

**People, Innovation and Collaboration Services Report to  
Intergovernmental Affairs Committee  
2023 March 15**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
IGA2023-0086  
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## **YYC Matters – 2023 Provincial Election**

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Intergovernmental Affairs Committee recommends that Council direct Administration to use the proposed approach and themes to conduct a 2023 YYC Matters Provincial Campaign.

### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, 2023 MARCH 15:**

That Council direct Administration to use the proposed approach and themes to conduct a 2023 YYC Matters Provincial Campaign.

Opposition to Recommendation: Councillor McLean

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## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- This report seeks direction to design and implement an information campaign to highlight local priorities in the lead up to the 2023 May 29 provincial election. While using the non-partisan “YYC Matters” branding of past exercises, the proposed form and content will feature important differences.
- What does this mean to Calgarians? Provincial governments shape The City of Calgary’s ability to deliver the services Calgarians expect. YYC Matters is an opportunity to draw the attention of the parties competing to be the next government by informing them of pressing local concerns, while providing Calgarians with important information about how that government can address those concerns. Based on recent direction from Council and Calgarians, the planned focus is on: Economic Resilience; Social Resilience; Climate Resilience; Transforming Downtown; and Modern Government.
- Why does this matter? It is important that Council support the proposed priorities which will be the focus of YYC Matters and to understand the safeguards that will be put in place to ensure The City adheres to the requirements of legislation and protocol. This will contribute to a successful campaign that highlights local issues.
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

## **DISCUSSION**

With direction from Council, Administration will develop the detailed messages for a 2023 YYC Matters campaign, as well as the communications plan to best deliver those messages in the context of the upcoming provincial election. The present report identifies the core themes and their rationale, and includes a high-level look at communications, focused primarily on proposed differences from past campaigns.

### Proposed Priorities

The YYC Matters campaign is focused on a limited set of issues given the short duration of the writ period and public and political attention spans. To identify the most pressing issues for 2023, Administration drew from recent Council direction as well as the positions of key

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advocacy partners that can be counted on to amplify The City’s own messages. Together, these point to a YYC Matters campaign focused on:

1. **Economic Resilience:** Council’s Strategic Direction for 2023-2026, for instance, calls for advocacy to the provincial government for legislative reform and long-term funding agreements to ensure revenue is reasonable and predictable. It is anticipated that City messaging will be echoed by partners such as Alberta Municipalities, who plan to raise municipal finance leading up to the election.
2. **Social resilience:** Council direction in The City’s recent budget submission signalled the urgent need to rapidly increase and sustain capital funding for affordable housing. The need for greater provincial involvement in housing was also a major theme of Edmonton Mayor Sohi’s 2022 “State of the City” address.
3. **Climate Resilience:** The City’s most recent provincial budget submission called for investments in critical climate resilient infrastructure. This remains unfunded after the release of the provincial budget, including a commitment to Phase 3 of the Bow River Reservoir Options Study.
4. **Transforming Downtown:** The City of Calgary’s budget submission and Council’s Strategic Direction for 2023-2026 each call for the province to leverage The City’s own downtown strategy and investments. Aligned downtown messaging is evident in the Calgary Chamber of Commerce’s election platform advocacy.”
5. **Modern Government:** Council’s Strategic Direction for 2023-2026 calls for a more productive, collaborative, and complementary relationship with the provincial government. This is anticipated to continue to be a priority for Alberta Municipalities as improvements to our intergovernmental communication and collaboration is increasingly important to ensure decisions are informed by shared experience and local expertise.

### **Communications plan**

YYC Matters is meant primarily to inform Calgarians by providing them with materials to support their decision making at the polls. The tools of past campaigns have reached a wide audience (Attachment 2) and provide a helpful starting point for the 2023 communications plan (Attachment 3).

In the past, the communications plan included a YYC Matters survey of major political parties, asking direct questions and seeking commitments to corporate priorities. The answers to these questions along with important background information was shared publicly on yycmatters.ca to help Calgarians navigate their election choices.

Based on the experiences of previous YYC Matters campaigns, a refreshed approach where we see the elimination of the survey component in favour of a more informational approach is being pursued. To this end, Administration, led by Intergovernmental Relations, Communications and Law will develop a communications plan and content for YYC Matters which is inspired in part by the City of Edmonton’s recent approach. The “Ask About Edmonton” campaign uses high-level, City messages that Edmontonians can ask their local candidates or inform their own deliberations.

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For the 2023 YYC Matters campaign, it is proposed that issues will be articulated in terms of “what’s important to Calgarians,” rather than the corporate or “City of Calgary” focus of past campaigns. The issues themselves were drawn from City of Calgary sources to ensure our participation in a provincial election remains within municipal jurisdiction. Following their initial selection, the issues were reviewed against results from the 2022 Fall Survey of Calgarians, to verify overall alignment with the priorities of Calgarians.

### **ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken        | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

The YYC Matters campaign is primarily a communications initiative, as such engagement and communication has not been required to this point.

The City will continue to engage with the City of Edmonton to identify areas of alignment and to learn from their experience with the “Ask About Edmonton” campaign.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Social**

The proposed YYC Matters campaign will draw attention to several issues, including affordable housing, community safety and the Family and Community Support Services Grant that directly and indirectly affect The City’s ability to foster social resilience.

#### **Environmental**

The proposed YYC Matters campaign will draw attention to issues such as economic diversification and investment in key City of Calgary climate resilient infrastructure that directly and indirectly affect The City’s ability to enhance environmental resilience.

#### **Economic**

The proposed YYC Matters campaign will draw attention to issues such as renewing the fiscal framework that directly affects The City’s ability to increase economic resilience.

#### **Service and Financial Implications**

Existing operating funding - Base

\$10,000 – \$15,000 (based on 2019 YYC Matters campaign)

By elevating Calgarians’ priorities during the election period, The City may have greater success in obtaining both the operating and capital dollars needed to fund programs that are critical to Calgarians.

Expenses related to the YYC Matters campaign will be accommodated within the existing operating budget. No additional staff costs are required, as work will be led by staff in

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Intergovernmental Relations working closely with colleagues in Law and Communications. Actual expenses may include creative work, printing, website hosting and videography.

### **RISK**

The primary risk is that The City could be perceived as acting politically, by favouring a particular outcome or by simply engaging in a provincial election process. This is not the intention of YYC Matters, and past campaigns have taken careful measures to minimize the potential for this perception. The 2023 campaign will take these same steps, including clear messaging about why provincial elections matter to The City and the informational purpose of YYC Matters.

There is a related legal risk that the YYC Matters campaign could be seen as violating the Alberta Elections Act, and the rules governing third-party spending in particular. This was also a risk to the 2019 campaign, during which The City engaged the province and the Elections Commissioner to ensure a better understanding of what The City could and could not do.

Based on those discussions as well as advice from The City's Law Department, the 2019 campaign took steps to minimize exposure to this risk. These will be reapplied, including:

- The above measures to minimize reputational risk
- Communicating via City channels only (e.g., calgary.ca; Twitter; Facebook; TV displays), though not those that include a cost to the campaign (e.g., bus benches)
- Monitoring platforms and statements to ensure that a City priority does not become too closely associated with one party, removing related communications where that occurs.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. YYC Matters – 2019 Provincial Election Overview
3. Proposed Communications Tactics: YYC Matters Campaign – 2023 Provincial Election
4. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
GM Chris Arthurs	People, Innovation and Collaboration Services	Approve