



# 2023 Fall Research Insights and Recommendations

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## About this report

- Opinions and priorities of the general population are important considerations in municipal matters. Research with Calgarians provide The City with opportunities to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- This summary, taken from a section of public opinion research surveys and focus groups, is a brief rollup of 2023 research results, based on the identified Council results areas of public safety, climate, social equity and modernizing government, especially as they pertain to the priority areas of downtown revitalization, transit and local area and land use planning.
- Highlights in this report are sourced from:
  - *2023 Fall Survey of Calgarians*
  - *2023 Spring Focus Groups*
  - *2023 Economic Perspectives Survey: Wave 3*
  - *2023 Attitudes and Outlook Survey*
  - *2023 Perspectives on Calgary Survey: Council Focus Areas*
  - *2023 Perspectives on Calgary Survey: Elevate Calgary*
  - *2023 Perspectives on Calgary Survey: Diversity and Inclusion*
  - *2023 Perspectives on Calgary Survey: Planning and Development*
  - *2023 Perspectives on Calgary Focus Groups: Downtown and Safety*

\*above reports can be accessed [here](#)
- Detailed quantitative research reports are posted to [Calgary.ca/CitizenSatisfaction](https://calgary.ca/CitizenSatisfaction) as they are completed. Complete qualitative (focus group) reports are available for internal distribution upon request.





# Public Safety



## Public safety

### What do Calgarians think about public safety in Calgary?

- Generally, Calgarians feel Calgary is safe, with most defining the city as ‘somewhat’ safe.
- Calgarians feel similar about safety in Calgary as residents of other major Canadian cities feel about safety in their cities, with the exception of transit.
- Only 35% feel transit in Calgary is safe for all users – well below the municipal norm.
- One-half avoid taking public transit due to safety concerns.
- Four-in-ten Calgarians consider concerns for their personal safety when deciding whether or not to visit downtown.





# Public safety (continued)



## Transit

92%

The City should be **investing more** to address transit safety issues



## Downtown Revitalization

94%

The City should be **doing more** to address safety issues in Calgary's downtown





## Public safety (continued)

### Where are we headed? What are our gaps?

- Perception of overall safety is down from last year.
- Possibly driving the decrease is overall safety; *homelessness, poverty and affordable housing* doubled in mentions as key issue compared to 2022.
- The perception is that mental health issues and addictions result in unpredictable behaviours – regardless of whether or not these behaviours are criminal.
- There is an understanding that balance needs to be found between enforcement and addressing the “root cause” of these behaviours.

## Public safety (continued)

### What would Calgarians like to see The City do?

- Generally, Calgarians feel The City is doing a poor job addressing safety issues.
- However, when asked specifically about how The City is doing working with community partners on these issues, 57% agree they are doing a good job. The same is true of Transit safety initiatives.
- Communication is key – while few Calgarians believe The City is doing a good job communicating about crime and safety issues in Calgary, there is a desire for more information from The City.

#### Transit



- Having peace officers address safety concerns (less focus on fare enforcement)
- Restricting access to platforms and stations
- ‘Friendly’ riders (buddy system)
- Non-breakable glass at Transit shelters

#### Downtown



- More people living in the area
- More events/activities
- More social supports like housing, addictions treatment and mental health support





# Climate



# Climate

## What do Calgarians think about climate in Calgary?

- Generally speaking, Calgarians feel the quality of Calgary's environment (air, water and land) is good.
- Despite this, the majority remain concerned about climate change. Concerns with climate are greatest among younger Calgarians.
- There appears to be low top-of-mind awareness of City programs and services aimed at helping Calgarians reduce their environmental impact with fewer than one half believing The City offers such services.
- However, in focus group discussions and when asked about specific services, awareness of certain programs does emerge – especially recycling.





# Climate (continued)



## Transit

**67%**

Calgary Transit is making a sufficient effort to reduce their environmental impact



## Land use and local area planning

**56%**

The City supports climate-friendly and sustainable housing development



## Climate (continued)

### Where are we headed? What are our gaps?

- When it comes to getting around Calgary, the majority of Calgarians choose to drive, even though two-thirds agree that The City offers sufficient alternatives.
- Vehicle dependence is perceived to be a result of Calgary's infrastructure not being built to support a green economy, the limited nature of the Calgary transit system and increasing urban sprawl.
- Some Calgarians living in multi-unit residences feel they do not have equal access to City environmental programs.



## Climate (continued)

### What would Calgarians like to see The City do?

- Grassroots programs in schools
- Allocating funds to the development of environmentally conscious technology
- Equal access to programs and initiatives
- Subsidize green energy
- Encourage higher Transit use (make Transit more appealing)
- Make recycling and environmental practices more accessible and convenient
- Transparency in communications about environmental efforts
- Set Calgary apart from the rest of Alberta





# Social Equity

## Social equity

### What do Calgarians think about social equity in Calgary?

- Nearly all Calgarians believe they are very welcoming and friendly people. They also believe Calgarians have opportunities to express and celebrate their unique cultures and that advancing Truth and Reconciliation is something that all Calgarians should be a part of.
- Two-thirds agree that The City fosters a city that is inclusive and accepting of all.
- However, a slight majority do not feel Calgary is safe for all residents and visitors regardless of things like ethnicity, race, religion, income or sexual identity.
- One-in-five Calgarians report personally experiencing discrimination in Calgary.
- Only one-third agree all Calgarians have access to adequate housing that meets their needs.





# Social equity (continued)



## Transit

75%

Calgary Transit ensures its services can be used by all Calgarians **regardless of their abilities\***



## Downtown Revitalization

69%

The City is doing a good job **working with local Indigenous communities** when discussing downtown revitalization



## Land use and local area planning

81%

The City should **invest more into affordable housing** programs for low-income Calgarians

## Social equity (continued)

### Where are we headed? What are our gaps?

- Agreement that The City is taking steps to address racism is down to 69% from 75% last year. Young Calgarians are less likely to agree.
- Nearly all Calgarians identify both housing affordability and affordable housing as issues.
- Half of Calgarians spend more than 30% of their household income on housing.
- Unhoused Calgarians and those with mental health issues or addictions are the groups identified as most underserved by The City, followed by low income Calgarians and renters.



## Social equity (continued)



### What would Calgarians like to see The City do?

- **Leading** from the top: The City of Calgary was identified as having a crucial role in building and promoting social resilience
- **Removing** barriers to participation for City programs and services
- **Exploring** ways to make home ownership more affordable
- **Investing** more in affordable housing programs
- **Increasing** accessibility of multicultural festivals and events (free/low cost/live streaming)
- **Providing** more comprehensive support for people experiencing homelessness and addiction (e.g., safe injection sites, social supports)
- **Informing** Calgarians about Indigenous communities more consistently (e.g., through public education) for better understanding and **encouraging** empathy for lived experiences



# Modernizing government



## Modernizing government

### What do Calgarians think about modernizing government in Calgary?

- Six-in-ten Calgarians agree that The City is responsive to the needs and expectations of Calgarians and a similar proportion agree Council and Administration work collaboratively to make the best possible decisions for Calgary's future.
- However, only four-in-ten agree that The City is continuously modernizing and updating programs and services in a valuable way. The same proportion agree The City is innovative or forward-thinking in how these programs and services are delivered.

## Modernizing government (continued)

### Where are we headed? What are our gaps?

- This year's fall research shows a decline in many performance measures for The City, including agreement that Calgary is moving in the right direction to ensure a high quality of life for future generations (down to 38% from 52% last fall).
- Concerns are likely related to areas identified in the issue agenda as requiring the greatest attention from local leaders – homelessness / affordable housing, safety, infrastructure, transit and the economy / affordability.
- We will explore this drop further in our upcoming fall focus groups, which will also explore opinions related to housing affordability and zoning.





## Modernizing government (continued)

### What would Calgarians like to see The City do?

- Calgarians continually cite ‘finding efficiencies’ in focus groups which is a key tenet of the modernizing government result area.
- Focus group participants in the past have struggled to determine what they would be willing to give up to invest more in the areas they feel are underserved.
- This is an area we will continue to research and find opportunity for in 2024.



# 2023 fall research insights and recommendations

## Questions?

Reports found at: [Calgary.ca/CitizenSatisfaction](https://calgary.ca/CitizenSatisfaction)

For further information, please contact:

Corporate Research Team

[research@calgary.ca](mailto:research@calgary.ca)

