

## Urban Municipalities Task Force “The Regional Story”

Everywhere in North America we see examples of failed regional planning: sprawling urban, industrial, or commercial corridors; stressed commuters caught in traffic gridlock; environmental degradation; and the loss of prime agricultural lands. Regions following this path have all learned the shortcomings of plans that are not supported by a vision of sustainable communities. Once these plans are implemented, it is nearly impossible to correct mistakes and bad decisions, as costs to do so are prohibitive.

In contrast, good regional planning accepts the reality that established boundaries between neighbouring municipalities are not walls that allow one community to act in their own interests. Instead, regional partners need to work together at local levels to collectively manage the costs and risks to the environment, to social and economic development, and the impact on neighbouring communities. In short, good neighbours cooperate. When neighbours don't cooperate, when they pursue their own self interests without consideration and respect to others, they end up making everyone including themselves worse off. They put everyone's future, including their own, at risk.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of principled regional development and planning that is inclusive and responsive to all stakeholder needs. The municipalities in the Calgary Region have one opportunity to get regional planning right. We are committed to a collaborative approach in which we join together to develop our region with a positive vision: a place for opportunity and growth with vibrant communities and towns, built in a *fiscally responsible* manner with supportive services, fair taxation, equitable funding for municipal services, and healthy distinct wilderness and agricultural areas.

Regional cooperation builds bridges between neighbours and complements existing community visions. It does not reinforce the building of walls. Regional cooperation is about leaving a legacy and preserving our heritage. It is about having a well-developed regional vision and choosing a future that honours communities, our agricultural heritage, and the environment shared by all citizens today and well into the future.

### Key Speaking Points

1. Regional planning must be built on a foundation of fiscally responsibility;
2. Growth for the sake of growth makes it impossible to correct planning errors;
3. One opportunity to get regional planning right;
4. Regional planning should serve needs of all stakeholders;
5. Collaborative approach to develop region and create fiscally responsible, vibrant communities, supported by fair taxation, and responding to agricultural priorities;
6. Regional planning focuses on balancing economic and social development with the protection of wilderness, natural and environmentally sensitive areas, and farmlands.