House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** The City of Calgary

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Infrastructure

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

National Transit Framework

The City of Calgary recommends that the Government of Canada implement a fully-funded National Transit Framework, which would provide an annual investment of $2 billion to cities and communities to build and encourage greater public transit usage in Canada, and mitigate the impact of municipalities' transportation networks on climate change.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$1 billion or more

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

The City of Calgary recognizes that public transit is one of the eligible categories of public infrastructure that may be funded through the New Building Canada Plan. An annual investment dedicated specifically to public transit would complement the existing infrastructure investment programs and provide predictable funding over the long term. This would enable communities to plan their public transit infrastructure even more effectively for the long-term and make more efficient transit capital expenditures.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Public transit is a valued service that contributes to the well-being of our citizens and our community. Mobility options and accessibility of all citizens allows for connections between people and places, promotes development and redevelopment, and lowers impacts on the environment. Public transit also fulfills a basic social need and provides for the efficient movement of people to and from work and school to sustain the economy. Investments in transit are investments in the environment, reducing congestion, improving social mobility and improving everyone's quality of life.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

The Government of Canada has recognized that efficient urban transportation addresses both short-term economic challenges and the environmental and economic realities of the future. Reliable transit services can maintain and even expand a city's economic base by allowing for the efficient movement of people. Urban transit also has social, environmental and health benefits by reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Topic: Poor, poverty and income inequality

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Antipoverty Act

The City of Calgary recommends the development of a federal antipoverty act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results, with sufficient federal investment in social security for all Canadians; and that the federal government actively consult with municipalities in the development of any forthcoming antipoverty act. Poverty is a complex issue that requires involvement from all orders of government. Poverty has a substantial impact in big cities, including costs for social assistance, affordable housing, policing, fee subsidies and other supports.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

unknown

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Federal investment in antipoverty initiatives would help Canadians living close to or below the poverty line but would also benefit entire communities across the country.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Poverty costs us all. A recent report estimated the annual cost of poverty to Alberta alone at between $7.1 and $9.5 billion. Poverty also robs communities of the talents and strengths of those who cannot contribute fully to society. In 2010, there were 114,000 Calgarians living below the poverty line. Since the 2008 recession, Calgary's vulnerable populations such as recent immigrants, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, and visible minority persons continue to be at the greatest risk of poverty.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

The City of Calgary is addressing the issue of poverty through the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative, a joint initiative launched in January 2012 between the municipality and the United Way of Calgary. The initiative includes the goals of having 95% of all people living in Calgary at or above Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-off rates and having 90% of all people living in Calgary at or above 125% of Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-off rates by 2023. A federal antipoverty act and associated federal commitments in this area could help Calgary reach these goals.

Topic: Rural, remote and urban communities

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Affordable Housing

The City of Calgary recommends that the Government of Canada demonstrate its commitment to affordable housing for all Canadians through:

1. Providing increased and sustained affordable housing infrastructure funding to support necessary growth and replacement of aging assets;
2. Amending the Income Tax Act to eliminate the capital gains tax on donations of real property to registered public charities for the purpose of providing perpetually affordable housing.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

unknown

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

It is essential that long-term federal funding remain in place to support municipalities in identifying and responding effectively to the housing and homelessness needs of each community. The renewal of five-year funding for the Investment in Affordable Housing program in budget 2013/24 is beneficial, as this helps communities plan and effectively implement their housing initiatives and projects. Although the Homelessness Partnering Strategy was renewed for 5 years at $119M per year in the 2013-14 federal budget, this represents a $16M reduction per year from the previous funding level.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Low to moderate income households are the intended beneficiaries of increased affordable housing options. Calgary and Alberta's strong economy is attracting a labour force that is essential for the economy to remain competitive. The range of choices required to house this booming population is not available. Although private sector development has been successful in addressing the needs of 78% of the housing market without intervention, this leaves 22% of households whose housing needs were not being met through the private sector (as of mid-June 2013).

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

The need for affordable housing is acute for households with very low income. 36,000 households in Calgary have an average annual income of $21,000 and are considered to be in "core housing need." These households typically spend more than 50% of their income on housing. The standard of living for those currently negatively affected by the housing market in Calgary would improve through the provision of more affordable housing options. Increased direct funding for affordable housing and improved tax incentives would help address the current and growing gap in the housing market.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

The City of Calgary requests an opportunity to appear in person before the Committee at the Public Hearings in the fall of 2013 in order to elaborate on the recommendations submitted online.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided