



**Report Number:** C2020-1439

**Meeting:** Combined Meeting of Council

**Meeting Date:** 2020 December 14

NOTICE OF MOTION

**RE: Providing Incentive to Residential Development in the Downtown Core**

**Sponsoring Councillor(s):** Councillors Jeff Davison, Druh Farrell

WHEREAS the downtown is Calgary's community, and is a key economic driver and employment centre;

AND WHEREAS in 2007, City Council approved the Centre City Plan encompassing the communities of the Downtown Core, Downtown West, Eau Claire, Chinatown, East Village and the Beltline, that set out a vision and framework to make "Centre City a livable, caring and thriving place"; and which is now being updated in the new "Greater Downtown Plan";

AND WHEREAS *Calgary in the New Economy*, the economic strategy for Calgary, identified 'Place' as one of four interconnected focus areas to implement the strategy for an enduring and prosperous economy and recommendation #8 from the Financial Task Force directs The City to leverage this strategy;

AND WHEREAS following the approval of Calgary's economic strategy, City Council created and endorsed a *Downtown Strategy* to support economic resilience and vibrancy by focusing resources on the geographical area of the downtown;

AND WHEREAS City Council has recognized the importance of strategic investment and placemaking in the downtown, including and not limited to: creation and expansion of the Community Revitalization Levy (CRL), investment in the BMO Centre Expansion, new Event Centre, Arts Commons Revitalization, Central Public Library, Contemporary Calgary, Eau Claire Public Realm and East Village;

AND WHEREAS City Council has approved the alignment and funding for the Green Line that will intersect with the Red Line, Blue Line and Max Purple and Yellow Lines to create the most connected transit service area in the city in the heart of the Downtown Core;

AND WHEREAS Calgary's economic downturn has resulted in one of the highest unemployment rates across Canadian cities, a significant impact on downtown vacancy rates, and corresponding declines in assessed property values of downtown office buildings, particularly in the Downtown Core;

AND WHEREAS the current economic situation is expected to take several years to recover, requiring intentional management of a longer-term view, with near-term actions;

AND WHEREAS the economic pressures facing The City of Calgary have resulted in a hollowing out of the Downtown Core that requires the immediate attention of Calgary City Council;

AND WHEREAS City Council has established the Real Estate Working Group to tackle recommendation #33 (Investigate the crisis level vacancy in the downtown office market and respond with actions) alongside additional Administrative Actions for the Financial Task Force recommendation;

AND WHEREAS an active and vibrant population base is required for the long term success of these strategic investments and the overall health of the city's downtown;

AND WHEREAS policies, bylaws and public infrastructure in the Downtown Core were designed around the development and needs of a primarily office and employment environment that does not consider or embrace the needs of residential development;

AND WHEREAS The City of Calgary's Municipal Development Plan endeavours to accommodate 50 percent of Calgary's future population growth over the next 30 to 60 years within Developed Areas of the city;

AND WHEREAS new population growth in the city's downtown fits within the goal of the Municipal Development Plan;

AND WHEREAS incentives for the development of high-density residential complexes in downtown areas are common throughout North America.

AND WHEREAS Calgary Economic Development has identified ten buildings in the downtown that could be converted to residential.

AND WHEREAS the viability of residential development in the Downtown Core is challenged to attract residential development and investors compared to other areas of the city and the country;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct City Administration to explore the potential creation of regulatory and financial investment incentives for the development of new high-density residential complexes and the conversion of office buildings to various forms of residential occupancy or other uses within the downtown generally, but with a focus on the Downtown Core;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that Administration report to the Priorities and Finance Committee with its findings no later than the end of April 2021.