Calgarians continue to have mobility choice.

The short-term parking rate increases were approved by City Council in November 2008 as part of the 2009 - 2011 business plan. These increases did not account for the economic downturn that commenced in the later part of 2008. Through the elimination of the LRT station parking fees on evenings and weekends, City Council has begun to respond to the economic realities confronting our city. The Chamber urges support for Alderman Mar's motion to further alleviate the economic burden on Calgary citizens and encourage greater business activity in the downtown core.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Douglas". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Heather Douglas
President & CEO