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I have read and understand the above statement.

ENDORSEMENT STATEMENT ON ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The purpose of The City of Calgary is to make life better every day. To fully realize our purpose, we are committed to addressing racism and other forms of discrimination within our programs, policies, and services and eliminating barriers that impact the lives of Indigenous, Racialized, and other marginalized people. It is expected that participants will behave respectfully and treat everyone with dignity and respect to allow for conversations free from bias and prejudice.

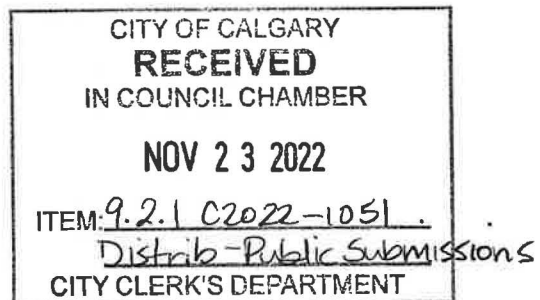
I have read and understand the above statement.

First name (required) James

Last name (required) Stauch

Are you speaking on behalf of a group or Community Association? (required) No

What is the group that you represent?





## PUBLIC SUBMISSION FORM

What do you wish to do?  
(required)

**Submit a comment**

How do you wish to attend?

You may bring a support person should you require language or translator services. Do you plan on bringing a support person?

What meeting do you wish to attend or speak to? (required)

**Council**

Date of meeting (required)

**Nov 23, 2022**

What agenda item do you wish to comment on? (Refer to the Council or Committee agenda published [here](#) )

(required - max 75 characters)

**Nov. 22-26. Adjustments to One Calgary Service Plans and Budgets**

Are you in favour or opposition of the issue? (required)

**Neither**

If you are submitting a comment or wish to bring a presentation or any additional materials to Council, please insert below. Maximum of 15 MB per submission (5 attachments, 3 MB per pdf document, image, video)  
If you have additional files to attach, email them to [publicsubmissions@calgary.ca](mailto:publicsubmissions@calgary.ca)

**I am writing with two particular suggestions in mind:**

First, I am strongly opposed to the proposed four-year budget increase to the Calgary Police Services. Were those funds to be targeted to community and neighbourhood services - in particular affordable housing. In fact, I believe the entire proposed police budget increase could be better devoted to preventative measures, including a housing-first approach. The police department should instead be encouraged to rationalize their existing budget. The cost of keeping the helicopters in the air, for example, is exorbitant and unjustifiable for a city with our population and relatively low crime rate. The helicopters are rarely used for their original purpose - curbing the need for high speed chases, and are the number one menace to peaceful living - day or night - in this city.

Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

Also, there is a profound imbalance between proposed (low) investments in climate-related initiatives relative to investments in large-scale automobile infrastructure, which also has the inner city yet again subsidizing suburban sprawl. Calgary has declared a climate emergency, so we have to act like it, which means significantly different preferences and allocations away from auto-oriented, energy-intensive initiatives toward green, low-carbon and sustainable building and transportation initiatives. Our investment in the urban canopy or in incentivizing home and commercial solar, for example, pale in comparison with Edmonton.

As such, please consider revising this budget in a way that centers the pressing realities of 2022 - the climate emergency, rising poverty, and housing affordability in

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particular.



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**Please note that your name and comments will be made publicly available in the Council agenda. Your e-mail address will not be included in the public record.**

I have read and understand the above statement.

### ENDORSEMENT STATEMENT ON ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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I have read and understand the above statement.

First name (required) **Mary Anne**

Last name (required) **Schleinich**

Are you speaking on behalf of a group or Community Association? (required) **No**

What is the group that you represent?



What do you wish to do?  
(required)

Submit a comment

How do you wish to attend?

You may bring a support person should you require language or translator services. Do you plan on bringing a support person?

What meeting do you wish to attend or speak to? (required)

Council

Date of meeting (required)

Nov 22, 2022

What agenda item do you wish to comment on? (Refer to the Council or Committee agenda published [here](#).)

(required - max 75 characters)

Budget for Climate Strategy

Are you in favour or opposition of the issue? (required)

Neither

If you are submitting a comment or wish to bring a presentation or any additional materials to Council, please insert below. Maximum of 15 MB per submission (5 attachments, 3 MB per pdf document, image, video)  
If you have additional files to attach, email them to [publicsubmissions@calgary.ca](mailto:publicsubmissions@calgary.ca)

Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

Please notice my comment. It reads: "You think Calgary is too cold for a heat pump? When my high efficiency furnace died, I decided on a heat pump. I live in NW Calgary. I turned off the gas to my house May 2020." I linked the tweet to an Wired article about heat pumps. My tweet got over 9,800 impressions, and I received 3 telephone calls by interested people in NW Calgary. I generally get 25 - 250 impressions, so this tells you that there is a great deal of interest in climate friendly sources of heat and it makes a lot of sense to retrofit a home. Cities who are leaders in climate action offer more than financing. They capitalize on existing interest by generating even greater interest through incentives which direct money from business as usual into deep retrofits which are essential to meeting the targets. People are chomping at the bit but the city is lagging behind. It took me two winters with no heat to figure out how to get around Enmax which wanted me to pay for an expensive dig. The city needs to improve its relationship with Enmax so that it becomes an ambitious part of the Climate Strategy.



Mar 2022 · 31 days

TWEET HIGHLIGHTS

**Top Tweet** earned 9,802 impressions

Why You (and the Planet) Really Need a Heat Pump [wired.com/story/why-you-...](https://wired.com/story/why-you-...) via [@wired](#) You think Calgary is too cold for a heat pump? When my high efficiency furnace died, I decided on a heat pump. I live in NW Calgary. Turned off the gas to my house May 2020. [@ClimateHubYYC](#)

↩ 11 ↻ 28 ❤ 50

[View Tweet activity](#)

[View all Tweet activity](#)

**Top mention** earned 167 engagements



**Mark Z. Jacobson**

[@mzjacobson](#) · Mar 5

If you are not part of the solution [@CandiceBergenMP](#), you are part of the problem

..which is expanding oil+gas

The solution is transitioning Canada+world to 100% [#WindWaterSolar](#) energy+storage for everything

[web.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jac...](https://web.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jac...)

MAR 2022 SUMMARY

Tweets  
**262**

Profile visits  
**1,811**

New followers  
**12**

## **2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets Comment Supporting Data and Context**

Graduate Students' Association (GSA) of the University of Calgary  
1030 ES, 844 Campus Place NW, Calgary AB T2A 1E5

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### **Why the City should care about Graduate Students**

Post-secondary education (PSE) is a provincial matter, and much of the direct cost of education (i.e., tuition and fees) are set by the institution and the provincial government. However, students face a number of *indirect* costs that can prevent them from either accessing PSE or completing a PSE degree—and municipal governments can play a role in reducing the burden these indirect costs place on students. The most important indirect costs, from student perspectives, are *food insecurity, mental health, and housing/rent-related insecurity*.

Hence why our asks—**Ask #1, Ask 1.1, and Ask 1.2**—seek to increase funding for *Social Programs and Services*, and to expand the range of efforts the city undertakes to improve the lives of Calgarians (*including graduate students*) in light of the many social and economic challenges we all face.

For instance, according to Meal Exchange, in 2021 approximately 41.5% of University of Calgary students were experiencing *moderate* food insecurity,<sup>1</sup> while a further 24.6% of University of Calgary students experienced *severe* food insecurity,<sup>2</sup> for a total of 66.1% of students being classified as food *insecure*.<sup>3</sup> Food insecurity amongst students has, in fact, been a persistent problem: in 2016, 30% of University of Calgary students were food insecure, which was “a rate much higher than the municipal average.”<sup>4</sup> Graduate students, it can be inferred, are *particularly vulnerable*, as they represent only 18% of the University of Calgary’s population but comprised 23.1% of the survey respondents.<sup>5</sup>

For mental health, it has long been established that university students are vulnerable to mental health disorders; more recent data has also shown that *Albertan* students are

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as answering “yes” to between 2-4 questions out of 6, with questions like, “I worried my food would run out before I got money to buy more.”

<sup>2</sup> defined as answering “yes” to between 5-6 questions out of 6, with questions like, “I worried my food would run out before I got money to buy more.”

<sup>3</sup> Meal Exchange. 2021. “University of Calgary 2021 Student Food Experience Survey Report,” Retrieved from: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5fa8521696a5fd2ab92d32e6/t/631a0ae8bce03130f83a346c/16626511140/University+of+Calgary+-+2021+Food+Experience+Survey+Report.pdf>, pg. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Meal Exchange, “2021 Food Experience Survey,” pg. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Meal Exchange, “2021 Food Experience Survey,” pg. 5.

particularly vulnerable to experiencing poor mental health outcomes during studies.<sup>6</sup> Graduate students suffer greatly from mental health-related issues: indeed, the state of mental health amongst graduate students has rightly been called a “crisis” by some authors.<sup>7</sup> As the CASA/Abacus Data cited above shows, mental health issues have become particularly salient during the pandemic,<sup>8</sup> and given that graduate students had to not only complete their studies, but also help transition undergraduate learning online in their role as teaching assistants or instructors, the pandemic very likely increased graduate student stress-levels and vulnerability to mental health-related problems beyond the municipal average.

Finally, housing insecurity continues to be a problem for students. Thanks to inflationary pressure, rent has increased an average of 16.3% from October 2021 to October 2022 in Calgary.<sup>9</sup> These same inflationary pressures have dramatically increased the price of housing as well: the Consumer Price Index for Housing has increased 14.1% from October 2021 to October 2022 in Calgary, and Calgary is one city where the housing CPI has *not* decreased noticeably during 2022.<sup>10</sup> We’ve already seen stories released that detail how a combination of (mutually reinforcing) high prices and lack of supply have negatively impacted students: a 1% vacancy rate<sup>11</sup> creating long waitlists for students<sup>12</sup> and sending them into a “lurch”.<sup>13</sup>

Each one of these areas negative impact students learning experiences—and graduate students in particular. It’s difficult, if not impossible, to complete your studies if you lack sufficient food, are suffering from poor mental health, and have no reliable shelter. And as the data shows, students—and graduate students in particular—ought to be considered a vulnerable population, given the number of challenges they face. But these are all areas that the City of Calgary can invest significant resources into, and the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets* can go a long way to addressing these concerns—if there are some modifications to the underlying numbers.

As our asks note, *Social Programs*—which includes mental health services, community organizations, and community investment—are seeing a cut from a 2022 total of \$29.2 million

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<sup>6</sup> Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, Abacus Data, Mental Health Commission of Canada. 2022. “The New Abnormal: Student Mental Health Two Years Into COVID-19,” Retrieved: [https://www.casa-aca.com/the\\_new\\_abnormal\\_report](https://www.casa-aca.com/the_new_abnormal_report), pg. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Evans et. al. 2018, “Evidence for a mental health crisis in graduate education,” *Nature Biotechnology* 36(1): 282-284.

<sup>8</sup> CASA, Abacus Data, “The New Abnormal,” pg. 1.

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://rentals.ca/national-rent-report>.

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/221122/dq221122c-eng.pdf?st=wDJ4RJK1>, pgs. 2, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Markus, J. (June 15, 2022). “Calgarians feel financial squeeze, anxiety, amid ‘virtually impossible’ rental market,” *CBC*, retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/property-market-calgary-rent-1.6490159>.

<sup>12</sup> Sherif, O. (August 28, 2022). “U of C students still dealing with waitlist for campus residence as students move in,” *CBC*, retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/university-calgary-students-housing-1.6565015>.

<sup>13</sup> Williams, R., and MacVicar, A. (July 21, 2022). “Calgary’s tight labour market leaving university students in a lurch,” *Global News*, retrieved from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/9007120/calgary-rental-market-university-students/>.



to approximately \$10 million from 2023 onward. By our calculations, this was a mere 0.64% of the budget in 2022; it will comprise *dramatically less* of the budget by 2026. While we are speculating that this is the result of COVID-specific measures being ended, we think that the approximately \$19 million being cut from this line-item can be reinvested back into social services.<sup>14</sup> Given that the concerns we've raised above are not necessarily COVID-specific, we think the reinvestment is justified in order to alleviate the burden that graduate students are facing; indeed, food insecurity *is not currently part of the Social Programs line-item*, so any additional municipal funding would be an improvement.

*Affordable Housing* is, currently, expected to see only a modest increase in funding—\$16.7 million in 2022 to \$17.9 million in 2026—and, in 2023, will only make up 0.4% of the budget.<sup>15</sup> While affordable housing is receiving a large capital investment during this period, which will help facilitate the creation of more affordable units, we believe more operational funding ought to be spent on housing grants, rent support, and research programs—the latter could, in part, help address some of the student-specific gaps that have led to the housing and rental crunches UCalgary students experienced at the beginning of the term.

Finally, *Neighborhood Support* funding is currently expected to remain static from 2022 to 2026.<sup>16</sup> We think that neighborhood support programs are essential for increasing the resilience of communities, especially for international communities. Additional funding, especially to address inequities between communities, would benefit graduate students—especially international students. Graduate students not only constitute a significant portion of new arrivals to the city but, additionally, lack many of the community supports of domestic students. More resilient and equal communities are better able to support their members, and support is something graduate students are particularly in need of during these trying times.

## ***Investing in Graduate Students Benefits Everyone***

It should be noted that even relatively right-leaning economists (like Paul Romer of the conservative Hoover Institute) recognize a role for government in funding basic research and assisting in the development of human capital. And the economics and political science professions have begun to re-emphasize Joseph Schumpeter's arguments that product and process innovation is essential for sustained growth, with the human capital-enhancing effects of education being at the forefront for developing and sustaining innovation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Pages 231-235 of the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.

<sup>15</sup> Pages 215-220 of the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.

<sup>16</sup> Pages 226-230 of the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.

<sup>17</sup> The literature on this subject is vast, but for a small selection of studies (and in particular, a small selection of studies from Paul Romer, which led to him winning the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 2018), see Romer, P.M. 1990. "Endogenous Technological Change," *Journal of Political Economy* 98(5): S71-S102; Romer, P.M. 1994. "The Origins of Endogenous Growth," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 8(1): 3-22; Romer, P.M. 2014. "Human Capital and Growth: Theory and Evidence," *Annals of Economics and Finance* 15(1): 765-816; and Nelson, R.P., and Romer, P.M. 1996. "Science, Economic Growth, and Public Policy," *Challenge* 39(2): 9-21.

Beyond product and process innovation, a better educated population is a more adaptive, tolerant, and participatory population as well.<sup>18</sup> The adaptability dimension of education is particularly important when the labour market, and even the nature of work itself, are rapidly changing, as it means that workers have a high level of skills and knowledge that can be applied in multiple contexts to address new challenges. None of these skills and knowledge are tied to a single job, too, which grants Canadians significantly more mobility than if their livelihood and skills were tied to a single, precarious job.<sup>19</sup>

If Calgary wishes to remain economically competitive, innovative, and adaptable, then an investment in human capital allows individuals to grow, learn, be creative, and apply their skills to better society as a whole. Investments in human capital also don't require the government to be omniscient in predicting future economic trends: investing in people so that *they* can expand their range of choices allows them to adapt to changing circumstances locally, nationally, and globally.

All of the above benefits of education apply to graduate students. In fact, graduate programs may be a particularly neglected source of human capital for a country. Students, and particularly graduate students, often create IP in the course of their studies and research. Indeed, according to the House Standing Committee on Industry, Science, and Technology, recent "graduates are twice as likely as their professors to create spin-off companies" based on their research,<sup>20</sup> indicating the important role that students play in cultivating innovation in Canada. That same report quoted a witness as saying that "[t]he largest intellectual property and technology transfers from academia to Canadian companies occur when one of these innovative companies hires technically well-trained graduating students," which requires integrating graduate students "into the broader innovation ecosystem in order to do design work, proof of concept and prototyping."<sup>21</sup>

Research has also shown that a graduate student body that's suffering from the psychological effects of excessive debt is also going to be far less effective at supporting undergraduates and professors, negatively impacting those aspects of education as well. Indeed, graduate students with high levels of debt are less likely to finish their degrees in the first place.<sup>22</sup> Increasing affordable housing and food security programs would go a long way to

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<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Kiess, J. 2021. "Learning by Doing: The impact of experiencing democracy in education on political trust and participation," *Politics* 42(1): 75-94.

<sup>19</sup> Empirical research has shown that firm-specific human capital makes transferring between different jobs costly, with costs increasing as the differences between jobs increases. See Gathmann, C., and Schönberg, U. 2006. "How General is Specific Human Capital," *IZA DP No. 2485*. Retrieved from: <https://docs.iza.org/dp2485.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Industry, Science, and Technology. *Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer: Promoting Best Practices*. 1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament, 2017. Report 8. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/INDU/Reports/RP9261888/indurp08/indurp08-e.pdf>, pg. 29.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 30.

<sup>22</sup> DeClou, L. 2016. "Who Stays and for How Long: Examining Attrition in Canadian Graduate Programs," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 46(4): 174-198.

reducing the debt-levels that students face; additionally, mental health services will only be *that much more important* if the provincial government refuses to fund PSI's enough to lower tuition and fees. Doing so will allow many more graduate students to complete their degrees, which means Calgary will benefit that much more from graduate student research.

Graduate students are not a resource the City should ignore. And while it may seem as though we're asking the City to spend money on a small portion of the population, the social benefits that will be accrued from investing in this group is far, far larger than the cost.

## ***Why Funding Could Be Re-Directed from the Police Budget***

*Police Services* represents the largest line-item on the budget: \$433.6 million of a 4.6% billion budget in 2022, growing to \$467.5 million of a \$4.9 billion budget in 2026.<sup>23</sup> That means police services will take up 9.5% of the budget by 2026, far and away larger than *total* Social Service spending in the city—or, indeed, other emergency services, such as *Fire and Emergency Services*.<sup>24</sup>

Again, we do recognize that part of the increases in police services are likely intended to fund, for example, de-escalation training—and such efforts most certainly will cost money. But parts of the increased spending have little to do with equity training, de-escalation, or CPS reform: for instance, the CPS is seeking to use part of the capital investment for a new gun range,<sup>25</sup> but there doesn't appear to be as large an investment in explicitly non-lethal responses. Give that, as the proposed budget also indicates, less of the public believes the CPS treat different groups equitably this year (and last) versus 2019,<sup>26</sup> and this drop is more precipitous than the drop in the percentage of Calgarians who feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night,<sup>27</sup> we're not sure that a large funding increase to CPS is the correct answer for this budget. Indeed, we'd say we're in broad agreement with Councillor Courtney Walcott that relying on policing ought to be a "last resort" when it comes to tackling public safety issues in the city,<sup>28</sup> and that alternative, more holistic measures to address crime should take priority.

We might even take it a step further: the budget indicates that part of the increased spending will be used to implement a race-based data collection service,<sup>29</sup> which other cities

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<sup>23</sup> Pages 205-211 of the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.

<sup>24</sup> *Fire and Emergency Services* is budgeted for \$248 million in 2023, for example. See Pages 183-189.

<sup>25</sup> Sharp, J. (November 21, 2022). "Calgary police seek budget boost, 100+ new officers as deliberations week begins," *CBC*, retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-budget-deliberations-police-fire-civic-organizations-1.6659624>.

<sup>26</sup> Page 208, *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.

<sup>27</sup> Page 207, *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.

<sup>28</sup> CTV Staff. (October 25, 2022). "Walcott quits Calgary Police Commission," *CTV News*, retrieved from: <https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/walcott-quits-police-commission-1.6125202?cache=yes%3FclipId%3D89619%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue>.

<sup>29</sup> Page 209 of the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.



have used to track systemic racism within their police force. But in Toronto, where the race-based data collection showed that Black Canadians faced disproportionately more force from police than other identity groups,<sup>30</sup> this data merely confirmed what activists have long been saying. The result was increased calls to move funds away from the police to more holistic, non-coercive, and humane efforts to address crime. While more data on an issue is welcome, a stronger commitment to *reduce* the use of force—rather than simply committing to research and consultation as endpoints for this budgetary period—is more in line with what vulnerable groups have asked for and *need*.

According to our *Advocacy Priorities Survey*, 76% of respondents showed “strong support” for anti-racism and accountability measures.<sup>31</sup> And while “Defund” was much more polarized, we still saw 64% generally supporting defund measures, which aligns with **Ask #2**: using funds from the CPS budget to address funding shortfalls in *Social Programs and Services*.<sup>32</sup> While it may not seem as though this is an issue that graduate students would be interested in, our survey results indicate the opposite.

The literature on how targeting the root causes of crime, rather than using punitive measures, is vast and can’t be adequately summarized here. We think, however, that investing in the services that graduate students want, and which support graduate students—among many other vulnerable groups in Calgary—has clear benefits to the city’s economic and social prospects, which should be expected to lower the incidence and impact of crime. Therefore, diverting funds from the police to affordability campaigns, accessibility issues, sustainability, and social programs in general does not, in our view, come at the cost of public safety.

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<sup>30</sup> Bond, M. (June 15, 2022). “Black people faced a disproportionate amount of force, Toronto police data says,” *CityNews*, retrieved from: <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2022/06/15/toronto-police-race-based-data/>.

<sup>31</sup> 90% of respondents showed *general* support for anti-racism and accountability measures, further highlighting graduate student’s interest in this area.

<sup>32</sup> We saw 45% of students show *strong* support for defund measures. By contrast, 8% showed strong *opposition* to defund measures. Again, while this issue is more contentious than other areas of our survey, a clear majority still supports using CPS funds for social services or alternative public safety measures.



# Comment Submission for the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*

Graduate Students' Association (GSA) of the University of Calgary  
1030 ES, 844 Campus Place NW, Calgary AB T2A 1E5

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## *The Issues and Our Asks*

As graduate students, our main concern is, of course, affordability and accessibility in post-secondary education.<sup>1</sup> High costs and lack of accessibility are particularly salient issues for graduate students: in addition to their studies, graduate students are expected to assist their professors in completing research, teach undergraduates, and contribute their *own* research to the university's stock of citations, patents, and papers. If systemic barriers to program entry and competition aren't adequately dealt with, the lack of graduate students—and lack of quality, diverse, and innovative research from these students—will have real, and quite dramatic, effects on the economy and broader society. Graduate students may be a small portion of the population, but the interests of graduate students align with wide swaths of civil society.

Post-secondary education is provincial jurisdiction, so we recognize that there's little direct funding that the City of Calgary can provide to post-secondary institutions (PSI's). That being said, the City of Calgary's *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets* could go a long way towards addressing some of the broader socio-economic issues that contribute to affordability and accessibility problems amongst students, including graduate students. Indeed, graduate students are interested in essentially all aspects of this budgetary proposal, with two additional areas—sustainability and public transit—also factoring heavily in conversations with our membership, as well as in advocacy-related survey's we have sent out on behalf of our organization. In the interest of space, we have left out some of our membership's views on sustainability and transit in order to focus on affordability and accessibility—especially because we view these areas as more amendable to budgetary changes. However, we wish to point out that graduate students would very much welcome additional funds and initiatives towards sustainability and effective public transportation, despite this document not going into those issues in depth.

Moving on to affordability and accessibility in post-secondary education, we see some scope for the current service and budget proposals to be adjusted to more comprehensively target areas like housing, food insecurity, mental health, and social support programs.

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<sup>1</sup> In our *Advocacy Priorities Survey* released this previous summer, 63% students said that they need "Responding to the rising cost of living" *right now*. This category included food security initiatives, affordable housing, and transit. A further 23% said: "I would definitely support that." In total, 87% of respondents saw affordability issues as a deeply pressing issue for them.

As such:

**Ask #1:** We'd like to see a greater proportion of the budget being spent on *Social Programs and Services*. The operating budget for all *Social Programs and Services* from 2023 to 2026 is pegged at \$103 million,<sup>2</sup> which means that every year it will decrease as a proportion of the budget, *without* any indicators listed in the budget indicating that the number of vulnerable Calgarians is expected to radically decrease over that period of time.

More specifically:

**Ask 1.1:** We'd like to see the 2022 level of funding for social programs (\$29.2 million) maintained for the 2023-2026 period, rather than it being reduced to \$10 million for this budgetary period. We think the additional funds can be used to better target otherwise underserved and undervalued vulnerable groups, *of which we think graduate students are one*, and we also think that the additional funds can be used to tackle the often-intersecting nature of food insecurity, mental health,<sup>3</sup> and housing insecurity-related problems. Indeed, food insecurity does not seem to be a part of the *Social Programs* line-item (food-related issues are spread through a number of programs, like *Climate and Environment Management*), so there's certainly room to add a food security-related focus to social programs in the city—something graduate students would very much benefit from.

**Ask 1.2:** Additional funding for affordable housing, above and beyond the operational budget and capital investments, would be welcome as well. Community strategies and neighborhood support could, in our view, deserves a higher proportion of the budget as well, especially since these programs can help communities develop more spontaneous and comprehensive social supports.

The City's policies on immigration, inclusiveness, and sustainability all align with both graduate student interests *and* can be enhanced by incorporating graduate student education into the City's long-term plans. Indeed (as we'll show below), investing in graduate students could accrue *significant* benefits for the city-at-large. It makes sense to invest in services that support graduate student education.

*However*, we recognize that the City is required to run a balanced budget, and for that reason there is less room for discretionary spending than at the provincial or federal level of government. We question, then, whether it's wise to increase spending on police services, rather than investing more heavily in affordability, sustainability, and accessibility. Indeed, concerns over police services and the amount of money that's allotted to them forms part of

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<sup>2</sup> Page 5 of the *2023-2026 Service Plans and Budgets*.

<sup>3</sup> In our *Advocacy Priorities Survey*, 71% of respondents stated that they had "strong support" for increasing access to *on campus* mental health services, which includes therapy, pharmacare, and social supports.

our advocacy efforts: our membership has asked for enhanced anti-racism efforts within the city, and an area of concern for many is finding alternative public safety measures that rely less on the Calgary Police Service (CPS).

As such:

**Ask #2:** We'd like the city to direct funding from police services to Social Programs and Policies to enhance the level of social supports the city provides for vulnerable individuals, *including graduate students*.

We do recognize, again, that part of the increases in police services are likely intended to fund, for example, de-escalation training—and such efforts most certainly will cost money. But a comprehensive transition towards public safety measures that target the root causes of crime, and are more sensitive to the inequities and discrimination that vulnerable communities have to confront with regards to policing, would better enhance public safety—and likely *enhance* the effectiveness of policies like de-escalation training. And thanks to the holistic view of society that alternative public safety measures take, the City could focus on affordability, sustainability, *and* public safety without requiring a dramatic increase in property taxes or other sources of revenue. Indeed, redirecting money away from police services towards social programs could be done without changing the underlying revenue and expenditure numbers listed in these Service Plans and Budgets.

In summary:

- The City can help address some of the systemic and structural barriers to accessing, and completing, graduate school education in Calgary, specifically through restoring funding to social programs and enhancing funding to affordable housing;
- Supporting graduate students will benefit Calgary in the short *and* long run;
- We think that funding could be directed from police services to pay for these initiatives, and that redirecting funding towards social programs is both more sustainable and takes a more holistic view of public safety.

We expand on our asks and the background context for graduate student needs in an additional document, which Council is welcome to read if they wish.

My Name is Nancy Toombs and I am a Board Director with Vecova.

I'm here to add my voice to the Vecova supporters you have already heard from to endorse this organization and its new Centre for All Abilities.

I'm the Communications Director for Economic Developers Alberta working in the economic and community development space for a decade, and one of the reasons why I became a board member is I think Vecova embodies values I feel are critical to thriving communities:

inclusion and innovation.

As you know, the Vecova Centre for Disability Services and Research is nationally recognized and award-winning and for more than 50 years it has been meeting lifelong and changing needs of persons with disabilities.

**It is an integral thread in the fabric of our city.**

In order to continue to meet the needs of Calgarians, the new Centre for All Abilities is required.

You have already heard the demand for Vecova's services has increased. There are 2000 Albertans with disabilities who are on the waitlist to access programs they have been approved for.

Vecova's current facility is original and, as it sits now, is at the end of its life cycle. Assessment studies have shown it is not feasible to repair the current building. About 30% of the building has already been closed because of its poor condition and is no longer being used to deliver our important services.

The new Centre for All Abilities must be built to expand services and programs to continue to benefit the expanding number of Calgarians who need them.

There is no other organization that offers the breadth and depth of programs and services in a central location

Vecova is the only one.

Vecova is a lifeline.

Plus, this new facility will be the first of its kind in Canada - by exceeding the standards of universal and accessible design and will be a net zero carbon ready building ultimately reducing its carbon footprint and operating expenses.

When people feel included; when their uniqueness is honoured; people naturally grow.

Inclusion breeds productivity and Vecova's new Centre for All Abilities will provide that space.

I am an enthusiastic champion of Vecova's new Centre for All Abilities.  
Thank you in advance for your support.





Please use this form to send your comments relating to an upcoming Council or Committee matter, or to request to speak on an upcoming public hearing item.

In accordance with sections 43 through 45 of [Procedure Bylaw 35M2017](#), the information provided may be included in the written record for Council and Council Committee meetings which are publicly available through [www.calgary.ca/ph](http://www.calgary.ca/ph). Comments that are disrespectful or do not contain required information may not be included.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

Personal information provided in submissions relating to matters before Council or Council Committees is collected under the authority of Bylaw 35M2017 and Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* of Alberta, and/or the Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 636, for the purpose of receiving public participation in municipal decision-making and scheduling speakers for Council or Council Committee meetings. **Your name and comments will be made publicly available in the Council agenda.** If you have questions regarding the collection and use of your personal information, please contact City Clerk's Legislative Coordinator at 403-268-5861, or City Clerk's Office, 700 Macleod Trail S.E., P.O. Box 2100, Postal Station 'M' 8007, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2M5.

Please note that your name and comments will be made publicly available in the Council agenda. Your e-mail address will not be included in the public record.

I have read and understand the above statement.

ENDORSEMENT STATEMENT ON ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The purpose of The City of Calgary is to make life better every day. To fully realize our purpose, we are committed to addressing racism and other forms of discrimination within our programs, policies, and services and eliminating barriers that impact the lives of Indigenous, Racialized, and other marginalized people. It is expected that participants will behave respectfully and treat every-one with dignity and respect to allow for conversations free from bias and prejudice.

I have read and understand the above statement.

First name (required) Evan

Last name (required) C

Are you speaking on behalf of a group or Community Association? (required) No

What is the group that you represent?

What do you wish to do?  
(required)

**Submit a comment**

How do you wish to attend?

You may bring a support person should you require language or translator services. Do you plan on bringing a support person?

What meeting do you wish to attend or speak to? (required)

**Council**

Date of meeting (required)

**Nov 24, 2022**

What agenda item do you wish to comment on? (Refer to the Council or Committee agenda published [here](#).)

(required - max 75 characters)

**Budget**

Are you in favour or opposition of the issue? (required)

**In opposition**

If you are submitting a comment or wish to bring a presentation or any additional materials to Council, please insert below. Maximum of 15 MB per submission (5 attachments, 3 MB per pdf document, image, video)  
If you have additional files to attach, email them to [publicsubmissions@calgary.ca](mailto:publicsubmissions@calgary.ca)

Comments - please refrain from providing personal information in this field (maximum 2500 characters)

**This city's budget is frankly ridiculous. In a time when household finances are tight and inflation is running high the amount of spending proposed is unacceptable. This Mayor did not make mention of the huge focus on climate change spending in their campaign and yet looks to burden Calgarians with outrageous costs. We did not agree to council spending \$50M of our money on climate change and will not stand for this. Calgary Transit is in shambles. When will the Mayor accept that transit use has plummeted due to safety issues? How much more will be spent expanding a transit system no one uses until they address the real issues of drug use in transit infrastructure and violence for transit users?**