

# Innovation Fund Application

## Improving budget transparency:

Helping Calgarians understand how taxes are invested.



## 2017 Quality of Life and Citizen Satisfaction Survey

**92%**

Of citizens are interested in knowing how their property tax dollars are invested.

Citizens that reported that they were informed about their taxes saw more value for their taxes than those that didn't.

Content that helps citizens  
understand their tax investment  
increases their satisfaction with  
The City.

## What are users saying?

Based on responses from Qualaroo surveys on Action Plan website:

- I want to see where my taxes go.
- I want to see how much a service (e.g. snow clearing) costs.
- I want to give feedback about which services should get more and less funding.
- I want to download the total budget for The City.
- I want to know if my property taxes will go up, and if so, why?

## Project goals

- **Show value:** Citizens are aware of the value and balance of services The City provides.
- **Be transparent:** Provide easy-to-understand information and answer questions like:
  - How much does a service cost?
  - How well is a service performing?
  - How will this affect my taxes?
  - What's the total budget for The City?
- **Collect feedback:** Citizens can easily provide feedback about the budgets.
- **Increase task completion:** Increase user task completion score to 80% by making common user tasks simple and easy to do. (e.g. Action Plan baseline was 59.7%)

# Problems we are trying to solve

- The City has a new direction in how we provide services in the next budget cycle, which is relatively unknown to the public, making it difficult to understand why the changes are necessary for us to move towards service-based budgeting.
  - How can we engage citizens in this new service direction The City is moving towards in the next budget cycle so that user satisfaction increases?
- The City provides transparent information around the services it provides and the value citizens receive for their tax dollars paid, but it can be challenging for them to find and gather this information which can cause distrust.
  - How can we more easily provide this information so that it's easily accessible, and so that citizen trust increases in how their city is run?
- calgary.ca does not provide information around the value and performance of all the services provided in an easy to understand manner, which makes it difficult to understand if their tax dollars are spent wisely on the services they want.
  - How can we provide new value and performance information around services so that citizens can measure the value of how their tax dollars are spent?
- calgary.ca doesn't provide an easy and clear way for citizens to provide feedback on the service budgets which can make them feel less trusting in how their city is run.
  - How do we provide clear and easy opportunities for citizens to provide feedback on service budgets so that we increase customer satisfaction?

# Potential cost breakdown

Item	Cost estimate
<b>2019-2022 Service Plans and Budget site including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive tax breakdown by service tool</li> <li>Mobile friendly infographics and charts</li> </ul>	\$15,000
<b>Refreshed “Our organization” site:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our Strategy site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storytelling approach that explains why and how we’re changing to a service-based culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>Our Services site including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service value storytelling (e.g. 1 litre of clean water costs 2 cents, road maintenance costs two timbits)</li> <li>Service line pages with KPI dashboards</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	\$60,000
<b>Marketing:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People will only visit the website if we promote it, cross-promote it or link to it. To create awareness of our services and educate citizens on where their tax dollars go will need marketing promotion.</li> <li>Opportunities include audience profiling, building engaged following, focusing on digital first and overlaying messages onto financial milestones.</li> <li>If approved for the fund, a detailed marketing plan will be built to support the promotion of the tools available to citizens.</li> </ul>	\$75,000
	<b>Total = \$150,000</b>



## Add on option for consideration

Item	Cost estimate
<b>Optional: Open Budget</b> Socrata's Open Budget application presents budget information in an intuitive visual manner. Interactive charts and graphs allow users to "dig down" into the budget. Examples: <a href="#">Edmonton</a> , <a href="#">Seattle</a> .	35,000 one-time set-up + \$20,000/year to maintain
<b>Total:</b>	Set-up + 1 year = <b>\$55,000</b>
<b>Note:</b> Potential to expand fund ask to cover set-up and one year, but sustainment funds of \$20,000/year would still have to be found.	

# High-level timelines

