



Backgrounder: Fall 2019 Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results

November 12, 2019

The City conducts the annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey to gather citizens' views about living in Calgary, perception of quality of life, attitudes towards City Administration and Council, and perspectives of City programs and services. Findings from this annual survey of citizens provide a performance-based report for Council and Administration, and serves as an important tool for understanding the needs and perceptions of Calgarians and identifying areas for improvement on an ongoing basis.

Given that the Citizen Satisfaction Survey is a year-over-year longitudinal survey, it provides more than opinions captured in a single moment of time; tracking citizens' perceptions over time allows for comparison against previous years' findings and allows The City to gauge and better understand shifts and changes in perception. Additionally, the survey shows that The City values citizens' opinions by giving them an opportunity to provide feedback.

Context:

The City conducts research initiatives and engagement activities throughout the year, many of which are dedicated to some dimension of service delivery and service value to citizens. The Citizen Satisfaction Survey is one of those initiatives.

Methodology:

The Fall 2019 Citizen Satisfaction Survey was conducted by Ipsos in partnership with The City and in accordance with The City's competitive bid process.

- Total sample size for the telephone survey: 2,502 randomly selected Calgarians, 18 years of age and older.
- The sample was drawn from both cell phones (40 per cent) and landlines (60 per cent).
- The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 2.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Where possible, results are compared to previous iterations of the Quality of Life and Citizen Satisfaction Survey as well as its parallel study, the Spring Pulse survey conducted in the spring.

Key Findings:

Quality of Life

- Although perceptions about the quality of life in Calgary remain strong, this year's survey results tell us that the 2019 results are slightly lower than this time last year.
 - In Fall 2019, 83% of Calgarians say the quality of life in Calgary today is "good," three percentage points lower than Fall 2018 (86%).
- Perceptions of an "improved" quality of life have also notably declined since this time last year, while perceptions of a "worsened" quality of life have significantly increased.
 - Slightly less than one-half (44%) of Calgarians say the quality of life in Calgary has "stayed the same" in the past three years, statistically lower than 49% in Fall 2018.
 - Four-in-ten (40%) say the quality of life has "worsened," notably up 11 points from 29% in Fall 2018.

- Current perceptions of an “improved” quality of life in the past three years (16%) remain statistically lower than in Fall 2018 (22%).
- Although most Calgarians agree that Calgary is a “great place to make a life” (79%) this is down from Fall 2018 (83%); furthermore, fewer believe Calgary is a “great place to make a living” (63%) than in Fall 2018 (71%).
- While most (76%) also agree Calgary is “on the right track to being a better city 10 years from now,” this is significantly decreased from Fall 2018 levels (84%).

Issue Agenda

- When it comes to what Calgarians think are the most important issues facing their community, and the issue they feel should receive the greatest attention from local leaders, one-third (35%) of Calgarians cite “infrastructure, traffic and roads” as an important issue; while this continues to dominate the Issue Agenda, it is statistically down 5 percentage points from Fall 2018 (40%).
 - Ranking second on the issue agenda is “transit” (17%), consistent with Fall 2018 (16%), while “crime, safety and policing” follows in third place with 15% of Calgarians citing it as an important issue (on par with 14% in Fall 2018).
 - Of note, “budget and spending (11%),” “taxes” (11%) and the “economy” (8%) have gained prominence on the Issue Agenda in 2019.

Perception of Services

- Three-quarters (74%) of Calgarians say they are satisfied with the overall level and quality of services and programs provided by The City; although this is down from 77% in the Fall of 2018, satisfaction with services and programs in 2019 remains strong.
- A majority of Calgarians are satisfied with each of the 35 services and programs assessed, with satisfaction at 90% or higher for 13 services and programs, and 80% to 89% for another 11 services.
 - The highest satisfaction ratings are for the Calgary Fire Department (98%), 9-1-1 (98%), disaster planning and response (95%), and the quality of drinking water (95%).
 - Statistically significant increases from Fall 2018 are seen for satisfaction with snow removal (75%, up 8 percentage points since Fall 2018) and for road maintenance (73%, up 9 percentage points since Fall 2018).
 - The lowest satisfaction ratings are for property tax assessment (64%) and on-street bikeways (60%).
 - The highest statistically significant decreases from Fall 2018 are seen for satisfaction with:
 - Property tax assessment (64%, down 13 percentage points since Fall 2018);
 - Downtown revitalization (77%, down 9 percentage points since Fall 2018);
 - City growth management (75%, down 7 percentage points since Fall 2018);
 - On-street bikeways (60%, down 7 percentage points since Fall 2018);
- Affordable housing, social services, the Calgary Police Service and transportation related services such as transit and road maintenance emerge as the most desired areas for increased investment.
- When asked if The City should invest more, less or the same amount in specific services and programs, one-half or more believe The City should invest more in 8 out of the 35 services covered in the survey.
- Notably, areas where Calgarians say they want more investment tend to be those they are least satisfied with.



- When asked if The City should invest more, less or the same amount in specific services and programs, at least 20% or more Calgarians say The City should invest less in three services out of 35.

Perception of Taxes

- More than one-half (54%) of Calgarians give The City a “good value” rating for the value of their property tax dollars, significantly lower than in Fall 2018 (59%).
 - In Calgarians’ own words, “value” related to municipal services is defined as “good quality services” (51%), “appropriate spending” (49%), “good customer service” (12%), accessible and convenient services (10%), the “provision of specific services” (9%), and government “transparency” (3%).
- Calgarians are fairly split with respect to supporting tax increases to maintain or expand services (44%, consistent with 41% in Spring 2019, but notably lower than 52% in Fall 2018) compared to supporting service cuts to maintain or reduce taxes (50%, statistically down from 53% in Spring 2019, remaining significantly higher than 43% in Fall 2018).
- For the first time in Fall survey tracking, a preference for service cuts over tax increases emerges.
- Interest in knowing how property tax dollars are invested remains strong:
 - In Fall 2019, a large majority (94%) agree that they are “interested in knowing how their property tax dollars are invested in various City services,” identical to 94% in Fall 2018.
 - However, less than six-in-ten (55%) agree “The City does a good job of providing citizens with information about how their property tax dollars are invested in various City services,” significantly lower than 60% in Fall 2018.

Perception of Customer Service Delivery & Communications

- Calgarians are satisfied with the overall level and quality of customer service: a majority (74%) of Calgarians who contacted or dealt with The City in the past 12 months are satisfied with the overall level and quality of customer service received.
- A majority also agree the “quality of customer service from The City is consistently high” (81%) similar to levels in Fall 2018 (83%).
- Ratings have also increased for citizens feeling that “The City of Calgary makes customer service a priority” (79%), significantly lower than 82% in Fall 2018.
- Overall satisfaction with the quality of City information and communications remains stable at 75%, down 5 points from 80%
- More than one-half (54%) of Calgarians say they have access to “just the right amount” of information from The City, slightly less than Fall 2018 (57%), while 44% say they have access to “too little” information, a significant 3 percentage point increase from 41% in Fall 2018.
- More than seven-in-ten (72%) Calgarians report that The City communicates well with citizens about its services, programs, policies and plans.

Perception of Reputation & Trust

- Overall, one-half (50%) of Calgarians have a favourable impression of The City, significantly lower than 68% in Fall 2018.
- Two-thirds (66%) of Calgarians believe that “City Council and City Administration work collaboratively to make the best possible decisions for the future of Calgary,” significantly down 8 percentage points since Fall 2018 (74%).



- Seven-in-ten survey respondents (70%) are satisfied with the way Council and Administration combined are running The City, showing a notable decrease since Fall 2018 (79%).
- While 71% of Calgarians agree that “The City of Calgary practices open and accessible government,” this has statistically declined 7 percentage points since Fall 2018.
- Declines also emerge for:
 - Citizens agreeing that “The City allows citizens to have meaningful input into decision-making” (60%, notably down 7 percentage points from Fall 2018); and,
 - “The City uses input from Calgarians in decision-making about City projects and services” (65%, statistically down from 70% in Fall 2018).

Next Steps:

- November 12 – Council will receive a presentation of the 2019 Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results
- November 12 - Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results are released publicly
- November 12 – Survey results will be posted to Calgary.ca and internal message to employees.

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