

July 29, 2020

Good afternoon Your Worship members of Regina City Council my name is John Hopkins and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce.

I am here today on behalf of our 1200 member business organization regarding the report ***COVID-19 Response - Property Tax Relief***.

I want to begin my comments by commending the Administration for the report that is before you. In fact, I cannot say enough about the work Ms Bryden has done in developing the program before you.

COVID-19 has had a major impact on the economies of the world and Regina is not immune from its wrath. Over the past number of months many businesses were shuttered but have now started to reopen.

Our initial request asked for Council to consider reducing municipal non-residential property taxes by 25% and that the total amount be paid back by the non-residential sector over a period of 5 years through an increase in the mill rate factor.

Under this scenario all non-residential property owners would see a reduction but by the same token all non-residential property owners would pay back the total amount. What we thought was attractive about our request is that all of the funds taken from the reserve would be returned to the reserve by the non-residential class of properties. Having said all that *The Cities Act* does not allow that type of action.

Over the past number of months we worked with your Administration on options to help those businesses most in need as well as looking forward.

The concept before you borrowed heavily from the City of Edmonton plan. I believe what you have is creative, timely and most importantly will have an impact.

While we were prepared to partner with you on this project, we respect the decision made by the Executive Committee and I want to clearly state that we understand that this program is a City of Regina program in its entirety.

What we like about your program is that it does fill gaps that are currently not being addressed with other programs like the cost of PPE. We have hosted a series of Zoom calls over the past number of months and one of the challenges we have heard over and over is PPE costs.

Some others include adapting to the new reality of a post COVID-19 world where safety and consumer confidence will be paramount to success including the ability to meet customer needs in new ways.

In closing we respectfully request that you support the recommendation.

Thank you,

John Hopkins

Chief Executive Officer