

OUR CITY OUR BUDGET OUR FUTURE

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Understanding Values & Priorities Phase 2 Social Media – Facebook (City of Calgary), City of Calgary News Blog, Mayor Nenshi's News Blog, Facebook (Mayor Nenshi) March 1st – April 30th, 2011

FACEBOOK (City of Calgary)

What could be improved?

Parking is more expensive and less accessible than New York. The new parking system downtown is a joke to anyone who does not own a credit card. My 2\$ pizza delivery tip is often offset by \$40 parking ticket something doesn't add up. The city of Calgary will no longer be getting pizza's downtown.

Good point - would the city ever consider free parking on Saturday and Sunday? It would encourage people to come downtown and be apart of their city. Also the downtown could use a Safeway express for people who work in the core and need groceries to take home.

Great idea City of Calgary :)

But the point is that it's not easy to make the tough decisions about complex issues. By opening up the budget for all Calgarians to provide input on, and not just a small group of staff and council, we have a much better chance of hearing new ideas about how to handle these issues. Staff have an extremely important and valid point of view and the average Calgarian has an equally important and valid perspective. This process lets us hear them both and take the best of all worlds.

It would be an easier process if the mayor (ideally with prior consultation with council) were to instruct staff to develop a budget based on his/their strategic objectives and then, when the budget was presented by staff they could approve, approve with revisions, etc. Much more like other levels of government. This would be easier on all involved.

Secondary suites...that is the question!!! Do we really need them? Do we want the landlords to keep them well maintained or do we want another misfortunate human being to die in another basement suite fire ...where the windows were boarded up, so, he could not get out!!

The question should read, "What city services work well?". I'm looking at a car parked across my driveway and not just slightly or partially blocking it. They won't do anything about it until I shovel my driveway and stay here and wait for them? Really?

Traffic. Especially 14th ST SW.

Again we have a stabbing on the LRT platforms. Why well hire some more of the losers to drive around in the vans that get 60 some thousand a year. Crime preventers highly unlikely they just know one thing and that is drive around in a van and look at the platforms to see if there is any trouble. Sad really sad it is. We pay so much and get so little. Wake up management your time is limited.

We have a freeway (Deerfoot) that works no better than our pathway in rush hour! Reconfigure off/on ramps or educate drivers on how to use them properly. I would strongly suggest the latter! There is no reason to stay in passing lanes until your off-ramp, then trying to merge through 4 lanes causing everyone else to slow down for you!

I agree. Reducing property taxes would be nice also.

I'm tired of seeing civic construction projects run significantly over-time and over-budget compared to private endeavors of similar scope. Third party oversight might be the answer.

How about staffing the water services group. My front yard has been lake front for more than a week now.

Save race city.

Wow the city is looking at a 42 million dollar windfall and the cbe has a budget deficit of 62 million and will be cutting 172 positions and this is our future councilor.

Transit, affordable housing.

Bylaw!

Traffic. Work with the province to get traffic moving on the Deerfoot!

What city services should the city provide that aren't being offered right now?

Snow removal and transit.

You guys should retire the old light trains. Or I should say recycle them. I remember in the wintertime their heat was barely working. Or maybe they were just not as much of energy efficient as the new models.

Plus you can clearly feel that their ride is not smooth as the other trains. This could be another factor that adds up in less efficiency.

Disappointed that you want to know what more to provide. You provide far too much already, lower our taxes! (3)

More taxis. I manage a bar in town and it's really frustrating when intoxicated patrons have to stick around until 3:30 am before they get a safe ride home. This especially during holidays, bad weather, and special events. (3)

Composting. (2)

Composting. And extend recycling program to condos and town houses. (3)

A salvage centre, for recycling good household stuff. (2)

Recycling for condos!! (1)

How about a manned 3-1-1 account for those pothole or icy road reports that don't get through on the busy phone lines. You would likely see multiple reports for the same section of road at any given time (at a glance) without citizens having to wait on the phone during busy times. The city could respond to the area with the most complaints first. (4)

I would like to see Enmax get into residential Internet offering a viable alternative to Shaw and Telus. (2)

Lower taxes. We don't need any more people 'working' for the city. (2)

More transit routes--which I understand are coming. More frequently. (2)

I think dog parks should be incorporated into the planning of new communities. It seems next to impossible to get one

put in afterwards. (1)

I want to second the ideas of curbside composting, extending the blue bins to apartments/condos, and I'd like to see more public or community gardening plots. The current ones are often heavily controlled by specific neighborhoods. I also want to thank whoever was in charge of the tiny veggie gardens in the park just off 1st ST SE. The blooming and ripening vegetables gave me hope and brought a smile every time I saw them.

Recycling for apartments! So many tenants in my building throw out cardboard because they don't have a car to drive it all to a bin that is a 10 min drive away! (5)

When it comes to "low income" the city has only one fee/rate to offer. When you are on the extreme end of low income it makes it very hard to afford even that rate/fare. I have suggested to others who advocate poverty issues to the #yyccc a low income/disabled yearly transit pass that is on a sliding scale based on your income level. This would assist so many people in Calgary. I am one of these people. I am disabled. I have many doctor appointments to go to where I take the handibus (two transit tickets per trip, one ticket to the appointment, one ticket for the trip back home). I cannot afford the monthly \$40.00 low-income transit pass. I carefully plan my appointments to not be more trips than a book of 10 transit tickets, what is budgeted for each month. It is not always possible. I know I am not the only person in Calgary in this situation; I am not the only one who a yearly transit pass based on a sliding scale according to your level of poverty this would assist. (2)

How about a free Wi-Fi Internet connections to be installed in every community, just like somewhere in northwest area. (1)

Compost! Wow! That is a great idea:) can it be done in the winter here? I am new to Calgary.

Recycling access is another one I would like.

Build a giant dome over the city, like Houston, Texas plans to do.

Revenue generator: sell carbon credits generated from city parks.

Revenue generator: dramatically raise the fire department false alarm fees.

Increase the productive use of public land. Does Ogden really need that many parks?

Revenue generator: raise revenue from the sale of 'air-rights' above c-train lands, and roads.

Use cost-effective fuel cell technology to power city hall. It can generate up to 60% of your power needs.

Cost savings: do downtown streets need to be cleaned every week?

Create revenue by leasing out ad space on the sides and rooftops of city owned buildings. Large corporations pay big \$\$ to put their name on a building (think new Zealand reforms of the 90's).

Street line painting. Is there a paint product that lasts longer so we can see the lanes in the winter?

Snow/slush removal.

For heaven's sake, don't add any more services. If anything, the city should look into reducing services that it participates in. Private sectors always provide a more cost effective service than the city could. (5)

A listing of businesses within 10 minutes walk of the LRT lines. If shopping consisted of getting on and off the C- train - maybe ridership, especially on weekends, would increase. Sell ads to businesses pay for it. (1)

I really like the recycling depot they have in Airdrie. Does Calgary have something like that?

How about transit zones. Seems a rip off to pay the same to go downtown from the beltline as opposed to coming from Cranston. Ever seen a flat rate cab ride in Calgary? 50 bucks to go 2 blocks or 20 miles? Come-on Calgary!!

Community farms on unused/orphaned/surplus land. Vertical realty inventory for artists. Tax breaks incentives for owners of empty buildings to allow occupancy by art/recreation/education/environmental or age groups. Community based organic collection connected to community farms. Protect pedestrians.

Better street lane painting/markings that works year round. Especially where cycle routes seem to share space.

Curbside composting and recycling pickup for all residences. Make it easier to recycle because far too much is ending up in the waste.

Reporting process between council & admin is deeply flawed.

Ditto on @jen pooley curbside composting with smaller boxes & condensed zone, using smaller vehicles. Amends soil 4 community farming network.

I would like to see the service of a balanced budget and zero tax increase. (2)

Can you budget to fix the sidewalks on the corner of 2nd street and 8th ave? That whole intersection is shot and 75,000 people a day walk that intersection.

Which services matter most?

Police service, ambulatory services, hospital services, public transit, and recreational services. All should be on the forefront.

That is a really neat tool for engagement!

Please don't approve every idea sent in. This isn't fun anymore, most of those new "ideas" aren't services the city does or could provide, and many of them are just incomprehensible. How am I supposed to compare "stop funding of public art program" to "make dog owners keep their dogs off the pathway"?

Public transit is a must but you can't approve 24h c-train service without 24h feeder bus service. Also I'd like to see more common sense used when purchasing transit vehicles. For example, the new arboc shuttle busses are garbage. They do not kneel correctly and the ramps are too steep for some wheelchairs. Chairs tip backwards unless someone assists the person in the chair on. Passengers hate them, operators hate them and now the city has purchased 30 more of these lemons.

The most crucial services are those that affect the lives of the majority of Calgarians! These include - fire, police, roads, water and sewer, by-laws, transport - c train, busses! And one of the most crucial is help to our invalid and aged population! No cuts to taxi services and no cuts to home care - even though I don't understand how that is under the city's control!

Also garbage and electricity! Keeping Enmax under city control and the homeless! And to watch the spending on non-essential services - more aids etc.! Instead of asking what we should keep perhaps ask what can be cut without effecting Calgarians - which to me includes consultation fee's - just use Facebook and the good old phone for this I think the city is very top heavy and a total anonymous report of ideas from regular city employees (where they can show where to cut, where to add, what is the problem in their department and also where and if they can make cuts!). Who better to ask where to cut or add then the people that are out on there 24/7! Time to listen to the employees! I think that city hall already knows what we find dear, and what Calgarians are against - privatization! So just ask the ones with the ideas! Another great idea would be to put what really shouldn't be on the shoulders of Calgary city council and back in the appropriate laps! Such as home care and access Calgary - why are we paying for this? This should be a province thing! The homeless problem should be a federal issue - to make more affordable spaces! Why can't you turn around and say, "here you handle it, it's not my responsibility," I think every thing we take on, loosens up the pressure on the provincial and federal ruling parties!

Have you gone on this site? They have repeated and repeated most of the questions! I think the Shaganappi question came up about 20 times! It should be 1 question and that's that! I think the whole thing is very leading and one sided! It definitely doesn't offer us the right sort of questions and answers that we should have! I just clicked on one of the examples and ignored the one about funding dog parks with licenses, and because I didn't choose that one, it stayed on there! This is not a good representation of ideas at all!

I agree. They did repeat one of the questions when I was on this site.

Water, electricity, sewage and roads. Enough with the spending, service me by a controlled budget, zero tax increase.

Privatizing is not an end all and be all. The taxpayer still pays for the service and often the city can provide it more efficiently. (1)

The city needs to start running itself like a real business. Please begin by making cut backs and reduce, not increase our property taxes.

Have you driven on our streets lately? The potholes, the sewers, the water main breaks, snow removal etc. They have to be done! And the Deerfoot maintenance was privatized by Klein; did you drive on that after a snowstorm? I would choose the city any day! At least I can phone my alderman and complain and get something done! We had years of no tax increases from the past mayor and we are now paying the price for all.

Snow clearing and recycling...and police/fire.

Senior care, childcare, fire safety, ambulance, and bus service.

Seniors in care homes need our help to live a better life with dignity- upon visiting my dad whom is in col.belcher & dependent on the care givers to help him get from bed to wheelchair and bathroom, when he asks to go they reply he can go in his diaper, I tell them he wouldn't like that and if he asks to go to bathroom there is no reason why he should be left to have to go in pants like a newborn. I consider this a very undignified practice on our seniors. He is left like that for hours on end as well.

The care givers seem to think this practice is okay. My father was on front lines during WWII and this is how we repay them.

That's horrible. How about a letter to the editor. A story in the media. Shame.

Contact your local member of parliament. After our nice election on Monday, I am sure there are some newbies just chomping at the bit. No one should be treated this way ever and they should be ashamed of themselves. Karma baby! Karma! (1)

Participation

My concern is with the marginalized citizens of Calgary. They may not be tech savvy, they may have poor English language skills, they may have disabilities. Have all the groups who work with these people been informed of this budget discussion?

Sell the Calatrava bridge!! It was privately wanted, it can be privately owned. Charge a premium for locale. (Maybe it can make up the new \$10M shortfall for the province's poor planning and sneaky gov2govt auto registration database fees.).

The sad thing about the budget nights is the public apathy. I went last week to Glenmore Inn. It was very good and is for anyone the input is good the surveys are good. All in all is a worthwhile venture. And the people didn't show up. 17 showed up.

Hi! I messed up!!! Lol for some reason I put "eliminate" for water and for transportation!!!! Lol as if! So is there anything I can do about it, or is it null and void!

Thank you! I don't know if you can see from the picture but I'm blonde! So when I went back the 2 that I "thought" I had missed were actually zero anyway - due to fees for water and transportation!!! Lol.

Don't hide things behind closed doors most people can't make it to those meeting and that's not fair for Calgary if only a small part picks for the whole.

Just like every other decision the City of Calgary seems to make, the far north is left out. Just the winter club for the entire NW and north central and yet the deep south gets one in McKenzie. It is a long ways from the northern hills or

royal oak/rocky ridge and ironic it is nearly impossible for those communities to access the winter club by transit. There should have been more opportunities, and they should have been where people live in my opinion.

Well the city has better things to do than spend 50 million on a useless bridge and spend money on mla building to renovate we need major road work throughout the city.

And not raise property taxes stop burning our money away on things you politicians think our money is your personnel spending money, where's the honesty gone.

I'm running a petition via Facebook to convince the city of Calgary of the dire need for 24/7 train or transit service if you're interested in joining or posting feedback join up here's the link.

Other

How come the city is moving away from it being in charge of waterworks? Privatizing waterworks is a recipe for disaster, and I suppose that is why we have mandatory water meters? If the city hired 100 seasonal last year and this year only 20, then there's a problem! There should be zero cuts to staff and services that are essential - such as waterworks, electricity, fire, roads, sewers etc.

No cuts when there's work to be done. Privatizing is the best way to inflate everything. I can't believe in an oil rich province how enslaved we are to have to work our butts off to make ends meet and the city is busy privatizing so costs go up further. What a lame way to treat a community you are supposed to serve.

Privatizing is a way for America to take our water, bad step and totally dumb idea, I expected our leader to be much more informed and intelligent than this.

CITY OF CALGARY NEWS BLOG

I'm trying to fully understand what this post is saying. Correct me if I'm wrong - the city is paying a company to advertise to Calgarians in order to solicit input from people on budgets? If I have this correct, here are a few questions:

You say it will cost "under \$1 million". That isn't very specific. It also costs me "under \$1 million" to put gas in my car ever few weeks, much less in fact, but still under 1 million. Can you be more specific about cost

If the city is seeking input, why not set up a website where people can provide input and then advertise directly to Calgarians to inform them of the site. Cut out the middleman and allow people to come to you instead of chasing them with expensive campaigns and save some money. This website is a good example of a way for citizens to provide input that costs the city very little. The city might also benefit from an online discussion forum.

How is input from various sources received and used? For instance, who at the city reads this blog and considers comments here? Who reads Twitter, the mayor's Facebook page, city e-mail addresses, etc? How is this information processed? If I e-mail the mayor can I assume the mayor will get my message, or should I assume he'd never see it? Should I spend time writing a detailed comment in my e-mail, or should I be brief and to the point, as it will be read by an assistant who will coarsely sum up my e-mail in a report with a count of how many people contact the city on different issues and general feelings for those issues? Basically, how is input used and processed?

Thanks.

I agree...why use an expensive middleman to hear our comments? Good idea in setting up a web page for Calgarians to submit their comments.

Here are some answers to your questions.

During the 2011 budget adjustment discussions in December 2010, Council approved \$2.5 million dollars from the

Innovation Fund to initiate this important conversation on services and budget for the future of our city. Consulting fees for this project will be \$545,000, with expenses (like printing, meeting rooms, keypad polling and other engagement tools and materials) totaling approximately \$300,000.

Thanks for your question. We agree that the website is a great way for people to provide input, and we appreciate the suggestion for an online discussion forum, which we will definitely implement in the process. This is the beginning of an in-depth conversation with Calgarians. The tools, techniques and methods we introduce during this process, will continue to be used as we move through the 2012 – 2014 business plans and budget cycle and beyond. Not all citizens or staff have access to the Internet or email, and many will want to talk face-to-face about these important issues. Our goal is to provide multiple opportunities for everyone to provide input in the way that works best for them.

All input received from citizens and staff in this conversation will be included in reports. Two versions of reports will be created: one focused on “What Was Said”, which is a record of what people said online, face-to-face and through emails, letters or faxes, documented without attribution to specific participants. All “what was said” reports will be available for everyone to review. From the “what was said” reports a second report will be developed for Council and Administration that analyzes all of the input and identifies values, priorities, themes, and ideas presented by all participants. This report will also be available for everyone to review. As well, throughout the engagement process, bi-weekly updates on input received from citizens and staff will be provided to Council and Administration.

The input received will be used by Council to help them set their priorities for the 2012-2014 business planning and budget coordination. Once Council priorities have been set, Administration will use the information to create business plans and budgets aligning with Council’s priorities.

Hope this helps. Thanks for taking an interest.

I was at first skeptical to note the engagement consultant hails from Ottawa rather than here at home in ALBERTA. Is it reasonable or naively optimistic to expect non-Calgarians/non-Albertans/non-westerners to appreciate the lifestyles, values, culture and aspirations we hold here? Would outsiders provide an objective, un-prejudiced perspective, or instead come to the table with inaccurate, predisposed assumptions about what Calgary means (or should mean) to Calgarians?

After the election, comments from astonished easterners re: Calgary of all places electing a Muslim mayor resounded with undertones of 'wow those rednecks are really progressive aren't they?'. Is that the appropriate population base from which to hire consultants for the express purpose of soliciting input from our citizens?

Upon reviewing the Dialogue Partners website, I was impressed by the level of their professional expertise and local experience (well Edmonton anyway). I was also pleased to see a smattering of Albertans on their team. I do hope these backgrounds are reflected in the makeup of the project team. Here's to our success.

Love it, when can I sign up DM.

MAYOR NENSHI'S NEWS BLOG

Help Draft the City's New Budget:

Prior to any tax increases or budget cuts each city department should examine their efficiency, as there is still plenty of room for improvement. Offer salary bonuses to those departments who are able to deliver without a tax increase. Get rid of those with a "not in my job description" mentality. It is far too easy to spend somebody else's money so please don't come asking for more until you are truly confident that each and every employee is working as hard as those who pay his/her salary.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the budget process.

Like it.

Why do you not have the airport moved east on the other side of the ring road make the Airport terminal into a LRT and shopping mall and station for the high-speed rail between Calgary and Edmonton which you know will come in the very near future.

If you could change a Calgary that could make money for the City and stop waste that is going on would you look at it. Not a big difference from what we are doing.

Budgets have to be discussed in the open:

An annual shortfall of \$90,000 million? So.... the equivalent of 300 times the operating budget of the Calgary Police Force and 36 times bigger than the current operating budget? Please check your significant digits.

Wow... thanks for catching that. Our bad. It would be a \$90 million shortfall. (Fixed)

We are in Maui on vacation and I was totally stunned when I heard on a CBC news stream that the city is suggesting a 12% hike in property taxes for 2012. After all that was discussed at the last budget time I would have thought that the city staff would realize by now that the budget cannot just be a wish list, coming out with a large scary number and then looking good by cutting back. We have to use inflation as the anchor point.

It would be easy for me to strongly request that the services that I use be kept and updated, but there are so many non-sexy things that need to be taken care of too. Road repair, replacing old buses, paying for police services, upkeep with libraries... I wouldn't know how to even start to make suggestions.

Actually, J.E. the Budget Toolkit (if you have the time to flip through it) is one of the best documents I've ever seen for explaining the City's budget. If you're feeling overwhelmed, it's a great place to start: <http://www.calgary.ca/docgalle...>

I believe we have plenty of infrastructures that are not used properly. We have schools, community centres, athletic complexes, arenas and libraries. Yet we still have community groups clambering for space. Still we have a perceived need for arts, community and athletic space. The major groups that use community space during the day are our beloved seniors and those with beautiful infant/toddler aged children. This is a fair assumption as older children through teens are mandated to be in school and a majority (we have a very low unemployment rate) of adults are employed. I understand that many of these buildings (schools) are outside of the city's control. All of these however have been paid with dollars from the same citizens. With Board of Education's infrastructure not being utilized to capacity (sitting dormant many evenings and most weekends) and the city's buildings being under utilized during the daytime; there must be a way like in smaller rural communities to manage these resources better. More importantly both the city and the School Board are staring at a deficit situation if the status quo remains. I encourage us to be community minded and be good stewards of our space and look "outside the box" for solutions. The same can be said for park space. Most schools are trying to be "greener" in terms of the property surrounding the building and this property is rightfully off limits during school hours. However there needs to be greater effort and cooperation in making these lands more community focused after hours. Again I point out that this is infrastructure funded by the taxpayer. If the city requires ball diamonds or soccer/football fields why not coordinate with the School Boards. We are a rich people and managing this wealth properly is essential to lower tax rates. If there is a shortage of park space let the city work with the schools in that district to address issues together. If community groups that provide extra curricular activities to youth do not have space let them work with schools. For a city where there is a perceived shortage of such spaces I am sure that if we looked at these spaces collectively we would find we are not near capacity at all. I am not a tax expert but this is something I have felt strongly about for some time as I came from a small community where the fire hall is where the rotary club met and the school's library was partly funded by the town and was a public library. The school itself had baseball teams practicing inside on weekend during the winter and housed many of our other community athletic teams. In my opinion we should study the use of current infrastructure before spending any more money. I know this does not relate directly to the budget but I am not well versed enough to speak to the budget directly. I do know that most every citizen would want great services at the lowest cost, it is in our nature. One-way to achieve this is cross over use of facilities. This is my two-cents worth and it is free; no need to adjust my property taxes. Infrastructure is very expensive; please investigate this if you are not already.

Mayor Nenshi, allow individual community associations the power to levy their own community association fees on all property owners in their neighborhoods - the effect will be to: a) eliminate City of Calgary expense and responsibility for local community parks/community association facilities and community road maintenance; b) allow communities to set their own priorities for this kind of funding, since community needs differ in the city just like municipal needs differ throughout the province; c) encourage more active involvement by community stakeholders rather than the standard community group of volunteers who have to spend too much time fundraising and less time actually getting things done in their community.

Thanks for your support for the great participatory budgeting process! I hosted a budget conversation at my house last night with friends and family and while views were diverse, we came to a solid consensus on our top 5 budget priorities. I'd like to encourage others to visit calgary.ca/ourfuture and host their own conversations to provide input to the process or go to one of the public forums taking place this week. This process is a gift to our city and if we as citizens don't take advantage of it, shame on us!

Here's my 2 cents: I was required to fill out 2 separate surveys when my water meter was installed. In my opinion the short one the technician got me to do was ENOUGH! The city had their own which tied me up too long, asked too many redundant questions. That "service" needs to be eliminated, their budget is obviously too big if they have time to pester me with silly surveys. If I have a problem, isn't that what 311 is for? And speaking of...after 2 calls and one to our councilor, we STILL have not had a flooded gutter cleared. We are going on our third week with a Lake here!

Mr. Nenshi, lock the property taxes to the rate of inflation and be done with it. The city must then live within its means, taking into account buying power via inflation. If we can afford the city today from property taxes, then we should be able to afford it tomorrow when adjusted for inflation. If this doesn't work, then obviously you are failing us with labor negotiations (hint: lock them to inflation too) or a growing scope of government that we DO NOT WANT TO PAY FOR. It is really a much more simple solution than the politicians and labor unions make it out to be. Lock to inflation. Adjust spending as necessary to stay within your means. You would save time, and we would respect city council a lot more for being faithful stewards of our city and our hard-earned dollars.

I would take the tax freeze and cut in services. I don't need LRT, Recreation Centers, Walkways on the River, Gala Ornaments downtown, New Libraries or new Roads; I don't need or expect anything other than Basic Utilities. One thing I do understand too well is the effect of compounding tax increases and at increases like 7 percent means in only 10 years my tax will double what they are now. And that is absolutely unacceptable.

I totally agree with you. I remember before Mayor Nenshi got elected that he promised Calgarians that he would reduce or cut some taxes. Since then I trusted him to keep his promise and is believed that he would do well for citizens'. However, I have never been so disappointed, all I hear from Nenshi is increase taxes all over place. Just another politician who only cares about his pocket. I am really tired of government spending our money left and right like a drunken sailor.

I totally agree. People's salaries don't increase 23% in 3 years. Increase property tax per the inflation rate and that's it. If there is not enough money, it's because the city is spending too much. Politicians tend to solve all problems with tax increases and that's wrong! Food prices are rising, clothing prices are rising, gas prices, electricity. The only thing that increases slowly are salaries (and sometimes they don't increase). Please stop growing the size and the weight of (local) government!

Facebook reactions to *Budgets have to be discussed in the open: (48 like)*

Always worry what services are going to be at risk when this happens every year. I am already on the lower income scale - any service/program cuts often affects me. I suspect Calgarians/council will meet somewhere in the middle as mentioned on your page...just my thoughts.

This is a good start. Thank you for being open and asking our opinions. I really hope there are no, or if there are any very minimal, tax increases. The external consultant review is also good to hear.

The very fact you're taking the initiative to have this discussion on Facebook just shows how much YOU TOTALLY ROCK!

I think that a 23% increase plus the spiking gas prices which will push up the price of goods will leave low income family's with nothing at the end of the month.

I have tried to go to a public library to pick up a budget package but they didn't have any/or didn't know where they were.

Way too many people using Calgary's infrastructure that don't pay any city taxes. Put a toll on the Deerfoot.

Maybe we could start with the obvious.

Transportation.

Deerfoot isn't Calgary's problem it's a provincial road isn't it?

I agree with ghost I think council should go to McKenzie town at 7:30 in the morning and take Deerfoot to work see how long it takes and then they would see how the south east needs a ring road ASAP!

I just want to say it's nice to know the city cares about the opinion of the people. I have always felt that this is how it should really work.

Now if only we could get provincial/federal gov't on board...

\$90,000 million?

I just want to add that we don't get pay raise 22 percent in three years so how do we get tax hike. Life will be too hard for people. Make city hall efficient and make people work instead of raising taxes or cutting services. Overhaul the way city council work that's what we vote.

My biggest concern is making and marketing a better transit system for this city. In my opinion it doesn't run efficiently and seem stale.

I think a big part of the problem is that people are prone to panic. While they realize that the 23% increase is on the amount of tax paid and not a jump from 8% to 31%, it still feels very frightening. And expensive!

What about the \$521.00 for my truck repair? The city does not want to pay even though it's their fault.

This mayor is clueless if he thinks for a second he can get away increase like this. We demand a decrease.

The perception is that some of our tax money isn't necessarily going towards programs that benefit Calgarians but is being squandered or mismanaged. If you and the council can keep showing us that the money isn't being wasted, then there will be more willingness to meet in the middle.

My download for the Budget kit didn't work. Some problem with the embedded font. Anyone else experience this problem? The main text appears as circles.

I love all of the recreation programs, and I think that many of them are very inexpensive compared to other programs. I think a small increase in fees would be acceptable to most Calgarians. 5% would keep them competitive with many other private venues.

Why don't you decrease inner city property taxes and up them for the sprawl. You've already said that taxes collected on the new properties won't cover the infrastructure out there, so make them pay for it. Us inner city folks are tired of paying huge taxes to support those who dream of a white picket fence.

I appreciate D To The R-O-B's comment to a degree. I instead propose Developers should pay for all new infrastructure required for green field projects. This includes road infrastructure that is actually designed to handle traffic once area fully developed (no cheap 4 way stop only to be replaced with traffic light on city dime 5 years later). Listen to your city engineers! Don't play politics with developers and infrastructure. Oh, maybe make political contributions from developers illegal.

Developers want to develop let them pay to develop. Buyers want to buy there, tax them. Past deals laid the burden of development projects on the city tax and the residents and developers got a free ride at the inner city expense. As an inner city person I could care less about someone else's cost and don't want to pay for it. Now here is the kicker the

older areas pay for the new developments by giving them the sewage and infrastructure and when their sewer becomes outdated they are charged \$10,000 dollars to have the sidewalks and sewer replaced at a convenient monthly payment over 10 years. I am very curious to see the outcome of Mr. Carras tabling of this issue he brought forward on the day of the 42 million dollar tax burn.

I'd love to see figures on Calgary's tax rates vs. other major Canadian cities - from my discussions with people it seems we're quite a bit lower than most (and definitely *far* lower than major US cities!). I personally think that the city needs a large amount of infrastructure work as well as improved services, and have no problem with the idea of paying taxes more in line with other cities to provide the funding. IF, and that's a definite if, a review of spending and trimming of wasteful spending is not sufficient. I highly doubt it will be, but I'd love to be pleasantly surprised.

I too agree developers should pay and if necessary pass the cost on to the buyer in undeveloped areas. Why should we living in the beltline/inner-city/well established neighborhoods have to pay? I don't mind having to pay a bit more in taxes as ours are rather low in comparison, but I want to be sure that our hard earned cash is being used wisely.

There is a need for an "efficiency audit" at all levels of the city operation. Municipal business is no different than Non-profit organizations except that the city management can avoid the deficit by increasing the property taxes. I have personally seen work conducted by city employees in an inefficient way.

I think as always council will royally screw the public with taxes yet council takes raises and trips I don't believe the council or mayor give a crap that they are making this city more livable for the POOR folk and killing this city with councils pipe dreams and screw ups. Councilors and mayor should take one hell of a pay cut or quit.

I was filling out the City Budget Future Pamphlet and I am really curious why it is going to an Ottawa based "Dialogue Partners" information collection service? Is there no one in Calgary that can do the same service and in turn support our backyard services?

In the US their personal income tax is lower by over 1/2 and why do I care what happens elsewhere its the money taken from my pocket is enough already and if you pay property then you wouldn't be agreeing with increases either.

When I watch how you are handling what could be some really tough budget decisions - I know why I voted for you. Politics in full sentences - and a willingness to let all of us in on the nitty gritty of the budget - as ugly as it can be. Thx.

Where should the money go? Have your say on the budget.

Mayor Nenshi, thank you for letting me have a say, I find this might be better than trying to figure out the system. I would like to see our money go towards fixing up older neighborhoods drainage systems. A lot less money on police, and better organization in City hall. The system of city planning has been very ignorant of our older people. To just clean up the planning department alone would give our city a much better spirit. Many of the city inspectors really screw things up for those who want to do things right. With this being corrected it would help our city get developed into a more unique place to live. Too much the same here and the complaints are always the same about the city development department. For a person to develop something unique and design as he builds in this city is very hard due to the set up process. For example, why can't we design the load bearing walls first on a renovation? And then come in with our finish design later when we have a better vision about our finished concept. How about a system that says if a home owner wishes to dispute a mistake done by a city inspector that is paid to help us, that the city will pay for the cost set back by the mistake. Today there is no way to ask the inspectors to correct themselves other than the builder starting with a letter and stopping their work. How about helping this process and letting us build a city that is more like Portland Oregon. All these same old same old looks like crap.

A1, while I respect your views, I don't believe that cutting the police department is the answer. In my view (and all of my friends), safety is the absolute first priority for any community, and the CPS is on the front lines in providing it for us. I'm not sure how much the CPS coordinates with local community associations, but partnering with block-watch programs and funding local community safety-awareness councils may be one way to make our CPS budget stretch a bit farther. I am a husband and father of two and I am strongly opposed to any budget changes, which might negatively affect the

safety of my family.

Dear Mr. Mayor. My request for allocation is very specific. I am here to register my support for the expansion of Cardel Place that is a major recreation facility in the N-NE Calgary. My family and I visit almost daily, and in the winter I drop by both before and after work, my kid has classes, we go to the pool, my husband and I using the gym. Sometimes when I come through the halls, and see teens dancing or playing sports, I feel encouraged that when my 4.5 year old is a bit older she will have a place to have safe and healthy entertainment. Cardel is great, but there is definite need for things like a lane pool and more winter-friendly facilities, an arena for public skating, indoor soccer, whatever we can afford to have a place to go when your nose freezes off your face the moment you step outdoors! While I understand the desire for things like biking passes and stuff, I think with the climate like ours, the indoor facilities that are family-friendly where a family can spend a weekend of fun when it's a snowstorm out are very, very, very important! Please, allocate the budget for Cardel expansion! The parents like me will be very happy!

Great tool, and if it made me realize one thing it is how complex a budget is for a city the size of Calgary. It's pretty easy to point to one thing and say "I'd like more of that", or "this is stupid, we should do less of this", but every budget or budget cut has a consequence and it was interesting to read what they might be, and to appreciate all the effort that goes into making this city run.

Only a brain like Mayor Nenshi could've come up with something so unique and clever. Wonder how they will stop hackers though? Different departments may choose to hire their own.

Uhh, I'm confused though. Can people take part in this without joining Facebook or twitter? If so, how? Also, I can't read the tiny tabs at the top of the budget allocator.

I hope Mayor Nenshi will support the expansion plan for Cardel Place to serve the northern communities of Calgary.

If you want to re-allocate funding, the best place to start would be to instruct the Calgary Police Service to stop enforcing laws against victimless crime. Stop prosecuting the 'War on Drugs', stop harassing prostitutes, and spend their time actually improving public safety and investigating real crimes against persons and property. Then you could increase the tax burden further on the suburbs, so they actually pay their fair share. After that, you could allow secondary suite construction in all areas, which would both generate tax revenue as properties became more valuable, and also reduce the drain on infrastructure by making sprawl less necessary. In short, you could expect people to pay their fair share in taxes, stop harassing people who are just minding their own business, and allow people the right to do with their own property what they wish. Of course none of this will ever happen. Both Police and Politicians like to be able to use easy targets like pot dealers and hookers to prove their 'tough on crime' credentials. The development lobby is far too powerful in this city to ever allow any infringement on the corrupt profits they make on backroom sweetheart deals and unsustainable development policies. And too many people seem to think secondary suites will lead directly to slummification, despite all the evidence to the contrary.

If you want to illustrate the difficulties involved in allocating finite resources to city departments, why not make all of the city's financial information available to the public (including departmental level financial and operations reporting). There is simply not enough information to make any sort of informed decision about budget allocations in your allocation tool. It might make a nice junior high school social studies project I guess.

FACEBOOK (Mayor Nenshi's Page)

I think the opportunity to have input on the city budget process is great. However, I do not have the time or desire to go through the process myself, but do wish to make one request, or suggestion. Please transfer money from the budget for maintaining the present condition of city parks into creating useful growing spaces, for vegetables and fruit trees. We have a great opportunity to provide healthy food for our population; let's take it!

Let's plow all those stupid ridiculous golf courses under and plant corn in their place.

Hi - I know you are committed to developing infill's in Calgary's downtown neighborhoods - there is a power line and green space on 50th ave SW between McLeod and elbow - any thoughts on redeveloping that area?

I see an opportunities to not only possibly save Calgarians some money, but provide better service in doing so. Specifically regarding the 3-1-1- and bylaw complaints. Often when a single complaint is made, there can well be several more related to the same property. Just the nature of bad apples. They don't just flagrantly violate 1 aspect of our social fabric, but abuse many at once. So the reporting system should be able to clone the property and complainer info easily to avoid repeating the same info over and over again.

Our LRT System is old and needs to be updated! If we don't get barriers of some kind on the LRT platforms these accidents will continue and it may be one of your family members that ends up being a victim.

Have your say online (54 likes)

Lose the one shot wonder and move on that's the only way this city is going forward.

Can you help to improve employee-parking situation at YYC?

Own a vehicle. This is not an easy choice in a city like Calgary as it's made for those with vehicles. I had hoped the farmers market would be centrally located but no. I'm hoping the city thinks about making the inner city more livable for us regular folks. A big thanks to the police department as I've noticed a big difference in the area. I feel safer now then I did a few years ago. Unfortunately our condo building was broken into about a month ago but stuff happens.

Thanks Mayor Nenshi, I will definitely participate! :)

I really wish that people who complain about lack of certain services and then go on to complain about paying tax would educate themselves. Service costs money!

Thanks for involving the public in the decision-making process. I'm looking forward to seeing how all the great input is used.

Q1. Transit is a big issue with me as it's my only mode of transportation. Not as necessary as transit, but still a big plus for me is the recreation programming - especially the art programs. Q3. I would like to live in a city that also provided not just the necessities of life for all, but also creative and recreational outlets.

Come on impose London style traffic aggravation fee in down town core for vehicles coming in. Keep Traffic Cops and Tow Trucks on stand by during peak hours to ease traffic congestion on Deerfoot and the busy streets and trails connected to Deerfoot.

How about a non-resident tax? Developers are advertising the fact that taxes are cheaper in the bedroom communities, i.e. Cochrane, Black Diamond, Okotoks. The folks come here and pay nothing. The City of Detroit implemented a non-resident payroll tax of 1%. I cannot understand why this isn't even on the table for budget.

Absolutely a good idea. They had them when I came to Calgary in 1990. They have been gone for years.

How about creating retail locations on the C-Train platforms? Generates income and increases security at the same time.

A public transit system that has no emissions and is connected to a renewable / sustainable source of energy. Also a commercial land development law that requires builders to use designs that are more energy efficient.

You doubt the c-train to the airport will help the common people? Who do you think works there?

I want to see more money spent on public transit, and taking the focus away from road spending, so that congestion can be dealt with appropriately.

As far as the airport c-train goes Calgary could give a break to the taxes on trips and as a city we would be much farther ahead. For the times that the c-train operates, there is a great bus system anyhow, so why spend money where it's really NOT NEEDED!

I'm doubting that the c-train to the airport will help the common people in our city. I'd rather see taxicab companies

make the money there and we spend our budget on fixing existing roads. Many drainage systems in Calgary are not working as we see floods all around our city. Our snow issues could be subbed out using quickly trained landscaping companies. Our city hall has more on the street complaints than ever before. We need better permit communication between commoners and our mixed up city hall decision makers. City hall needs to be run for the people's sake! I hope that our mayor has the balls to care for people who need it?

Thank you for not assuming that council knows the opinions of their constituents simply because votes were cast in their ward.

I think the budget will be blown from our long winter's snow removal and soon to be "pot-hole" repair costs! :)

Besides the library, are other organizations, i.e. drop-in center, new immigrant associations and seniors' centres aware of this budget site or have hard copies of budget books? Just wondering because some of these people face literacy and mobility barriers.

It's tough to think long-term and citywide, rather than thinking of immediate problems/issues. Good on you and all other members of Council for giving us citizens a meaningful try at city-wide, long-range thinking.

I beg, hands and knees that something be done with Crowchild from the University to the Bow where there are the sets of lights. It is time that city planning tackle that stretch of road and look for way to eliminate the lights be it a sub-road through tunnel or above-grade bridge, the longer we put it off the worst its going to get.

Hopefully every mayor in every community will be inspired by Mayor Nenshi's lead!

Why waste the time. You already ignored the citizens when you took all that money out of our wallets to the tune of \$45 million this year, and countless millions more down the road. You have ZERO credibility as far as I am concerned.

Hopefully Mayor Mandel will learn something from this.... But I doubt it.

I was just wondering, why we (Calgary) didn't support the Earth Hour? I know this has nothing to do with budget, but I'm curious.

Other:

Hi, I'm a Calgary science school student and I think that the city of Calgary should make a indoor skate park there are a lot of people that would use it year round and its sometimes hard to use outdoor facilities in bad weather but if we had a indoor it would be a great pleasure. Thanks if you can help.

It's not unlimited but the Leisure Centres offer indoor skating. Even in the summer!

Yes can't wait to see the Liability claims come in from people getting hurt. The city should have stopped them before they killed themselves on a jump. I can hear the sob story now.

I agree with you, Mark. The city has an outdoor park. An indoor park in Calgary just makes sense

A suggestion to make the BRT in the SE work smoother. Treat it more like an LRT line in that the busses stop at very limited stops. Heading east on 130th and south on 52nd there must be 20 stops in a 3 km stretch. If there were fewer options for stops directing more passengers onboarding at those fewer points the system would get faster and more efficient. 1 stop at the McKenzie Park and Ride, maybe one at the mid point of New Brighton/Prestwick, and 1 stop on 130th could save 10+ minutes on that small end of the route alone rather than stopping for a few folks here and there. I believe the plans for the SE LRT has stops in similar place.