

One Calgary Report to  
Special Meeting of Council  
2018 October 11

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
C2018-1150

## One Calgary 2019-2022: Citizen research and engagement findings

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administration continues to work to provide citizen perspectives in order to inform Council and Administration's service and budget planning as part of the One Calgary program. As committed to Council on 2018 September 25, this report includes a roll-up of all research and engagement activities and tactics that have taken place in the last year. Many of the tactics and activities contained in the report are above and beyond those initiated by the One Calgary process and are included because they present other insights into citizens' views on the importance, value, and satisfaction with the delivery of City services.

This is consistent with the overarching engagement and research strategy that has been used as part of the One Calgary process dating back to November 2017. This represents the beginning of the fourth phase of engagement and research. The process has been a blend of existing research and engagement that is relevant to service plans and budget as well as net new engagement that complements that approach.

The attachment to this cover report, Key Findings and Themes for Research and Engagement, provides a series of insights gleaned from citizens over the past year and represents input into service delivery, service lines and budgets.

For additional detail, we are making the raw data by service line available on the research & engage library and will send the link to Council directly.

Key insights are detailed in this cover report and the attached insights document. Roll-up of key citizen insights include:

- How citizens determine the importance of City services;
- Citizen concerns about the economy;
- Importance of open, efficient, and effective operations;
- Satisfaction with City services is high despite concerns with the economy;
- The business community tends to be less satisfied with City services, and wants City policies and actions to support, not impede, their sustainability and growth;
- There is a continued demand from both citizens and businesses to receive communications in preferred channels and be accessible to all aspects of Calgary's diverse population;
- Both citizens and businesses alike look for meaningful opportunities to provide input on City initiatives;
- Key priority areas for citizens include: public safety, ease of transportation, affordable housing and services, and investment in infrastructure and community, parks and open

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spaces, streets and sidewalks, city planning, and neighbourhood support and development.

### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council receive this report for information.

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

On 2018 September 25 (C2018-1080) Council directed Administration to proceed with the citizen research and engagement proposal identified in Attachment 5 to Report C2018-1080, pages 3-4.

### **BACKGROUND**

Our approach to engagement and research in the One Calgary process has been different than any other budget cycle previous. Throughout the One Calgary process, our approach has been to leverage existing feedback, not only as an input to Council, but also to inform Service Owners as they developed their service lines. This has resulted in significant cost savings for the organization, as instead of conducting this exclusively as a net new exercise we have relied on what citizens have already told us.

As new information emerged from the One Calgary process, such as the service line characteristics and value dimensions, we conducted net new engagement and research to gather specific citizen input. This approach enabled us to pull from thousands of pieces of citizen input received on our services, not just those specific to budget, and target our “net new” research and engagement to fill in the gaps.

Results from the One Calgary public engagement and research conducted throughout the program were used to guide the development of the proposed 2019-2022 service plans and budgets.

Research and engagement has been delivered in three broad phases:

- Phase 1: Public input used to set Council Directives (Nov-Dec 2017)
- Phase 2: Public input used to set value characteristics, service targets & refine services (Mar-Sep 2018)
- Phase 3: 2018 September Service Plan Previews

In response to a request for further engagement and research in October 2018, Administration has produced a roll-up insight report from previous engagement & research over the past year as part of phase 4 of the research and engagement plan. In October, phase 4 engagement and research is continuing through targeted conversations with citizens about service line plans via five focus groups, pop-up engagement in each ward and online engagement. These additional conversations to gather input from citizens will be summarized and presented to Council in mid-November.

This roll-up information is presented to Council to provide an overview of the research and engagement activities that have sought citizen input and perspectives over the past year. The final engagement activities to inform the budget planning process taking place in October

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will be presented to Council at the 2018 November 14 session. This report, reflecting citizen perspectives and priorities over time, is intended to be one of many inputs to help inform Council's budget deliberations and decision making in November.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

The City has hundreds of conversations every year through a variety of engagement and research channels and all of those conversations are about some aspect of service delivery to citizens. Through hundreds of initiatives across the gamut of City services in the past year, Administration has produced over one hundred reports that summarize more than 275,000 pieces of input from citizens.

As a 'book end' to the One Calgary research and engagement strategy to utilize existing inputs from citizens, this report provides a roll-up of all research and engagement conducted in the last year with emphasis placed on summarizing the key insights citizens have shared about their thoughts on service delivery by specific service lines as well as their aspirations and concerns.

Citizens recognize that the services The City provides have a significant impact on their quality of life, and they place a higher importance on services that are deemed essential and services they or members of their household utilize. As well, citizen sentiment is effected by local events and environments, including changes in the economy and weather or flood events. These external factors, particular short term events, tend to temporarily increase in importance the services associated with them. In the case of the economic environment, the impacts are more longstanding and far reaching, impacting citizen perceptions regarding quality of life, satisfaction with services, and value in taxes. As the economy recovers, citizens continue to place a high importance on services that improve quality of life and draw in and support businesses.

Concerns about the economy also impact citizens perceptions of value for tax dollars; since 2013 there has been a downward trend on how citizens rate their value for taxes. Despite the trend, overall citizens still see good value, with only 16% saying they have received poor value for their taxes in spring 2018.

To maintain citizens' trust it is important that The City operates in an open, efficient, and effective way; support for The City's overall performance and their ratings related to value for taxes are closely tied to citizens perceptions of efficiency and effectiveness. The greater the perceptions of efficiency and effectiveness, the more likely citizens are to support increasing taxes to maintain or increase services. As trust in The City erodes or the economy declines, citizens move their support to reducing services to find tax savings. Most recent survey findings indicate that citizens are evenly split between increasing taxes to maintain or expand services or cutting services to maintain or reduce taxes.

Despite economic concerns, citizen satisfaction with City services is high; eight in ten citizens indicate they are satisfied with the quality of service The City delivers and believe that The City makes customer service a priority. Important factors that contribute to this satisfaction include the effectiveness of City communications as well accessibility of services and information for all

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segments of the Calgary population. Citizens value most affordability, accessibility, safety and quality as dimensions of City services.

The business community in Calgary has needs and perceptions that are different from citizens. They tend to be less satisfied with City services, and want City policies and actions to support, not impede, their sustainability and growth. They want the City to better understand their needs and challenges, and to operate efficiently and effectively. Businesses value reduced risk, affordability, accessibility, and safety most in regards to City services.

There is a continued demand from both citizens and businesses to receive communications in preferred channels and to be accessible to all aspects of Calgary's diverse population. Both citizens and businesses also look for meaningful opportunities to provide input so The City can better understand their needs. Calgarians want to be part of the conversation regarding potential investments such as the Olympic bid or a new event centre as well as emerging topics like climate change and opioid use.

There are a number of key priorities for citizens that are consistent: public safety, ease of transportation, affordable housing and services, and investment in infrastructure and community building remain top of mind. Themes that regularly emerged in engagement activities include parks and open spaces, streets and sidewalks, city planning, and neighbourhood support and development.

Attachment 1 provides a roll-up of insights that include citizen and business community perceptions on service delivery overall and by citizen priority area.

### **Strategic Alignment**

This report aligns with One Calgary service plans & budgets. Opportunities for citizens to take part in the conversation, and for Administration and Council to be provided with a clear picture of citizen perspectives around service and budget planning, is a critical piece of this process.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Social, environmental and economic guidance is provided through City policies, Citizen Priorities, and Council Directives, all of which guide Administration in developing the 2019-2022 service plans and budgets. During the service plan preview, Council and Committee members provided input on social, environmental and economic issues, which will be used to inform the proposed 2019-2022 service plans and budgets.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

This analysis was completed utilizing existing City resources as part of ongoing research and engagement activities.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

This analysis has no impact on current and future capital budget.

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### **Risk Assessment**

The risks associated with preparing and approving four-year plans and budgets include directional alignment risk, risk of not meeting service delivery expectations, financial risks, and changes in circumstances that take place during the four-year business cycle.

This report represents one part of the process in addressing directional alignment and expectations risk. By producing this roll-up report on research & engagement administration is striving to inform Council and Service Owners with respect to the perceptions of citizens. This will serve as an input to the decision-making process that will produce service plans and budgets to best address those citizen needs.

### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

The “receive for information” recommendation is intended to address Council’s receipt of the *One Calgary Roll-Up Engagement & Research Insights*, as approved as part of overall direction at the 2018 September 25 Special Meeting of Council. This is delivered for input, feedback and guidance in regard to 2019-2022 One Calgary service plans and budgets.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Attachment 1: Key findings and themes for Research and Engagement