



## **Mayor Ken Johnston and members of City Council**

### **Re: Land Use Bylaw Amendment 3357/E-2023 Riverlands (Capstone) Area Redevelopment Plan – Flexibility Amendment 3574/A-2023**

On behalf of the Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce, the Red Deer Construction Association and BILD – Central Alberta as well as other identified industry partners, please find this letter as our support for the needed Capstone Area Redevelopment Plan amendments.

The Red Deer Chamber of Commerce, The Red Deer Construction Association, and BILD Central Alberta each have members that are involved, in real estate development, construction, or sales in the city of Red Deer. We are pleased to have the opportunity to share our collective input with council on the proposed changes to the Capstone Area Redevelopment.

The Capstone Area Redevelopment Plan was approved in 2016 and over the past 7 years has seen a municipal investment of well over \$40 million. This project has not met the expectations of the community and despite the active marketing and promotion of the site over the last several years, its performance has been disappointing.

We acknowledge and appreciate the initiative taken by administration to review the land use bylaw with the intent of adding additional land uses and flexibility to the development process in Capstone. The proposed changes are quite minor in nature and are unlikely, on their own, to generate any additional activity in this project. While we support the proposed amendments and encourage council to vote in favour of this bylaw, we would also suggest that much more needs to be done to move this project forward and help the city to take advantage of the significant investment of time and money that has been made in Capstone.

Our members have expressed some frustration with respect to the Capstone concept, the process of parcel acquisition & project approval, and the size of the expenditure. In 2020, Stone Olafson was hired to conduct a survey which highlighted some apparent challenges with the alignment between the Capstone vision and needs/desires of the consumer and marketplace for a city like Red Deer. The Discovery Bus is an innovative idea however, the need to “socialize” consumers to learn about and understand the vision perhaps is an indication that it might be the vision that needs the work and not the consumer.



As noted above, we support the proposed amendments that are the subject of today's public hearing. This needs to be the first of several changes to help move this project forward. One of those steps may need to be a re-thinking of the vision behind Capstone. Is it viable in a timeframe that makes sense for our city given the investment that we have made? Our members would be prepared to volunteer to serve on a task force to generate further options for council's consideration. There will be no quick fixes to the challenges facing Capstone but, together we will be able to create local solutions for the benefit of our community.

The building and development industry in Red Deer is deeply concerned about the progress of this project and time has long past since more marketing initiatives or cosmetic investments will be effective. We are proposing that the City of Red Deer create a city led **Capstone Taskforce** that would include 6-8 Red Deer building and industry leaders to review the Capstone project and ensure that this project moves forward without further delay.

On behalf of the Red Deer & District Chamber, the Red Deer Construction Association and BILD Central Alberta and its members, we thank you for your consideration and look forward to further progress in the coming weeks.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Robinson".

Scott Robinson  
CEO, Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce.

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A small, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Gies".

Gary Gies  
Executive Director, Red Deer Construction Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denie Olmstead".

Denie Olmstead  
CEO, Building Industry and Land Development Association – Central Alberta (BILD Central Alberta)