



NAHFED K. NENSHI, MAYOR

July 6, 2015

The Honourable Rachel Notley
Premier of Alberta
408 Legislature Building
10800 97 Avenue
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Dear Premier Notley: *Rachel!*

Re: Calgary Zoo Flood Mitigation Project

I am writing you today to request the financial support of the Government of Alberta with respect to a flood mitigation project to protect the Calgary Zoo (the "Zoo") from a future flood.

As you are aware, the Zoo is situated on an island in the Bow River just east of downtown Calgary. The Zoo is Calgary's number one tourist attraction and one of the top tourist destinations in Alberta. In 2014, the Zoo had an estimated annual economic impact of \$79 million and is ranked as the #1 zoo in Canada and has been consistently rated as one of the top zoos in North America.

The Zoo was heavily impacted by the 2013 flood, which resulted in the permanent closure of two exhibits and up to \$50 million in damage to the Zoo's infrastructure. Since the flood, The City of Calgary ("The City") has been working diligently with Zoo officials to determine how best to protect the Zoo from a future flood.

After extensive study, we have concluded that the construction of a continuous 360 degree cofferdam with earth filled berms and walls around the Zoo island is the most effective solution. The total cost of constructing the flood mitigation project is \$25 million. You should be aware that as part of our due diligence, we considered whether it would make more sense to move the Zoo off the island. However, it quickly became apparent that to move the Zoo would be well in excess of \$500 million and would not make economic sense. Building the flood mitigation project is the logical and most cost effective solution to protect this important Alberta institution.

City administration will be bringing a report to Council on July 27, 2015 for consideration on whether or not to proceed with the flood mitigation project. Administration is requesting that Council make a decision in July so that construction may begin in the fall, as the timing for construction is very narrow in order to minimize impact on the fish lifecycle. In addition, fall commencement is vital to ensure the Zoo is protected and the project is complete prior to the opening of the touring Giant Panda exhibit in the spring of 2018, as well as to accommodate the Zoo's high season. Minimal impact on the Giant Panda

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exhibit is desirable as the hosting of the pandas will be a significant social, economic and environmental opportunity for the Zoo, Calgarians and the Province of Alberta.

The Province has previously supported this project by providing \$1.2 million to The City for detailed design work for the flood mitigation project through the Flood Recovery Erosion Control program. However, our proposal for construction funding through that program and the predecessor program to the Alberta Community Resilience Program (Resiliency and Mitigation Framework Fund) was not selected for funding.

We strongly believe that the protecting the Zoo is vital to the citizens of Calgary and critical to our province's tourism industry. The City has the ability to advance funding for this critical project in order to meet the fall construction window, but we do need the Province to provide funding for this critical project, whether now or in the next budget year.

It would be extremely helpful if The City could receive a response prior to our July 27, 2015 Council meeting so that all of the information is available for Council to determine how best to proceed. Lori Kerr, Manager, Civic Partners (lori.kerr@calgary.ca or 403-268-5080) has all the detailed information about the project and would be happy to provide a comprehensive briefing to your staff.

I very much appreciate your assistance with this matter.

Yours truly,



Naheed K Nenshi
MAYOR

Thank you for your attention to this.

cc: Brian Mason, Minister of Infrastructure
Joe Ceci, President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Finance
Shannon Phillips, Minister of the Environment and Parks
Jeff Fielding, City Manager, The City of Calgary
Stuart Dalglish, General Manager of Community and Protective Services, The City of Calgary
Lori Kerr, Manager, Civic Partners, The City of Calgary