



CCVO
CALGARY
CHAMBER of
VOLUNTARY
ORGANIZATIONS

Speaking Notes for City Council Budget Process – November 21, 2005
Katherine van Kooy, President and CEO, Calgary Chamber of
Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)

Good morning, Your Worship and members of Council.

My name is Katherine van Kooy and I am the President and CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. **The CCVO** was formed in 2004, in response to a NEED for a STRONG VOICE to represent Calgary's 7,000 charities and non-profit organizations on public policy issues.

Our driving vision is of the charitable and nonprofit sector working together with business and government to build a strong, vibrant community. Our members reflect the breadth and diversity of the voluntary sector. They represent the social infrastructure of our community – organizations engaged in arts and culture; social services; health; the environment; services to families, seniors and youth; immigrant serving agencies; sports, recreation and community associations; and faith-based organizations.

On behalf of these organizations I would like to support Council's priority of "building a great city" - particularly the focus on a community that is welcoming, safe, caring and strong. Where the quality of life is accessible to all members of our community. And a City that is built on strong community partnerships.

We understand that there are many competing demands that Council will need to balance as you set the budget direction for the next three years. I am here to remind you of the value of Calgary's **social infrastructure** and to URGE you to maintain a healthy balance in your choice of community investment priorities. This is a priority articulated by the thousands of Calgarians who have contributed their thoughts and hopes for this city through the Imagine Calgary public engagement process. Their message is clear – they want to live in a City that is safe, caring, embracing of diversity, environmentally sustainable, where all members of the community can partake in the enviable quality of life that Calgary has to offer.

The City of Calgary has supported its social infrastructure through its many civic partnerships, as well as through its support for Family and Community Support Services. We commend you for recognizing the importance of the preventative social services funded by FCSS and for funding this program above the 20%

matching requirement. We urge you to maintain the integrity of this commitment into the future.

Here is the business case for continuing your support of the social infrastructure of the City. Of all the money that supports the work of non-profits and charities, **only 1/3** is provided by **all levels of government**. That means your support is not a drain on the City's resources, but in fact is leveraged by the community investments made by volunteers, private citizens, corporations, foundations and others.

The RETURN ON THIS INVESTMENT is measured in quality of life, reduced social tensions, safety, opportunities for newcomers to participate in the life of the community, a vibrant cultural mix and a more caring and inclusive society.

We would also like to thank City Council for their support for the Low Income Transit Pass program. This is an important initiative to enable the many citizens that live on low incomes to participate fully in our community. It provides much needed support for them to travel to work and all those other activities that are part of normal everyday activities. Programs such as this are essential to reducing the social problems that are rooted in social and economic inequality. However, it is important that in supporting this program that the funding for FCSS not be negatively affected. Funding for FCSS has not kept pace with the growing demand for the programs and services required in a growing city. Any measures that would decrease funding for these programs would undermine the commitment to a healthy community.

The City faces many challenges in meeting the needs of a growing community, not the least of which are the jurisdictional issues related to the revenue generation powers of municipalities compared with the other levels of government.

The City of Calgary has taken a lead role in seeking financial reform and greater financial support from the provincial and federal governments. We support you in these efforts and urge you to continue to demonstrate your leadership in recognizing the importance of the social infrastructure of our community, despite the funding challenges. To do otherwise would not be in the best interest of this city.

Thank you