

Mid-cycle Budget Adjustments 2019-2022

By Kristoffer Moen for Calgary City Council | November 25, 2019

Introduction

Thank-you your Worship and Councillors for the opportunity to speak today.

Economic and Political Climate

In 2019 I have canvassed over 8000 doors talking to Calgarians about the United Conservative Platform; Alberta Strong and Free, a Blueprint for Getting Albertans Back to Work. Calgarians, in a record mandate sent 23 MLAs to do the following:

- Make life more affordable through Repealing the Carbon Tax.
- Broad economic corporate tax cut on job creators to generate 55,000 jobs over 4 years.
- Get our fiscal house in order by returning to balance revenue and spending.

Calgarians are not receptive to tax increases. Many are in dire need of job creation measures in these uncertain times.

Transit

I believe Transit should be a use it or lose it proposition.

Our Transit network is largely based around the Monday to Friday commuter traffic. In these financially difficult times, Calgary Transit should be continually tasked with removing services that do not have enough riders to justify continued operation. Buses can be moved or parked for extended periods if not required.

Low Income Transit Pass

The Low Income Transit Pass found its self being unsustainable because the program was over subscribed since inception. Further there was no long term funding commitment beyond the pilot.

As a society, we need to find a place where programs can be evaluated on their performance, holistically across the various social programs, and without passion or prejudice.

Evaluating LITP on a holistic basis reveals that an \$18 increase in monthly transportation costs is well balanced considering increases in other social programs. AISH, for example, has increased over \$100/month compared to when LITP was established. The overall social services budget has increased 15% to account for higher program subscription and targeted increases in program funding.

Opportunities Calgary Investment Fund

The Opportunities Calgary Investment Fund started off with great promise for job creation when Parkland Fuels consolidated of their head offices in Calgary. However, the more recent 7 initiatives have failed to meet the goal of getting Albertan's back to work.

I cannot justify giving cash incentives and tax credits to Tech sector companies that will use funds to hire out of province people. Calgary in the new economy risks excluding out of work Albertans.

I would recommend that remaining uncommitted OCIF dollars be returned and the money applied to broad based commercial property tax relief.

14 new communities

After a little debate on twitter, I think its appropriate to comment on the notion that property taxes are increasing because of this council's decision to launch 14 new communities.

From canvassing my own community of Citadel twice in the last 8 months, many of neighbours are employed in the construction trades industry. Additionally, many of the tradespeople have transitioned out of the energy sector. The Alberta Strong and Free platform policies on getting Albertans back to work also apply to the 14 new communities. There is broad based support for a small increase in property taxes to achieve \$2Billion private sector economic growth and the preservation and creation of thousands of jobs.

Green Line

A quick comment on the Green Line.

The current funding crunch with the provincial government is caused largely because Albertans could not sustain the largest personal tax increase in Alberta's history; the carbon tax. While Green Line supporters living in Crescent Heights, Bridgeland or Inglewood could justify the carbon tax; majority of Albertan's saw no return on investment.

Without the provincial funding adjustment, there is still the gigantic problem of envisioning a path where Federal dollars for phase 2 flow at any point in my lifetime. I fear that Green Line phase 2 will have to wait until mass transit projects are funded and delivered in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal before Calgary sees phase 2 funding.

I invite anyone with a different funding proposal to post a blog, pen an opinion editorial, or post a YouTube video with their detailed path to get funding for the North Central Green Line.

Thank you

Thank you for your time. I'm happy answer questions.

