

Media Release

Transformative change: the Oklahoma City example

October 29, 2012 — More than 150 Calgarians attended a Transformation Calgary presentation today about how Oklahoma City redefined itself through a limited-term, one per cent municipal sales tax dedicated to nine key cultural and recreational facilities.

Former Oklahoma City Mayor Ron Norick discussed how the Metropolitan Area Programs (MAPS) made the city a model for innovative municipal funding and urban revitalization.

“Oklahoma is a very conservative state, much like Alberta is a conservative province and the population of the Oklahoma City area is very similar to Calgary,” Norick said. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Oklahoma City was struggling to attract businesses and visitors and to keep a new generation of workers. “We needed to improve our quality of life.”

Calgary’s quality of life is also a concern, Transformation Calgary co-chair George Brookman said. Calgary lacks an estimated \$2.5 billion in funding for cultural and recreational facilities. “Calgary is falling behind. The great art shows fly over our heads because our facilities are outdated. The library of the 21st century is on the boards but it is not in the ground. The most vibrant and industrious city in the country is 10th in terms of convention centre space. Our Epcor Centre is in need of upgrades and are efforts to draw great sporting events to Calgary are hampered by the lack of a great fieldhouse and great recreational facilities.”

Like Oklahoma City, it’s time for Calgary to have a new and sustainable approach to municipal funding, Brian Felesky, Transformation Calgary co-chair, said. “We must be bold and forward thinking. The time is now to be investing in our city and we believe the Oklahoma City example could have tremendous potential in our city.”

Formed by an independent group of business and community leaders in spring 2010, Transformation Calgary is dedicated to creating sustainable funding models for cultural and recreational facilities that support the transformation of Calgary into a dynamic world-class, complete-community city.

—30—

For more information, contact:
Terry Bullick, Communications
Transformation Calgary
(403) 630.3181/terrybullick@shaw.ca