



CCVO
CALGARY
CHAMBER of
VOLUNTARY
ORGANIZATIONS

Speaking Notes for City Council Budget Process – November 27, 2006
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. CCVO was formed in 2004, to help ensure the perspective of Calgary's 7,000 charities and nonprofit organizations was part of the public policy process.

Our vision is for charities and nonprofits to work together with business and government to build a strong, vibrant community.

CCVO has more than 320 members, most of which are nonprofits and charities that work in areas across the community. Our members provide organized sports for Calgary's kids, homecare and support for seniors, recycling and environmental programs, arts and cultural opportunities including festivals and museums, spiritual and religious programs and services, and other services that meet the unique needs of the community.

Calgary's economy is booming, and along with the benefits of a strong economy and job market, comes a growing population and rising community needs. With this growth, we recognize that City Council has difficult choices to make during the budget planning process.

Our message today is simple. As you deliberate the 2007 budget, we urge you to keep in mind the importance of the wide array of community-based services that make significant contributions to Calgary's quality of life.

As you know from the City's 2006 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, Calgarians are worried about the quality of life in our city. Quality of life is about more than roads and sewers. It is about where the roads lead. It is about Calgary being a vibrant, safe and inclusive community. Nonprofits and charities are key government partners who play an important role in delivering many of the services and programs that are central to our city's quality of life.

The importance of quality of life was also a resounding message I heard from Calgarians as a member of the ImagineCALGARY Roundtable. The ImagineCALGARY process was a valuable tool for building a blueprint for our city's future development. The City now needs to move beyond the adoption of

the vision and demonstrate corresponding resolve to ensure the vision becomes a reality.

The City of Calgary can demonstrate that resolve in two key ways: funding of community-based services and implementation of municipal policy.

From supporting a thriving arts community and rich variety of cultural festivals to providing adequate funding for sports, recreation and community services, the financial support from the City of Calgary is essential.

As our population grows, funding for Family and Community Support Services becomes even more important. The FCSS program provides essential financial support for preventative community services. The growing needs in the community are stretching the capacity of this program and the organizations that provide these services. We urge the City to continue to support the FCSS program and ensure it keeps pace with the growth of our city.

We recognize that FCSS is a shared program between the provincial government and City of Calgary and that both levels of government have a responsibility to ensure FCSS keeps pace with growth. For this reason, CCVO is also working at the provincial level.

But funding is not the only way to support community programs.

The City also needs to ensure their policies don't create additional challenges and exacerbate problems. For example, when implementing new policies or making changes to existing ones, it is critical that the City ensure that necessary alternatives are in place **before** changes are made. One example is in the area of affordable housing where plans to revitalize the downtown core are reducing the supply of much needed affordable housing units without ensuring replacements are in place to meet community needs. We applaud the City's commitment to a 10-year goal of eliminating homelessness, but actions taken today should ensure that we are not compounding the problems we seek to address.

Council has also adopted policies that will limit further development of social service agencies in the downtown core. If there is a sense that it is important for the health of communities, that social agencies should not be unduly concentrated in one part of the city, then Council has the responsibility to provide the leadership to ensure that communities throughout the city welcome these services. The needs these organizations address are the needs of Calgarians and not just of individual neighbourhoods and we need to accept a broader community responsibility to address these issues.

It is important to recognize that a market-driven approach to community needs does not work for all our citizens. When addressing issues such as affordable

housing or access to services, City Council needs to ensure the needs of all Calgarians are addressed and that services are accessible for the people who need them most.

The message from Calgarians during the ImagineCALGARY process was clear – they want to live in a city that is safe, caring, environmentally sustainable, and where all members of the community can participate in the enviable quality of life that Calgary has to offer. The work nonprofits and charities carry out every day in our city are a critical part of ensuring our city continues to be healthy and vibrant far into the future. We urge you keep this in mind during the budget process and through the implementation of those decisions.

Thank you