

October 11, 2011

Ray Pennings  
Cardus  
McKenzie Towne RPO  
Calgary AB T2Z 3W3  
CanadaTO: Mayor Naheed Nenshi  
CC: Calgary City Council  
PO Box 2100 STN M  
Calgary AB T2P 2M5  
CanadaRE: Proposed amendments to Calgary Centre City Plan

Dear Mayor Nenshi,

The following are a number of suggestions for amendments to the *Calgary Centre City Plan*, drawing on the conclusions of the *Calgary City Soul* report (Cardus with the Arlington Group, October 2011).

**Section 1.0**

This section could be enhanced with some form of recognition of the role of churches—both historical and contemporary—and their communities in the development of the Calgary city centre.

**Section 2.0**

A number of updates could be considered.

Section 2.1 (6)—Create and Maintain a Caring and Safe City Centre Environment—would be enhanced by including “worship” as an activity in the Centre City, and making reference to community institutions, including places of worship, as a source of diversity and caring social connections.

Also, a new subsection (9) could be considered to add a statement that encourages communities of worship and spiritual vibrancy.

**Section 3.0**

The Centre City Vision Congress described in Section 3.1 is impressively diverse, and appears to be as broad as possible, yet it could benefit from the addition of religious leaders/institutions to its composition.

**Section 4.0**

This section of the *Centre City Plan* encourages the formation and maintenance of complete and integrated neighbourhoods. However, there is no reference to the presence of faith communities which continue to be an essential part of life for many people in Canada.

Consideration should be given (Section 4.1) to the role that churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious institutions might have within the Downtown, including the role of churches still using heritage buildings.

Under Section 4.2, Policy 1 might be improved by adding places of worship to the list of neighbourhood amenities that should be encouraged within each neighbourhood.

**Section 6.0**

Consistent with Section 6.5, a review of parking requirements for worship facilities is suggested to ensure that the ability of these uses to share parking and/or make use of public short-stay parking is recognized.

**Section 7.0**

The discussion of the Public Realm in Section 7.7 is of interest. Places of worship, depending on views and practices of their adherents, may be considered as belonging to the “semi-private domain” or even the “public domain”. Ecclesiastical architecture has made numerous significant contributions to the public realm across time, space, cultures, and religions, and might continue to do so if suitably encouraged.

**Section 8.0**

The root word of “vitality” is “*vitae*”—*life*. This section focuses on economic activity, the arts, and recreation. It could be enhanced by a discussion of community connections and a sense of belonging that can be enhanced through the continued presence of faith-based institutions.

The addition (or appropriate insertion) of a subsection dealing with the role of faith-based institutions would be appropriate here:

*Section 8.12 Faith-Based Institutions*

*Places of worship, along with associated schools and social agencies, are an integral part of the built and social environments. Historic church buildings are noted for their architecture and place in a community's heritage. Churches and other faith bodies, as human institutions, are noted for their contributions to the social fabric by providing supports and a sense of belonging for many people.*

*Policies*

- 1. Acknowledge and encourage the preservation of historic places of worship for their heritage value, and as examples of notable local architecture that help to define urban spaces.*
- 2. Recognize the role of churches as a source of stability in the social fabric, and in supporting community members in need.*
- 3. Identify faith-based institutions, and encourage their participation in community initiatives intended to implement this plan.*

**Section 9.0**

Consistent with the policies of Section 9.0, partnerships can be formed with vibrant religious institutions (and others) to create communities that can provide a full range of community-based supports, including helping the homeless, supporting initiatives to create suitable affordable housing, and fostering community inclusion. Non-profit sector organizations motivated by faith considerations can actively complement the work of other publicly-funded social service agencies.

Thank you for your consideration.



Ray Pennings  
Senior Fellow and Director of Research, Cardus  
[rpennings@cardus.ca](mailto:rpennings@cardus.ca)