

**Mid-cycle Adjustments: Primary Themes from Citizen and Council Engagement**

Theme	Citizen Engagement and Research	Council Interviews
<b>Calgary's Economy</b>  <i>Note: a number of the themes identified under this topic are further explored in other topics below.</i>	<p>Calgary's economy was identified as the top-ranked issue in the citizen engagement (up from fourth place two years ago) and in the citizen research results.</p> <p>Citizen research results show that 89% believe The City can play a role in helping the community weather the economic downturn. However, only 25% say The City's impact on the economy is major, compared to 58% for the Provincial government and 47% for the Federal government.</p>	<p>Calgary's economy was the most frequently mentioned emerging issue during Council interviews.</p> <p>Many Council members believe The City should demonstrate leadership, but there is some debate about the appropriate extent of The City's role, and right level of activity in promoting economic growth. Some cautioned against The City taking ownership of this issue.</p>
<b>Infrastructure Investment</b>	<p>Creating jobs and building/improving infrastructure were two of the means identified in the citizen research to help improve the local economy, albeit by a minority of respondents.</p>	<p>There was a spectrum of opinions among Council members. Some support new investments that will make Calgary liveable, and support economic diversification. Others advocate delaying projects until economic conditions have improved.</p> <p>Council members are cautious about the impact on future operating costs and stressed the need to factor this into infrastructure investment decisions. Some also emphasized that if part of the rationale for infrastructure investment is to support the economy, there needs to be clear evidence of a connection to job creation.</p>
<b>Efficiency, Productivity, Taxes and Fees</b>	<p>This was the single largest theme identified from the citizen engagement written comments. Citizen engagement results identified efficiency and cost saving as the highest priority.</p> <p>Citizen engagement shows considerably more appetite now (compared to two years ago) for lowering tax rate increases rather than adding or improving services.</p>	<p>Council members emphasized the need to ensure that the organization is "lean" and to continue to seek service efficiencies as much as possible.</p> <p>Many said that there will be significant pressure to reduce the previously-approved tax rate increase. There is no consensus yet as to what the right level is, and what service impacts would be acceptable. Some cautioned about focussing solely on tax rates as a measure of affordability, and noted the impact of user fees and utility rates as part of the overall picture.</p>
<b>Service Levels and Quality of Life</b>	<p>Maintaining service levels remains a priority for citizens. In particular, citizen research results show that a majority of citizens support investing more in transit, affordable housing, traffic, transportation planning, social services and roads. There were no service areas where a majority of citizens supported investing less, and only one (bike lanes on streets) where more than 20% support investing less.</p>	<p>Generally, Council members see Action Plan as solid, and said that as much as possible The City should stay the course. Most are not hearing support for service reductions from constituents, and several cautioned against taking a short-term approach reacting to the current economic situation, and putting at risk the long-term goal of a liveable community. Some services were identified as potentially needing more attention (affordable housing, social services and development/business approvals).</p>