



## Business Sector Task Force and Business Advisory Committee Working Group What We Heard Report

The Business Sector Task Force was established as part of The City of Calgary's response to combatting the spread of COVID-19, as approved by Council's endorsement of the COVID-19 City of Calgary Governance structure presented on 2020 March 16. As a result of the success of the task force outputs, it was determined by Administration's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) that the task force would continue as an ongoing engagement channel with businesses, connected stakeholders and partners, and serve as a forum to identify opportunities to support, communicate with, and advocate for businesses.

The task force is made up of members from Administration, the mayor's office, BIA representatives, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Calgary Economic Development, Tourism Calgary and Calgary Arts Development, as well as stakeholders from various industries/sectors of Calgary's business community. On March 10, 2021, the options outlined below were presented to the task force for feedback and their recommendations and comments are summarized below.

The Business Advisory Committee who acts as a conduit to address perceived City of Calgary barriers that business stakeholders face in their everyday operations, also received feedback from their working group. Feedback received has been incorporated in the summary below.

### What we heard

Options presented	Stakeholder recommendations	Comments from stakeholders
<p><b>1. Pay license renewal fees and waive renewals</b></p> <p>The amount required to waive existing business renewals is \$6.8 million. If we would also like to waive the police check fees for renewals that would require an additional \$26,000.</p> <p>To waive all new business license fees, we would require \$1.97 million for the license,</p>	<p>a) Forgive license fees for the entire year.</p> <p>b) Forgive start-up fees for new businesses.</p> <p>c) Forgive fees for businesses to re-open that have been closed throughout the entire pandemic.</p> <p>d) Confederation of Independent Business, would recommend narrowing the scope on the business license program to small businesses and use any remaining funding from the \$8.8</p>	<p><i>"Fee relief is an easy, clear message to communicate. It's innovative to forgive all fees. We're already getting attention across Canada for the BIA levy relief program."</i></p> <p><i>"For the mental health of a lot of small business owners, even a small amount may help them."</i></p> <p><i>"City has stated how they're trying to become business-friendly. This would aid efforts in that direction. If The City can advocate and show that."</i></p>

Attachment 2

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CPS police check fees, Fire inspections & Planning fees charges on all commercial business locations.	million to go toward a grant program or toward a program whose businesses are still closed even one year later.	<p><i>"Spreading equally amongst many won't make a huge difference for many."</i></p> <p><i>"Taking away licence renewals may not be as beneficial as a grant."</i></p>
<p><b>2. Up to \$5 million saved for those businesses that have never re-opened.</b></p> <p>Example: Bars and entertainment establishments and venues.</p>	<p>a) Support this recommendation as well as forgive fees related to re-opening for the sectors identified in this option.</p> <p>b) The hardest-hit sectors need more support, which is well-reflected in the \$5 million allocation. Will businesses be able to access both the \$5 million and the \$15 million funding streams? My recommendation here would depend on the amount available in each stream. (Calgary Chamber of Commerce)</p>	<p><i>"Put majority to a sector that needs it the most, i.e. Nightclubs/bars. Or, grants but businesses have to show financial statements to ensure the funds go to those struggling the most."</i></p> <p><i>"Better off to choose a segment that was hit hard to get it operating. Problem with those who have been closed all along is their start up is going to be very expensive, so it won't help. i.e equipment maintenance, food and liquor cost, inspection fees, etc."</i></p>
<p><b>3. Utilize residual amount (approx. \$15 million) for small business grants.</b></p> <p>Facilitation to be determined.</p>	<p>a) Three priority categories of businesses who need help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Struggling businesses</li> <li>• New businesses opened since COVID</li> <li>• Incentives for businesses looking to open</li> </ul> <p>b) Connect with the province to get and build upon the parameters used for the Business Relaunch grants.</p>	<p><i>"Could we use the parameters for the Business Relaunch grants from the province? A lot of information has already been collected and businesses are familiar with the qualifications and process."</i></p> <p><i>"Could these funds be given to ATB as a backstop for loans to be forgiven"</i></p>

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	<p>c) Reference a previous program that was successful. i.e. Create an endowment matching program with a deadline. Pro-rate the funds based on the criteria.</p> <p>d) Businesses need certainty, so the sooner details can be announced on the eligibility of grants, the better. Many businesses believe the economy is at its worst right now and will recover soon as vaccines are rolled out and the economy reopens. Therefore, the financial supports proposed would be of highest value if they can be delivered fairly immediately.</p> <p>e) How will the grants differ from the provincial SMERG? I would advise against using the same criteria, as businesses that slipped through the crack with SMERG would slip through the cracks again with these grants.</p> <p>f) It will be important to clearly communicate to businesses that these grants are different from the SMERG, as it would be problematic if businesses don't apply for these grants because they are under the impression that they are the same grants.</p>	<p><i>"Like the idea of the inclusion of businesses that have opened since this started, province has restricted their grants to this group."</i></p> <p><i>"Create an endowment matching program with a deadline and pro-rate the funds based on the criteria."</i></p>

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	<p>g) Is there a way to link these funds to hiring/job creation/layoff avoidance?</p> <p>h) We also encourage a longer-term look at the property tax challenges Calgary faces. Unfortunately, the PTP is not sustainable and does not allow for predictability. As you think longer-term, we would encourage a re-examination of the system that decreases the non-res/res tax ratio, generates revenue, and finds efficiencies without sacrificing service delivery. (Calgary Chamber of Commerce, comments d-h)</p>	