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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **ESTABLISHING REVENUE-POSITIVE ANCHOR TENANTS KEY ASPECT OF “A NEW GAME” FOR THE ABBOTSFORD CENTRE**

*...new strategic direction will set clear terms for the engagement of new tenants and will not allow for direct subsidies of franchises operating as private businesses*

**TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2014 (ABBOTSFORD, B.C.)** – One of the most important aspects of “A New Game” -- the new strategic direction for the freshly renamed Abbotsford Centre -- is the baseline priority of engaging revenue-positive anchor tenants in the months and years to come.

“We will be very clear and disciplined in the approach we take to new anchor tenants for the Abbotsford Centre in the future,” said Mayor Bruce Banman, speaking on behalf of Abbotsford City Council at a news conference held today at the facility.

Since opening in 2009, the building has served as the home of the Abbotsford Heat -- the American Hockey League affiliate of the Calgary Flames of the National Hockey League. That tenancy arrangement was governed by a supply agreement struck in 2010 which has proved unwieldy and costly for the City and its ratepayers.

“On the one hand, we’re pleased the Calgary Flames chose Abbotsford in the first place and we certainly appreciate all of the efforts and energies that have been poured into the venture by Abbotsford Heat team president Ryan Walter, his employees, coaches, players and, of course, the local sponsors and fans of the club,” said Banman. “Yet the bottom line is that this AHL team agreement did not serve the best interests of the citizens of Abbotsford and we needed to find a solution to the significant financial burden it placed on the community.”

That solution is a \$5.5 million termination agreement with Calgary Flames and the relocation of the Abbotsford Heat for 2014/15 hockey season. The City is already actively pursuing new potential anchor tenants for coming seasons at the Abbotsford Centre.

“We will not contemplate subsidizing private businesses and we will ensure that ongoing community use of the facility remains a major emphasis going forward,” said Banman, who indicated the City will not rush the process simply to fill tenancies. “We will look for revenue-positive, long-term solutions that are natural fits for the facility and the community. In order for

the Abbotsford Centre to live up to its potential as a valuable community asset, we must attract tenants that resonate with the residents, businesses, sports and community groups of the City.”

Among those marking the departure of the Abbotsford Heat and the introduction of “*A New Game*” was Calgary Flames President and Chief Executive Officer, Ken King.

“In 2010 we came to Abbotsford with our AHL affiliate at the behest of the City Administration of the day,” said King. “Our aims were simple: to establish a home in the American Hockey League where we could develop our younger players in a strong community environment. The economics did not turn out the way any of us intended, despite the tremendous efforts of many men and women who made it their mission to convert the allegiances of local hockey fans, at least at the AHL level, to the Heat.”

King added: “Notwithstanding economics, our experiences here in the Fraser Valley have been good. We made good friends here, have wonderful local partners and believe that our players have been served well in this market. Unfortunately, the time has come for us to move on.”

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