

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Business growth a top priority for Calgarians, survey shows**

*Economy weighing heavily on the minds of local business community*

CALGARY – Calgary residents see local business growth as a key policy priority to be tackled at City Hall, new survey results show.

Both residents and business leaders placed business growth in the top three most pressing municipal policy issues for the City of Calgary, according to new surveys of Calgary businesses and residents by the Calgary Chamber and University of Calgary School of Public Policy.

“It’s evident from these results that Calgarians see business vibrancy as the heartbeat of healthy households and communities,” said Calgary Chamber President and CEO Sandip Lalli.

The survey showed business leaders saw growing the Calgary business community as the top municipal priority, ahead of even policing, while residents ranked it the third most important municipal issue, only behind transportation infrastructure and policing.

“Calgary business leaders have made it clear they are raring to grow but need governments to create and sustain the right conditions to drive investment and expansion,” said Lalli.

One of those conditions identified near the top of the importance list in the business survey was relief for growing business property taxes, rating third on the minds of the business community as an area the City needs to tackle.

“It’s not surprising due to the growing tax burden especially on suburban businesses that this is top of mind for the business community,” said Lalli, noting the potential of double-digit tax increases on local business outside of the core this year. “We appreciate the City has asked for the Chamber’s help in finding short and long-term solutions to this taxing problem that must be addressed immediately.”

Not surprisingly, while still rating it as an “important” issue to address, residents saw business tax relief as the seventh highest spending priority to be addressed by the City.

“This shows that there is work to do to ensure Calgarians understand that in order to see growth in the number and size of businesses in the City, we need to ensure that Calgary has a policy environment that is competitive.”

Business respondents were also asked to answer an open-ended question about what they felt was the most important issue facing Calgary. The Chamber categorized the responses into 14 categories, where the economy and property taxes dominated the responses.

Lalli said the Chamber will continue to make the case that several layered costs and barriers imposed by all levels of government are contributing to a lack of competitiveness, when it releases its provincial election policy platform later this week and its federal election policy platform later this year.

The two separate but identical surveys conducted of business leaders by the Chamber and of residents by Forum Research between Nov. 14 and Dec. 13 asked respondents to rate “issue importance” scores on nine municipal spending policy areas.

A summary of the survey results from the School of Public Policy is available at [www.policyschool.ca/publications](http://www.policyschool.ca/publications)

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**To schedule an interview, please contact Chamber Communications Specialist, Gina Scandrett, at [media@calgarychamber.com](mailto:media@calgarychamber.com) or at (403) 750 0401.**

#### **ABOUT THE CALGARY CHAMBER**

The Calgary Chamber is an independent non-profit, non-partisan business organization. For 128 years the Chamber has worked to build a business community that nourishes, powers and inspires the world.