



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Calgary's business community applauds parking rate reduction

(Calgary, AB) – The Calgary Chamber of Commerce views today's announcement to reduce downtown parking rates as a step in the right direction.

"Reduction of parking rates downtown will encourage citizens to visit the city centre more often and encourage greater business activity," said Geoff Pradella, Vice-President of Public & Government Affairs with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. "Accessibility and reasonable parking costs are key elements to the growth and vibrancy of downtown businesses, many of whom are small and medium-sized enterprises."

In June 2009, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce supported Alderman Mar's motion to reduce on-street parking fees by 25 per cent, and has for many years communicated to City Council the detrimental impact that high short-term parking rates have on business and vitality downtown.

Chamber membership surveys indicate ongoing concern with transportation and in particular with downtown parking rates.

"Our members feel that rates are too high, and have become an impediment to doing business in the core," stated Pradella. "We are heartened to see recognition of this concern and the difficult economic environment. We continue to urge City Council to make further reductions."

While the reductions are welcome, the Chamber urges City Council to consider removal of on-street parking charges for Saturdays.

Chamber members have also expressed further concern about the ability of courier and delivery service vehicles to access short-term parking.

"There is potential for more loading zones and easily accessible loading docks in the downtown core," stated Pradella. "Alternatively, an exemption for courier and delivery vehicles would ensure service companies have access to this critical area of the city's business community."

In addition, the Chamber urges commitment to improving alternative transportation options.

"High parking costs are part of Council's policy decision to encourage alternative modes of transportation," said Pradella. "With these prohibitive rates, City Council must commit to provide quality mobility choice for Calgarians through alternative means such as transit, walking and cycling."

According to the Colliers International Annual North America Parking Rate Survey released in June 2009, Calgary has the highest monthly unreserved median rate of \$460 and the second highest daily median rate of \$22 after Toronto (\$7 above the Canadian average).



The Chamber's letter to City Council and other advocacy efforts on this issue are available online:
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. We are the leading edge business advocate and forum for debate, and a credible source for policy analysis and issue commentary. We advocate new and innovative solutions to improve the business climate on behalf of our members.

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