

People, Innovation & Collaboration Services Report to
Executive Committee
2026 May 05

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
EC2026-0295

2026 Spring Research Results

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a summary of the 2026 Spring Research results. This information provides insights into how Calgarians perceive City services, The City's reputation and their quality of life. These data-driven findings are available for use by Members of Council and Administration for consideration in planning and decision-making.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Results from the Spring Survey of Calgarians and other City-generated surveys are shared annually with Members of Council for information and use in strategic planning and decision-making.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Executive Committee recommends Council receive this Report and Attachments for the Corporate Record.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

The General Manager of People, Innovation & Collaboration Services concurs with this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

Calgarians are optimistic about life in Calgary today, though they are more measured in their outlook for the future of the city. Calgary maintains its appeal as a desirable place to live, work and play. Perception of quality of life continues an upward trend that began last spring, along with agreement that Calgary is a good place to make both a life and a living. Calgarians are also more optimistic about their own quality of life than residents of the other municipalities surveyed.

Calgarians continue to identify *traffic and roads* and *crime, safety, and policing* as key priorities for local leaders. While these issues maintain their top positions, there have been slight shifts since spring 2025 including: both traffic and roads as well as crime, safety and policing have shown an increase; growth and planning, as well as transit have remained relatively stable since last year, while homeless, poverty and affordable housing has shown a decline. Though not among the top mentioned issues, water supply/infrastructure did see an increase in mentions, likely due to the 2025 December 30 Bearspaw Feeder Main break. A similar shift in Calgarians' priorities was seen after the initial break but not sustained and we expect the same will be true this time.

Calgarians' satisfaction with services is moderate. Though they feel relatively positive about their experience with City services, there are reservations about concerns being addressed in a timely manner. Satisfaction with services overall is on par with the last two years, suggesting The City's efforts to maintain service quality have been effective. This stability is notable given the broader pressures Calgarians continue to experience and suggests a resilient baseline of confidence in City service delivery. Services were also tested on measures of experience, timeliness, and quality; on average, these elements are rated highly. Calgarians generally see City services as usable, reliable, and well-run and most Calgarians believe services enhance their quality of life.

Calgary is excelling in comparison to other major Canadian municipalities in terms of trust and value for tax dollars. As seen in the National Municipal Benchmarking Survey, trust in Calgary's

2026 Spring Research Results

municipal government, though moderate, is showing to be well ahead of the trust other Canadians have in their own local government. Value for tax dollars also exceeds levels seen in other peer municipalities, though to a lesser extent than trust.

The 2026 Spring Survey of Calgarians and other research that informed the Spring research results, including the National Municipal Benchmarking Survey, can be found on [Calgary.ca/insights](https://calgary.ca/insights).

DISCUSSION

Each spring and fall Calgarians are asked on an open-ended and unaided basis what priorities local leadership should focus on. For the 2026 Spring Survey of Calgarians (Attachment 2), Calgarians' priorities remain unchanged and are aligned to areas of focus for The City: traffic and roads; crime, safety, and policing; growth and planning.

Up six per cent from this time last year, *Traffic and roads* continues to be top of mind for Calgarians as 39 per cent identify it as an area of focus for The City; this suggests many Calgarians see a need to maintain and improve core infrastructure such as roads, traffic, pathways and sidewalks.

Crime, safety, and policing is the second most important priority, with 21 per cent identifying it as an issue requiring attention from local leaders; this marks an increase of three per cent from last year, highlighting how public safety in Calgary continues to be an increasing concern for Calgarians.

Rounding off the top three most important priorities, Calgarians believe local leadership should focus on *growth and planning* (15 per cent) consistent with last spring.

Though not a top mention, *water-related issues* were mentioned by 10 per cent of Calgarians, up from last spring, including both mentions of water supply and infrastructure. The 2025 December 30 rupture of the Bearspaw Feeder Main is a key driver of this increase in mentions, bringing the category up by eight per cent from the same time last year.

Quality of life measures see sustained improvement over this time last year. The positive shift in Calgarians' perceptions of quality of life that began in spring 2024 has continued with three-quarters (76 per cent) of Calgarians rating their overall quality of life in the city as 'good,' ten per cent higher than the national average, as seen in the National Municipal Benchmarking Survey. About three-quarters (74 per cent) of Calgarians also feel Calgary is a great place to make a life while a similar proportion (68 per cent) identify Calgary as a great place to make a living, both consistent with spring 2025. Satisfaction with services and value, heightened feelings around Canadian solidarity in recent months, and favourable comparisons with other jurisdictions may be reinforcing positive sentiment about life in Calgary.

Despite high quality of life ratings, however, Calgarians are measured in their optimism regarding the future, as only 54 per cent of Calgarians agree that Calgary is on the right track to be a better city in ten years.

With continued economic pressures and heightened concern about the impact of global instability on Calgary's economy, a majority of Calgarians still rate the current economy favourably. Six in ten (60 per cent) describe Calgary's economy as "good," a result consistent with last year and comparable to the high point observed in spring 2023. This suggests a relatively stable and resilient assessment of present-day economic conditions. At the same time, about half (51 per cent) express confidence that Calgary's economy can withstand pressures such as tariffs, interest-rate changes, or broader global instability. Only 40 per cent of Calgarians agree that Calgary's economy is becoming more competitive

2026 Spring Research Results

relative to other major Canadian cities, though a further 41 per cent feel Calgary is about as competitive as others. Only 17 per cent feel Calgary's economy is less competitive.

City services continue to meet expectations for a small majority of Calgarians, with 62 per cent satisfied with the overall level and quality of programs and services provided by The City, consistent with the past two years. Using a revised list of services this year and the addition of questions related to experience, time and quality for each, this survey provides a deeper understanding of individual City services, as seen through the eyes of Calgarians. These results show room for improvement and most importantly, where that improvement may be found for each service, be it experience, time or quality.

Trust and value for taxes measures both see an increase this spring although comparison to prior spring results should be interpreted with caution due to survey structure changes. This positive direction is further validated by comparison to other cities. One-half (51 per cent) rate value for municipal property taxes as 'good,' while 54 per cent say they 'trust' The City. Though these appear low to moderate, when looking at other major Canadian municipalities, Calgary is leading the pack with trust levels in excess of ten per cent of other cities and value for taxes rated five per cent higher.

When considering the balance of taxation and service delivery, Calgarians show a slight preference for increasing taxes to maintain or expand services that are most important to them. More than one-half (57 per cent) of Calgarians favour this approach, compared to less than one-half (37 per cent) who prefer cutting services to maintain or reduce taxes. It is important to note that the bulk of those supporting tax increases are moderate in their support, suggesting these increases should be at the inflation rate to maintain service, not above the inflation rate to expand services.

By sharing research results in a transparent and equitable manner, The City continues to demonstrate its commitment to improve delivery of services, value for tax dollars and accountability to Calgarians.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

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

Research is one component in how The City engages with Calgarians. It is a critical tool to help Council and Administration understand the needs and perceptions of Calgarians. It informs decisions and provides accountability through performance measures and insights, as well as identifies issues and opportunities for improvement in municipal government.

To understand the perspectives and experiences of Calgarians, several research tactics are considered and reviewed as part of the 2026 Spring Research Results package. The Spring Survey of Calgarians (Attachment 2), the largest and most comprehensive survey, is complemented with other surveys that target specific areas of focus, which can be found on Calgary.ca.

The Spring Survey of Calgarians is a random and representative telephone survey conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs from 2026 February 17 to March 16 with 2,500 Calgarians.

- The survey was conducted using numbers from cell phones (70 per cent) and landlines (30 per cent) to obtain a random and statistically representative sample of Calgarians.

2026 Spring Research Results

- Using the most recent census data from Statistics Canada, data was weighted based on age, gender and quadrant/ward to ensure composition reflects that of the actual Calgary population aged 18 or older.

Though the results of these surveys will be communicated to Calgarians, public communication did not take place prior to conducting the survey, as the methodology employed was random digit dialing. To maintain the integrity of the random and representative methodology, Calgarians cannot self-select to participate in these surveys.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

To ensure fair representation, the research results are adjusted so that responses reflect Calgary's population across age, gender, and city quadrant. The survey also collects detailed demographic information including income, education, employment status, ability, Racialized groups, Indigenous identities, and 2SLGBTQIA+, as well as how these factors intersect. This comprehensive analysis helps deepen understanding of the needs of Calgary's diverse communities. Findings for each equity-deserving group will be made publicly available in mid-2026 in the Research Library on Calgary.ca.

Environmental

The Spring Survey of Calgarians report includes Calgarians' perceptions of City programs and services aimed at helping reduce their environmental impact.

Economic

These results provide Council with valuable insights on a range of economic issues, including how Calgarians view the local economy, their opinions on taxation and perceived value received for municipal taxes.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

The findings from this research are intended to help inform decision-making at all levels of Administration and by Members of Council. Consequent actions are at the discretion of these offices, departments, and business units.

RISK

If decisions are made without considering input from Calgarians shared through surveys, other research, and engagement activities, it can erode trust, lead to decisions based on incomplete information, negatively impact perceptions of quality of life and damage The City's reputation.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Presentation
2. 2026 Spring Survey of Calgarians

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Department Circulation

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Paul Taylor	311 & Insights	Approve
David Duckworth	Chief Administration Office	Consult
Executive Leadership Team		Consult

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