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Living Wage and The City of Calgary Frequently Asked Questions

Is Council Being Asked to Approve a Living Wage?

No. The current decision before Council is whether a policy *should be developed*. If Council decides to develop a policy, the proposed policy would be brought back to Council for approval later in the year. At that time, Council would have the opportunity to review and approve, amend or reject the policy.

Would the Living Wage Establish a New Minimum Wage for Calgary?

No. If developed, a Living Wage would only apply to The City of Calgary and those it chooses to do business with. Businesses not associated with The City would not be affected.

Why is The City of Calgary Considering a Living Wage Policy?

In 2007, City Council approved the Sustainable Ethical and Environmental Purchasing Policy (SEEPP) that established basic ethical and environmental standards that it expects its suppliers to adhere to. When this policy was approved, City Council asked for a report on the impacts of including a Living Wage clause in the SEEPP policy.

Would Calgary be the First City to Adopt a Living Wage Policy?

No. Currently there are 125 cities in the United States that have adopted such policies including Atlanta, Boston, Baltimore, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, San Francisco, San Jose and San Antonio. Calgary, however, would be the first Canadian city to adopt such a policy.

If Council Votes in Favour of Developing a Living Wage Policy, what Impact will this Have on The City Budget and the Tax Rate?

None. Currently, City Council is only being asked whether or not it wants to develop a policy, not approve it. If Council asks for a policy to be developed, the budgetary impact would be provided when the policy was brought to Council for approval. Council would then have the opportunity to approve, reject or amend the policy based on the cost.

Are There Exemptions to the Policy?

In the United States, many Living Wage policies include exemptions for certain types of businesses and classes of employees. The question of exemptions will be considered if Council decides to proceed with developing a policy.
