

2011 Citizen Comments

Learning

Priorities:

1. Ensuring adequate resources for a high quality public school systems

"I believe the financial sustainability of the public and separate school systems must be improved. Every day you hear in the news reports of budget cuts that ultimately result in teaching or service cuts. It is death by a thousand cuts."

"Public school funding is a non-priority for this government. It should be among the highest priorities. Teachers are among the most important contributors to creating a strong society, yet the government treats them with no respect."

"We need to get rid of the two tiered system (private and public). Public education should be just as good as private."

"Focus on high quality funding for the public system and quit diverting money to the private (segregational) system."

2. Decreasing classroom size

"We need more teachers not less, smaller class sizes not larger ones and varied learning opportunities for students who have different learning styles and readiness"

"Class sizes and school closures are preventing students from learning as well as they can."

"Hire teachers, not fire! With fewer teachers and increasing class sizes, how can we expect any sort of quality of education, especially when those teachers' hands are tied with respect to discipline of unruly and disruptive students."

3. Improving the affordability of post-secondary education

"Improving financial stability of post-secondary education"

"Post-secondary education is becoming more and more unaffordable"

"All students who want to attend post-secondary should be able to do so at a much less cost."

Working Well:

1. Number of choices and options available

""Learning and education in Calgary seems to be diversifying in order to meet the needs of our growing population. I am impressed by the specialties offered by the publicly funded post-



secondary institutions and the targeted programming being offered in select public and separate schools (TLC, multi-lingual programs, etc.)."

"The public school systems offer a wide range of options, e.g. French Immersion, other immersion language programs, arts and science-centered programs which are open to all. The upgrading of Mount Royal College to a university provides a choice for university students in Calgary."

"There is much variety and choices for parents in students when it comes to what type of educational opportunities are available. Public, Catholic, private, charter, language schools etc."

"There are lots of options and types of schools in Calgary - choice is good"

2. Good post-secondary schools

"The four major post-secondary institutions are doing an excellent job. They are meeting the needs of those who need post-secondary. MRU's move to becoming a university is a good one as MRU and U of C provide complementary education. This will allow BVC to grow and emerge as a great community college, which it is shaping up to be."

"There is an increased number of post-secondary institutions from community college to university which gives many options to potential students. Having 2 universities and multiple colleges to choose from allows learning opportunities for everyone."

"Calgary schools are producing bright young adults. With two universities, a technical college and an art school there are plenty of post-secondary options!"

"Post-secondary institutions offer a range of options to local students."

3. Teachers are great

"A new generation of young, bright, engaging teachers."

"A lot of dedicated people are working at all levels of the education systems."

"Calgary's teachers and teaching assistants are, by and large, extremely qualified, passionate and dedicated."

"Excellent teachers! Committed, knowledgeable, welcoming, creating leaders of tomorrow"

"Our amazing teachers who perform miracles against all odds (usually by volunteering several overtime hours every day)."



Health and Wellness

Priorities:

1. Ensuring everyone has a family physician

"Everyone should have a family doctor."

"We must keep working to attract qualified medical staff to the City. Everyone should have access to a family doctor."

"Definitely, access to a family doctor for everybody would take care of many of the problems in emergency departments and waits for medical procedures. Speedy diagnosis and treatment start with a good family doctor. It is scandalous that so many Calgarians don't have access to this base line health need."

"More new clinics need to be built, with doctors who are willing to take on patients."

2. Shortening wait-time for medical procedures

"It is too difficult to find primary care physicians and the wait for specialized care too long after one is diagnosed."

"The long waiting time to see a specialist doctor for the first time can be 6 months or more."

"There is a shortage of hospitals in Calgary and the level of staffing in existing hospitals is severely lacking, leading to unacceptable levels of waiting times in emergency rooms."

"Wait times for specialists are too long. Physiotherapy and optometric services for adults should be covered"

3. Reducing Emergency Department overcrowding

"If everyone had a doctor then it may reduce the number of people waiting long hours in emergency departments."

"Emergency wards should be for emergencies. Shortening wait times should NOT be a goal UNLESS only emergency cases are seen"

"If we had more family physicians and easier access to them, it would likely reduce emergency overcrowding at hospitals"

"Too many people are without family physicians and there are not enough walk-in clinics that stay open on weekends so these folks then are forced to go to emergency departments for minor ailments that could be easily dealt with at another level. There needs to be some way of helping people look after themselves by learning basic first aid and how to take care of themselves when they get minor injuries or colds and flus."



Working Well:

1. Pathway system encourages walking and biking

“Calgary has a LOT of opportunities to be active at virtually no cost, from countless bike and walking paths, access to the Trans Canada Trail, bike lanes, and a few truly 'walkable communities”

“Great pathway systems, and they are only getting better.”

“More and more Calgarians are getting out and walking their communities. Excellent pathways around Calgary.”

“The pathway systems and parks areas are excellent. They are maintained and patrolled to stay safe for all.”

“The river pathways are always in use - they are beautiful and connect the city together nicely”

2. Recreation programs and facilities

“There are some great free programs offered through the City of Calgary (mobile skate parks, free day camps, teen nights, etc.)”

“Access to exercise programs and fitness centres is amazing. There is so much to do in Calgary during all seasons and for a variety of prices.”

“I really appreciate how the City of Calgary and local community centres are working together to offer quality, affordable (or free) fitness programs for people of all ages.”

“City recreation facilities are easily accessible and fairly affordable although a lot of people don't know about them.”

3. Quality physicians

“Committed front line health care workers.”

“Individual doctors, individual health care providers are wonderful and excellent work. They need to be allowed to continue to this.”

“We have excellent Family Doctors (if you can get one)”

“Medical staffs are of high quality, working in a difficult situation.”

“The medical staffs are doing a great job with what they have to work with”

“The quality of service, once you finally can access it is very good.”



Environmental Sustainability

Priorities:

1. Limiting urban sprawl

“Calgary has become addicted to urban sprawl and cars. The greatest source of greenhouse gases and pollution comes from our vehicles. So why do we keep letting developers chew up the prairies with more and more subdivisions? This is not sustainable. We need City Planners who are not in the pockets of developers and who recognize we need to build up and not out. We need more C-Train cars and tracks.”

“We are just now starting to limit urban sprawl and encourage building up in the inner city, but it is slow going. This is essential to sustainability. Denser, more walkable communities and public transit are key to reducing reliance on cars and making our communities more sustainable and environmentally friendly.”

“If Calgary was not built on a template of urban sprawl, Education, Health and Wellness and Environmental Sustainability would all have much higher scores.”

2. Reducing reliance on cars

“Reduction of reliance on cars requires a continued focus on the development of the public transit system. Good urban planning will improve air quality as commute times are shortened through reduced urban sprawl and less traffic congestion. Some of the issues are simply a result of Calgary's rapid growth and the time lag for the infrastructure to catch up.”

“We need to develop a long term land-use plan that increases the mobility of people WITHOUT relying on cars to do it. Neighbourhoods like Garrison Woods (close, dense but not overcrowded, connected and a mix of residential and commercial) need to be encouraged, or demanded. Calgary transit needs to not be so downtown-centric.”

“You had listed 'reduce urban sprawl' and 'reduce reliance on cars' - these 2 go hand-in-hand. You should have added "improved transit". You cannot rely on the transit system. I have children who must get to high school/uni and rely on the public transportation to get there. There has been many times where we have ended up driving them, as the bus drives right by them because it is too full to pick them up. We consistently purchase monthly bus tickets, however, on average, are only able to use for about 3/4 of the month because they aren't picked up.”

3. Improve options for alternative energy

“Actually most of the priority items are critically important to this city's environmental sustainability. We need to get better at recycling for example and alternative energy options. Each of these is interdependent.”



“Improving options for alternative energy and reducing waste generated area also important.”

“Where is the green energy encouragement? Enmax is owned by the City and has a terrific employee-test-market roll-out of WhisperGen furnaces that could save Calgarians lots of money. The "option" to get solar hot water and other alternative energy hook-ups through the utility is financially structured to make more money for Enmax, rather than to encourage Calgarians to adopt these new technologies and ultimately be able to put money back in our pockets in the form of savings. There is not sufficient encouragement. And also - where are the standards for developers? The big housing developers slapped up thousands upon thousands of slipshod, sub-standard houses during the Boom that will begin costing their owners zillions in repairs and renos very soon, if they haven't already. Calgary needs to require developers to have strict energy standards so that new housing is very, very efficient and costs the homeowner very little to run. We are ABLE, as a society, to build houses that can generate income for their owners! Why have we not required developers to provide these for the market? Clearly developers won't take on these measures by themselves, at present they can make way more profit banging up another Panorama Hills -- with no school and the rest of us taxpayers put in the roads, sewer, electricity, and we maintain the highways to bring all those suburban dwellers into the core to work for the oil companies. The least the City could do is require developers to make those suburban and new-build houses super-efficient.”

“incentives to reduce energy use during off-peak hours investment in wind power incentives to encourage every new roof top in city - residential or commercial - to have solar and wind power generation incentives to have grey water recycling in every new construction”

“More emphasis on developing cleaner energy is the most important issue in my opinion even if this town is based on oil”

Working Well:

1. Blue bins and black bins

“I am happy with the blue bins for recycling and black bins for garbage. I'm looking forward to a curb side composting program”

“I like the recycling bins that each home is provided with. It really encourages recycling.”

“The addition of blue bins is a very good way in motivating people to start recycling as it is an easy alternative.”

“The blue and black bins makes it much easier to recycle at home and reduce waste, I really appreciate the time saving and the fact that I don't have recycling building up in my storage room.”



2. Transit system expansion and improvements

“Expanding the Ctrain is a step in the right direction...we need more public transit in this sprawled out city...look to European examples!”

“Public transit - free parking at ctrain stations, investment in four carriages, new lines, buses are clean and drivers friendly, reasonably good service level (on time, limited breakdowns). A reasonable alternative to cars.”

“Transit ridership is impressive. Build it and Calgarians will come.”

“Very pleased to see improvements to public transit, LTR routes, Airport underpass and shuttle service - excellent development!!”

“The LRT is a good step towards reducing use of fossil fuels by motor vehicles and has done its share of reducing vehicular traffic among those willing to make a shift. “

3. Water quality, treatment plant, and Waterwise program

“Water and wastewater treatment. Good control of increasing water demand.”

“Installing water meters seems to have an effect on decreasing consumption.”

“Our water and sewer system is constantly upgraded and made first class.”

“Our water system rocks!”

“The air quality and the water quality in Calgary is second to none. Tap water is better here than some bottled water.”



Citizen Engagement

Priorities:

1. Increasing awareness of community engagement activities

“Communicating all that is available.”

“I think there are lots of opportunities out there for community engagement but the word does not seem to get out about them. Even I who am aware, find it hard to find things sometimes. Also need to figure out how to encourage people to be involved and make sure we highlight where community engagement has really made a difference.”

“It is very difficult to create any sort of social movement or awareness in Calgary. For the most part, people seem apathetic of politics at the provincial and federal level, despite numerous campaigns to get people to vote.”

“There's something missing related to raising awareness of the importance of community building, interdependence and working to have a high quality of life for everyone. I feel like the mainstream culture of Calgary is still very much about 'what's in it for me?' People's efforts are often only related to what the benefits can be for them, but they are not thinking of the larger community at all times. We need to challenge self-importance and looking inward.”

2. Improving voter turnout

“Calgarians need to feel that they have input into what is happening in the city. Then there will be more participation and higher voter turnout. The administration of the city is too powerful. It seems that the administration and not the aldermen, who are elected, are running the city.”

“I would vote for increasing voter turnout as well through a civic education program in the schools to raise awareness/improve enthusiasm/increase civic pride and responsibility”

“Change of attitude of too many people that 'you can't beat city hall', that 'it doesn't matter who you vote for they're all the same', the one party system in this province.”

“We need to get more people more involved in the city, politically, culturally, and socially. We need to improve voter turnout and youth engagement; we saw a little bit of this in the last election, but we must build on it. We also should try to get more people involved in the life of their communities, especially in the suburbs, where community associations are weaker than their inner-city counterparts.”



3. Increasing involvement of marginalized groups

“We should work harder to engage marginalized and vulnerable individuals.”

“a deeper understanding that social inequality is a strong determinant of citizen engagement. I am tired of well-resourced people putting on fundraising gala's to have a fun night out for 'charity". This perpetuates social inequality, and basically keeps people down. By involving more marginalized people it is important to not assume that the type of involvement is the same as well of people. Poor people are tired of being asked to get involved for free. I don't mean to generalize and fully support engagement but we need to seriously challenge our middle class assumption of HOW people get and stay socially engaged in community and civic activities”

“Gay rights groups, women's rights, ethnic, religious, and marginalized groups need to be highlighted more. Intolerance needs to be curtailed. I don't think the Police and community at large are doing a strong enough job at discouraging the radical racist, sexist and homophobic groups in Calgary. Hate speech and hate groups are illegal, but police don't seem to enforce that rule.”
“Increase involvement of marginalized groups in policy planning, in getting their stories heard. Work to encourage different and divergent opinions. Allow for and encourage critical thinking. Provide clear and accurate information on advantages and disadvantages of particular policies, processes, or plans.”

Working Well:

1. Mayor Nenshi encourage dialogue and engagement

“Have seen an increase in engagement since Mayor Nenshi came into office - he is leading the way and getting people involved- awesome!”

“Nenshi has really improved this area for my generation. In the past, 20 and 30 years olds didn't vote and get engaged because they didn't think it made a difference. For the first time, we felt like our voices were heard when he won the mayoral election. I finally feel like some of the issues that are important to me are being discussed and publicized. I work in nonprofit and think Calgaryans are actively engaged in volunteering and donating. Corporate philanthropy has been increasing as the economy improves and I hope that trend continues.”

“Mayor Nenshi has really helped citizens become more engaged through social media. I've never felt this connected to City Hall and the practices and decisions made.”

“The election of Mayor Nenshi was a big step forward for the city. Although we can't expect him to have all the answers, he does seem genuinely interested in twoway communication with the people of Calgary.”



2. Strong level of volunteerism

“Calgary is a city of volunteers! We should continue building on our strengths!”

“Calgary is an amazing city for the power of volunteerism.”

“I am continually impressed by the stories I hear of people's volunteer experiences. People in Calgary seem to really like to volunteer.”

“The volunteer sector is terrific and a highlight of Calgary.”

“There are a lot of Calgarians who do volunteer, enthusiastically, frequently, in many areas”

3. Events, fairs, festivals and sports opportunities

“There are some fantastic programs being provided through local non-profit organizations and grassroots groups. Larger events such as the stampede and the folk festival really create a sense of community and get people out to enjoy public spaces during the summer.”

“We have great festivals to show our diversified cultures”

“Living downtown offers SO many opportunities for involvement: Canada Day and Heritage Day celebrations; all the summer festivals - Turkish Fest, Folk Fest, Greek Fest, etc.; volunteering at art galleries, library, etc.”

“Calgary is seeing the rise of many interesting music/cultural festivals that unite us as a community. I look forward to seeing current events grow and the emergence of new, exciting events.”

“People living in Calgary enjoy the city and participate fully in the many events that occur throughout the year.”



Neighbourhoods

Priorities:

1. Improving walkability

“Calgary has only a few neighbourhoods that are really vibrant in terms of walkability. We need to travel significant distances for things that would be so much better if they were available on a smaller scale in neighbourhoods, e.g., hardware stores. I realize the economic model of smaller stores is very fragile.”

“Calgary is not a pedestrian-friendly city.”

“I do not know how to fix the lack of walkability in established communities but please in new communities and shopping centres do not forget that not everyone wants to or is able to drive!”

“If we have more walkable neighbourhoods, sense of community will follow naturally.”

2. Increasing opportunities to interact with neighbours

“Designing neighbourhoods that foster community connections and walkability that reflect a mix of residential housing, business activities, community outreach and local programming.”

“Improve connections between communities. The urban form of the city is based on establishing massive barriers between communities in the form of impassable expressway roads (Sarcee Trail, MacLeod Trail, etc.). Pedestrians and cyclists are unable to traverse these barrier roads and are forced to leave their community by motor vehicle.”

“Our current lifestyle often leads to isolation from neighbours - we are busy and don't seem to make the time to interact with our communities and neighbours. The number of apartments. Condos can further facilitate this sense of isolation. New communities seem so large that it is hard to feel a connection with others in the same area. The older, smaller communities often create a greater sense of togetherness and support.”

“Sense of Community is missing in suburbia...distance - walkability is an issue. Isolation exists and programs to get more involved in suburban neighbourhoods should be looked at”

“Strong neighbourhoods and a sense of community seem more common in more central inner-city areas, as compared to the suburbs; this is a bad thing indeed for suburban Calgary. I see that sense of community as the biggest thing which is lacking in some areas of the city.”

3. Reducing isolation of seniors and person with disabilities

“Development and establishment of community gardens can help with a number of ills such as isolation of seniors and the disabled, as well as isolation from one's neighbours.”



“Reducing isolation of seniors and persons with disabilities, I am also including those that have mental health issues. If we can get those people out of their houses and feel more connected to their communities they would have better self esteem, less depression, more supports, create leaders in our communities, and many other benefits.”

“Senior & persons with disabilities isolation needs to be addressed and somehow. EX. funding more programs like Linkages, a nonprofit organization that is underfunded, and NOT well known within the community.”

Working Well:

1. Community associations

“Active community associations that support a variety of programs is important and done well”

“Kudos to the dedicated community associations and the great neighbourhoods they care for.”

“The community association infrastructure is a real asset for Calgary -- let's make sure it is sufficiently resources and adaptable to the changing needs of our communities. “

“Some inner city neighbourhoods have good community associations with playgrounds and programs that bring people together.”

“Strong community associations.”

2. Local festivals, fairs and events

“There are a lot more weekend festivals with a cultural focus and these are a great idea.”

“There are a lot of community festivals that promote the neighbourhood feel and brings people together, like the Salsa festival, Lilac festival, Folk Festival etc.”

“we have many community associations which offer events and opportunities to make connections. Involvement is the key and encouraging folks to get involved is the key. Festivals and events are great and Calgary is very good at putting on and encouraging all kinds of community and area events.”

“Calgary does have a vast number of community celebrations from Lilac Fest, Folk Fest, GlobalFest, Stampede, and so many more. We are fortunate to have the number and diversity of local community activities and celebrations that we have here. We are also fortunate to have strong local leaders that are aware and listening to the sustainability and community economic development concerns of its citizens.”

“The various festivals such as Lilac Festival, Sun & Salsa festival, Marda Gras, etc.”



“In the past few years I have noticed that there are more advertised community events (ex. free bbq on Canada Day at Prairie Winds Park) that bring everyone together. Also, the spring community clean-up is fantastic! I hope there is a fall clean up too.”

3. Community gardens

“More community activities such as community gardens have been sprouting up.”

“The boom in community gardens is impressive. I was also very impressed with Plan-It”

“The establishment of community gardens, halls and farmers markets helps communities come together and participate in a healthy way.”

“Community gardens have taken off recently.”

“I think the expansion of community gardening and the attention to the local food movement has been excellent -
expand this...it is a solution to a lot of the other items (isolation, neighbourliness, etc.).”



Arts & Culture

Priorities:

1. Offering more affordable arts and cultural activities

“We have amazing theatre, ballet, music. Sometimes I feel that most of the opportunities are quite expensive. Especially in the winter, in the fall/winter there is no shortage of theatre etc. but most of it is pricey. In the summer we have lots of festivals, but that's about it for culture, or so it seems. Maybe we just need more promotion of other opportunities.”

“More year round free/affordable events.”

“Affordability and access remain issues. The City used to offer places like Devonian Gardens at charitable rates, but no more! I was dumbfounded to learn that the Homeless Foundation had to pay for the City Hall Atrium to deliver Project Homeless Connect - is the City not committed to the issue of homelessness?”

“Affordable housing and spaces (performing, etc.) for the arts and artists - help make Calgary a creative city”

***Affordable Venues/Studio Space was frequently mentioned

2. Increasing promotion of arts and culture events

“Absolutely dismal promotion of the arts in the city, greatly contributing to a lack of culture and community. Art needs to be funded and encouraged in our city from a young age.”

“Funding or promotion of local venues and local talent”

“not enough bums in seats to support our vibrant arts and culture”

“It would be great if the city could provide a comprehensive list of events/exhibitions that are going on in the city.”

“Better promotion of arts and culture events to improve audience attendance and decrease apathy. It seems that the private (npublic) events are much more successful even there are less affordable than the public free venues...Increase attractions of suburban neighbourhoods to participate in downtown events where most of the quality entertainment and cultural events are happening”

3. Increasing funding to support arts and cultures

“Increase funding for arts & cultural events - and possibly make it contingent on providing one or two free or low-cost events per year.”



“We need to spend less money on interchanges for cars and more on the intersections of culture. The public library is (nearly) free access to a world of information and ideas, it is the 6th busiest library system in North America, the 2nd busiest in Canada and yet it has the lowest rate of municipal funding among Canadian cities. More money needs to go to the library to support spaces and collections. With over 30+ million customer transactions last year and ~16 million items circulated, Calgarians send a clear message that the library is important to them. City Hall needs to listen.”

“Arts and culture is the soul of the city! We need to support it more!”

“Funding...plain and simple”

Working Well:

1. Number of festivals and events available

“Calgary Folk Festival, Blues Festival, Jazz Festival, WordFest, CCIF, various other film festivals, Calgary International Children'Festival, PlayRites, Glenbow Museum”

“Calgary has a wealth of festival events; there is always something to do on a weekend!”

“Calgary hosts a wide range and number of arts and culturally related festivals which is nice to see.”

“Gorgeous downtown art. Many festivals and art opportunities. Fantastic music scene in many genres.”

“I think that there are an abundance of arts & cultural events and festivals”

2. Excellent venues

“We have beautiful venues and one or two new ones being completed soon... the new Science Centre and the new concert hall at MRU.”

“We have lots of theatres, and performance venues and more coming. Hopefully EVERYONE will have some access to these venues.”

“Arts Central - great venue!”

“Many Venues”

“Pumphouse and local theater is great.. more people should go!”



3. Organizations working in the area

“The Cantos Music Foundation”

“Calgary Arts Development, its funding, its activities, its importance. PLUS the new-found energy found in the liaison between CAD, AAF, and Can Council. Keep it up!”

“The spontaneous groups and communities that form on their own”

“There are very good groups working in Calgary in music, drama and dance. “

“There is a lot of talent and creativity in Calgary and a tightly knit arts community. If we support the successful organizations that we have here, they will be able to stay and continue to grow and create.”

Getting Around

Priorities:

1. Further expanding the LRT system

“An LRT line to the airport!”

“Crossing Calgary remains a problem - and will continue to do so with only arterial LRT lines. We can't always assume that building a new/upgrading an existing road is the only solution - better public transit is essential.”

“Expand the LRT to the airport and COP and all educational facilities.”

“The LRT system is overcrowded, expensive and does not even reach all quadrants of the city. A southeast leg NEEDS to be built sooner not later. The BRT does not work when Deerfoot is a parking lot in the morning. You need to give people sustainable alternatives to driving!!”

2. Improving bus service

“The transit system - bus and LRT - are too unreliable in cold weather. Delays in buses or trains discourages people from relying on them for daily commutes. LRT is frustrating and uncomfortable (no seats). Express buses don't run long enough during the day and even BRT routes don't extend far enough to reach all corners of the downtown core. Again, ok in good weather but...”

“Transit will never be the primary choice for people to use as long as it is difficult to get anywhere but downtown, and only at specific & often inconvenient times. Transit will never be self-sustaining as long as it drives riders away by "cost-cutting" on routes & on providing sufficient buses”

“we need more frequent buses on major routes”

“Better coordination in the schedules of bus and LRT routes. It can take a very long time (1.5 hours) to go a relatively short distance (e.g. the U of C to Strathcona) at certain times of day or the evening. The system is designed to get people downtown, but is very poor for getting from one non-downtown neighbourhood to another.”

3. Improving coordination of construction work

“Calgary needs much improvement in the areas of road construction and maintenance, and should be provided with more resources to ensure that it happens. I believe that citizens should not be burdened with repair bills for vehicles due to pot holes and poor road construction. (I actually work in the industry and see many oversights and mistakes)”



“Improve construction schedules. Everyone knows it has to be in the summer, but all the major projects at once?”

“This whole crazy city is under construction. Could we please coordinate some of the work?”

“Controlling construction sites so that sidewalks and streets are NOT shutdown during construction - promote after hours deliveries/work to minimize disruptions to a poorly planned infrastructure. City planners need to really understand the ramifications of "traffic calming devices" - they don't work, create greater driver frustration levels and contribute to "road rage". In some cases the diversion of one street creates additional traffic onto an adjacent side street resulting in safety hazards for the community.”

Working Well:

1. Biking and walking pathways

“Calgary's bike path system is excellent.”

“I love the bike paths where I live to get to and from work - just wish I could use them year-round :)”

“The bike path system is first rate on the Bow River Pathway.”

“We have an amazing and extensive pathway system with good connectivity. It just needs to connect with urban places (downtown and business districts).”

“Bike pathway system is good (if not always continuous).”

2. C-train system and the new expansion

“The C-train is working well and will work even better once the expansion is complete.”

“Expanding the transit platforms to carry four cars - hopefully will alleviate crowding on LRT during rush hours.”

“glad to see the recent extension of the LRT up 17th Ave SW”

“I am thrilled with the West LRT and think everyone should have access to quick and relatively easy public transit.”

“I am very pleased with the new LRT developments and airport transit developments. Getting people off the roads is important to health and environment...let's act on it before it is too late.”

3. Bus system

“In the absence of LRT service in the SE, our express buses and BRTs are excellent.”

“Of late the bus transportation system is much improved”

“A few of the bus lines are well-designed in terms of their route.”

“Being able to get information on-line about bus routes really helps me plan a trip to different parts of the city.”

“Bus transportation has improved a lot in the last couple of years. The busses run more frequently and on weekends as well.”

Work

Priorities:

1. Continuing to diversify our economic base

“Diversity is key and we have none. The heavy subsidies to the oil and gas industry is also an impediment to small business because that industry drives up the costs of labour, rent, equipment, etc. When the price of oil fluctuates, the economy here is inexcusably vulnerable.”

“Having a more diversified economic base would make Calgary (and Alberta) a much more attractive place than it is right now. As someone who doesn't work in the oil industry, I have always felt somewhat alienated from the city's main ethos.”

“The boom/bust nature of the city and province requires more economic diversification and less dependency on oil & gas revenues. We need to do more to attract new investments for innovation.”

“The economy in Calgary definitely needs to diversify. We should not be so reliant on the oil industry.”

“Calgary still hasn't really significantly diversified into other sectors outside of oil & gas. That remains the core industry here. We will live by it & die by it. We need to encourage other industries to set up shop here in Calgary and so I think it comes down to a greater public relations focus originating out of the mayor's office & the premiers office.”

2. Improving supports for entrepreneurs and small businesses

“Leveraging the knowledge of the big successful companies to mentor and coach new entrepreneurs.”

“Tax incentives to subsidize first time entrepreneur to start off a business.”

“Business taxes, permits and other bureaucratic rules inhibit the success of small business. Timelines need to be reduced, application charges should be eliminated. The system is set up to discourage entrepreneurship not to encourage it. Smart people with smart ideas are leaving Calgary to set up a business elsewhere.”

“Small business provides people with jobs they might not otherwise be qualified for. It is a good thing to have in times of economic strife. Small businesses need to be encouraged both through financial incentives and through training programs.”

3. Proving more opportunity for skills training

“Still a lot of people without appropriate employment. A reduction in the cost of skills training and further education would help.”



“Harness public support for immigrant training and integration into the workplace. We need immigrants to sustain our growth. All levels of government need to work on the same page and step up to the plate. There are contrary messages being sent between Fed. and Prov. levels of government. And I don't know where the city stands on this issue.”

“Make it easier for Job training and retraining”

“Mismatch between skills of the unemployed and skill set employers are looking for”

Working Well:

1. Economy is strong and growing

“We have a fairly low unemployment rate and a relatively strong economy”

“We have a strong economy with many opportunities”

“We have a vibrant economy and a highly skilled, well educated work force. Entrepreneurism is strong and small businesses are doing well.”

“People of all ages and education are flocking to Calgary because they know that it is a city of opportunity. The fact that they are still coming is a testament to the optimism and vibrant economy of Calgary.”

“In general Calgary has a vibrant, growing economy”

2. Number and variety of career opportunities

“diversity of jobs”

“Good employment options in Calgary”

“Big picture...Calgary is still one of the best cities in the world to live and to find career opportunities.”

“Calgary still has a better employment rate than most Canadian cities and the working conditions are better than in most places.”

“There are a lot of job opportunities in Calgary.”

3. Oil & Gas industry pays well and is good for economy

“Calgary has a strong economy because of oil and gas.”

“The Oil & Gas sector does pay very well, and employ many people, which provides a lot of benefit.”

“Calgary is relatively well off in economic terms, even despite the bust. Oil offices pay well.”



“Strong business community (e.g. Chamber of Commerce) and lots of good corporate citizens - big oil companies treat their people well and support a lot of community events through significant corporate donations.”

“We are home base for many big oil companies that employ many people.”

Housing

Priorities:

1. Addressing density issues to limit urban sprawl

“We need to focus on revitalizing our downtown core with more small businesses and affordable housing. Less urban sprawl. Legalizing suites is also important not only for the renter, but for the home owner to help offset costs.”

“Less urban sprawl, more inner city living”

“Need to increase density to limit urban sprawl.”

“Urban Sprawl needs to STOP!! Instead of continuing to build out further with little to no infrastructure start working on improving the existing communities to higher capacities, i.e. secondary suites”

“Calgary absolutely needs to increase density and intensity of neighbourhoods. We cannot financially sustain our city if we keep growing out. Demographics are changing and people's needs for housing choices are changing as well. We need to keep the neighbourhoods diverse with a mix of housing choices, so that all neighbourhoods can be affordable and homes attainable to all.”

2. Improving the affordability of ownership housing

“Have zoning that allows smaller, more affordable owned homes, smart-built, efficient and attractive with a green-space rich environment.”

“Priority 4 would be affordability of ownership housing.”

*****This priority did not frequently come up in the “What’s Missing Comments”. More frequently, comments were against policies which made home ownership too easy, facilitating sprawl and creating unsustainable market bubbles like the recent US housing crash.**

“Your suggested options are amusing. I particularly liked finding new ways to help people finance their homes. CMHC wisely abandoned the no money down program they had working for a few years as they was what new ways of financing homes had done in the US. There is nothing quite like having your money tied up in a house to focus you on preserving the value of your investment. Helping people over-commit to homes they can't afford is bad economic policy. I also liked increasing rental vacancy rates, although I was not sure if you just wished to order landlords to eject a certain number of tenants to achieve some arbitrary level, say a 5% vacancy rate, so as to drive down landlords returns on investment and incentive to build further



units. If you want to improve the affordability of rental and owned housing reduce taxes by cutting the public art and celebration side of the City spending”

3. Improving the affordability of rental housing

“A NEED for new apartment and rental stock as well as increased social housing”

“Rent controls needs to be implemented, limiting the percentage by which a landlord might increase rent within a given time frame. Tenants need more rights and protections. Lack of affordability is one of the major factors contributing to homelessness. A recent study found that Alberta had both the highest vacancy rates in Canada, but also the highest rental costs! Many apartments are empty because the landlords aren't getting the price they want for them. This is unacceptable.”

“Renting a house in Calgary is unaffordable, the reason people rent homes is because they cannot afford to buy one for themselves, paying 1000 dollars for a crappy one bedroom is not uncommon in Calgary and this is unacceptable.”

“Rents are far too high and there is not enough good, safe, clean places to rent.”

Working Well:

1. Working towards ending homelessness (10 year plan, Calgary Homeless Foundation)

“10 year Plan to end homelessness is excellent. Increasing levels of residential options near downtown is important to a vibrant downtown.”

“Kudos to those working on Calgary's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness -- it is really making progress.”

“The 10-year Plan to End Homelessness seems to be an excellent approach - not sure if it's getting the support it requires, but it seems to be heading in the right direction”

“The Calgary Homeless Foundation seems to be making some progress through the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.”

“the Homeless foundation is working to help those in need”

“We seem to be making good progress on the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.”

2. Initiatives and organizations to help with affordable housing

“Efforts to address affordable housing and housing for the homeless are making progress.”

“There has certainly been an improvement in the awareness of the need for affordable housing.

“Increasing conversation about affordable and attainable home ownership”



“Calgary housing is becoming more affordable. There is a good availability of housing.”

3. Allowance of secondary suites

“The push for secondary suites and the re-gentrification of inner-city neighbourhoods.”

“Happy to see secondary suites legalized.”

“I like Nenshi's idea of pushing secondary suites.”

“I liked how the mayor opened up the possibility of having more secondary suites.”

“The slow but steady understanding that urban sprawl kills the heart of a city and that legal secondary suites can be done in a way that respects neighbourhoods and those living in them.”

Safety

Priorities:

1. Increasing the visible presence of police

“not enough police "walking" on the streets”

****This issue was not reflected largely in the “what’s missing” comments. Many comments said that the presence of police was already very visible and more visible police are not needed or desirable. Many complained about too much police enforcement for minor violations such as parking violations etc, and the need for police to take on a more interactive role within communities.**

Ex.

“Calgary is a safe city. We do not need more police and bi-law officers looking to catch people doing breaking some minor bi-law. If there is a need it is for a well-financed, well supported, well trained WHITE COLLAR CRIME UNIT. This is because, in focus on street crime we have missed that the real criminals are using computers and hiring lobbyists. They are running unethical businesses, that just happen to be legal. We have missed that in Calgary, a real criminal is focused on how they can influence to political process to ensure that their interests are looked after and not the needs of the Calgary Community. The War on Drugs is a waste of time, and we would all be better off if Drugs were sold in Liquor Stores, but that is a Federal Matter.”

“Greater trust / connection with police so we see them as allies rather than to be avoided.”

“I feel we live in one of the safest cities in Canada. If we add more government police presence we will begin to infringe on human rights. Look at The Patriot Act the Americans enacted.”

2. Reducing gang violence

“Need to crack down on gangs and street level crime.”

“Services for newcomers? The gang violence is directly tied to marginalization of some cultures and a "not fitting in" trend. This leads to younger finding their way to the gang culture.... why is the Federal gov't not assisting more with the funding of immigrants that they have allowed to come?”

“The city targets minor drug dealers who sell small amounts of street drugs such as crack and meth. (Which is good). They then make this public and deem it a 'success' in the fight against crime. They should focus the efforts towards the more serious dealers, those involved in the gangs that sell large quantities of drugs to the more wealthy people. Gang violence doesn't occur because of a few hits of crack on a street corner. It occurs over kilos of cocaine that are regularly bought by wealthy, middle-upper class people who can afford it.”



3. Improving public transit security

“Calgary Transit is the scariest place to be as a single white female at night. those red help buttons do nothing to comfort, as the response to trouble is slow at best.”

“Increase lighting in communities and between transit stations and communities. It can be scary walking in the dark on a cold winter evening. I have asked for lighting to be improved in my community on a pathway leading to and from an LRT station and have met with deaf ears. All say there is no funding or not their responsibility.”

“Public transit security, just not at station, but around and getting to stations.”

“re: public transit. There needs to be more visible security/police presence, especially evenings and weekends. I know there's the help buttons, but if something were to happen I'd like to know that someone is close by because I just saw them at the last stop, for example.”

Working Well:

1. Low crime rate

“Crime continues to decline, as it is in the rest of Canada. So something is working well.”

“Crime rates are falling and the city is generally very, very safe.”

“huge improvement in reduction of violent crimes, safety downtown, gangs under control right on top of computer crime doing an excellent job”

“Our neighbourhoods are safe and crime is relatively low.”

“We are a very safe city and our crime rate is steadily decreasing. It's time to divert some of the funds we put into policing into programs for youth so they don't start getting into trouble.”

2. Feel safe in my community

“Calgary feels like a very safe, friendly environment to live in.”

“Calgary is a very safe city.”

“Calgary's a pretty safe city to live. I'm a young female, and I can walk around the streets late at night feeling pretty safe.”

“For its size Calgary is one of the safest cities to live in. I feel safe here.”

“I feel safe here every day.”

3. Police visibility



“I think the Calgary Police continues to demonstrate an understanding of what is required to make the City safe. Their leadership should be commended.”

“In my experience, Calgary police have been helpful, courteous and professional.”

“Not only is there a police presence, but it is FRIENDLY!! Not too many cities can boast that!!”

“Police presence has definitely increased over the last few years. The current Police Chief is doing a good job.”

Aging Population

Priorities:

1. Developing more options for assisted living

“Affordable assisted living for seniors is important.”

“Assisted living places too expensive for most seniors”

“Baby boomers are retiring and there will be a greater call for more assisted living facilities that are affordable.”

“Many of the assisted living sites that are available cost more than the average person can afford.”

2. Reducing isolation

“I hate to think of any seniors living in poverty and isolation - we should ensure they are cared for”

“More priorities. Elder abuse is ongoing, isolation is a problem, adequate nutrition is needed, and more options for transportation are all priorities.”

“Elders should be respected more instead of being neglected.”

“Calgary's seniors' are under-engaged.”

3. Developing more options for housing

“Housing opportunities Adequate access to health care”

“Develop more housing downtown or near transport as an alternative to driving”

“Not enough senior-appropriate housing (i.e. smaller size, one level, close to shops and transit, etc.) is being built.”

“There isn't a coordinated strategy for housing seniors. It is hit and miss between government housing and private housing. There needs to be solid policy around providing housing for seniors at various stages as health declines.”



Working Well:

1. Seniors-focused programs and activities (Golden Club, community groups)

“Clubs like Golden Age and Kerby Centre; although I realize these Clubs are having financial difficulties and need better public funding.”

“I am part of a new seniors group dedicated to lifelong learning. The opportunities for seniors to remain active and engaged are considerable and improving.”

“Many seniors in Calgary seem to live very active and healthy lives. More facilities seem to be coming in line that can transition a senior from one stage in life to the next less independent stage, etc. Seniors can therefore plan for their future.”

“There are lots of interesting things for mobile seniors to do in Calgary.”

2. Seniors-focused associations (Kerby Centre, Meals on Wheels, Seniors Resource Society)

“Senior groups and organization offer a wide range of activities for Seniors i.e.. the Kerby centre, FLC Seniors”

“We do have some strong institutions, such as the Kerby Center.”

“Organizations dedicated to seniors doing good work (Kerby centre etc.)”

“There are many social organizations for seniors and by seniors in the city”

3. Handi-bus and cheaper transit pass

“I think it’s lovely you can get a seniors bus pass etc.”

“The senior transit pass is a bargain!”

“Handi-bus.”

“Handicapped accessibility is good for C-train and bus users and also for entering buildings unlike Europe where there are stairs everywhere.”



Financial Well-Being

Priorities:

1. Increasing services that assist with transition from poverty to workforce

“Provide educational seminars to assist people out of poverty - hand up, not hand out.”

“Help to get back into the workforce for those with problems”

****commenters pointed out that there are a large number of working poor in Calgary. Those who work at minimum wage jobs are often below the poverty line despite being a part of the workforce.**

Ex: “I struggle greatly with the wording of one of the options in the drop down menu: "Increasing services that assist with transition from poverty to workforce". 94,200 Calgarians are working and not earning enough to rise above the low-income cut off. It's not costly services that are needed, but rather pay people what they are worth: a living wage.”

2. Improving access to more affordable child care

“Better childcare with higher pay for childcare workers.”

“Child care cost is very high, availability is scarce.”

“Child care is so expensive, that it often costs more than my wife can earn in the same time. It would be good to implement new ideas to reduce costs there.”

“Implementing more before and after-school child care for the poor who tend to work outside of 9-5 jobs.”

3. Improving the affordability and accessibility of healthy food

“adjusting the housing market; improving overall cost of living - especially in basic needs like food in Calgary, which is high”

“Cost of food.”

“It's cheaper to buy not healthy food than healthy food. It has an expensive impact in long term.”

“Lower food costs through local production and more competition from smaller stores would be better for people with low income. More awareness of financial skills.”



Working Well:

1. Strong economy and high employment

“Strong economy that provides sufficient employment”

“Because the employment rate is low and employment opportunities relatively high in Calgary, the majority of residents enjoy reasonable financial security.”

“Employment seems to be on the rise.”

“Calgary is robust and dynamic with lots of opportunities for those will to take a chance”

2. High average income

“Generally Calgary has a very high average income.”

“Great education institutions leads to skilled workers. Salaries are competitive and Calgarians for the most part live a comfortable life.”

“Calgary salaries are high in comparison to the rest of Canada, while housing costs are reasonable - a good combination!”

“In general, wages paid in Calgary are higher than those paid for the same work in other major Canadian cities (at least for professional jobs).”

3. Number of support programs for low-income earners

“Efforts to achieve a living wage (vibrant communities Calgary) are very promising.”

“I believe that the non-profit community is doing an excellent job of leveraging their resources to compensate for government short falls in certain social investments.”

“There are programs available to assist low income Calgarians with money management.”

“Organization like Momentum Community Economic development provide support to low income individuals so that they can learn to manage their finances, save money, and become an entrepreneur. It would be better if there were more opportunities like this for people.”

