

# Citizen Engagement & Insights

Led by: Director of Customer Service & Communications

## Service Description

Citizen Engagement & Insights (CEI) plans and executes safe, fair, and accessible opportunities for Calgarians to give input (in-person, phone, and digital channels) on City programs, services, and overall quality of life in Calgary. We integrate multiple sources to provide insights on participant values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations. This data is used to create meaningful and actionable insight to inform City decision-making, policy creation, mitigate risks, identify opportunities for continuous improvement, and drive accountability and transparency for Calgarians.

## Service Updates

### Key Service Results

1. The Engage Portal now features translation services available in the top 10 languages spoken in Calgary. This has deepened The City's understanding of the perspectives of Calgarians, particularly those in hard-to-reach communities, to ensure all voices are heard. Substantial cost savings of \$500K resulted by transitioning from project-based translation services to a one-time service fee approach.
2. The Municipal Benchmarking Survey, a collaboration between this service and research teams from large Canadian cities, including Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal, provided valuable information on how Calgary compares when it comes to key performance measures and indicators. Incorporating this benchmarking has provided a greater insight into The City's performance and has fostered informed decision-making from senior leadership and strategic partners.
3. Significant improvements to the research panel approach boosted survey participation, resulting in a seven per cent increase in the Business Panel and a 10 per cent gain in the Calgarians View Panel. This growth has enhanced opportunities for Calgarians to provide meaningful feedback to inform City decision-making.

### Service Challenges

Calgary's recent population growth and changing demographics present a challenge for this service line as it strives to understand the perspectives of all Calgarians and support The Corporation's commitment to social equity. Our knowledge and understanding of new communities and groups identified as hard-to-reach (i.e. the unhoused, people with disabilities, new Canadians) is increasing, requiring more comprehensive and inclusive communication. Accommodating these communities often necessitates additional strategies and tactics and may also require a more nuanced and time-intensive approach. In response to the city's changing landscape, the service line has focused on developing new and cost-effective strategies including segmentation research, in-person translation services, and engaging Calgarians in the places where they live. Together, these approaches have helped deepen The City's understanding of the perspectives of all Calgarians, especially those in hard-to-reach communities.

### Trends & Potential Uncertainties

Citizen Engagement & Insights strategically partners with vendors to respond to changing circumstances, maintain objectivity, and to provide services that are impractical for The City to fulfill.

Current economic conditions, primarily inflation, are amplifying uncertainty by driving up the costs for vendor services. These cost escalations adversely affect customer budgets, timelines, and the service line's capacity to fulfill customer requests.

With demand for its services projected to increase throughout the business cycle, this service will need to navigate these economic pressures, balancing effective and representative input opportunities for Calgarians in the face of rising costs for the vendor services it relies upon.



# Measuring Our Performance

## Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

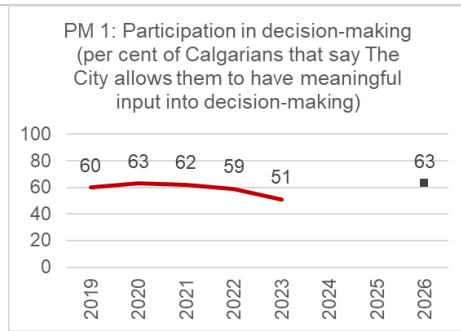
→ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

## Performance Measures

## Story behind the numbers

## Status

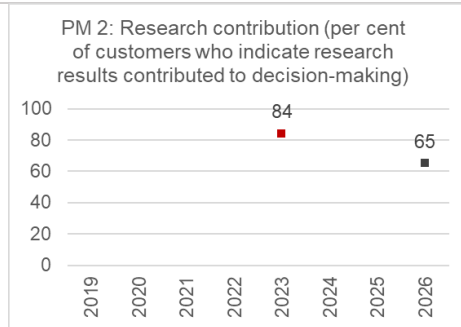


This service provides value to Calgarians by creating opportunities for meaningful input into City decision-making.



Performance in perceptions of how well The City is meeting expectations for participation in decision-making has declined, dropping from 62 per cent in 2022 to 51 per cent in 2023. This decline reflects a broader trend of diminishing trust in The City and concerns with how The City is addressing issues with the economy, safety, and transit.

Planned initiatives to improve social equity and the inclusion of hard-to-reach Calgarians will continue to provide inclusive and accessible opportunities for input into decision-making.



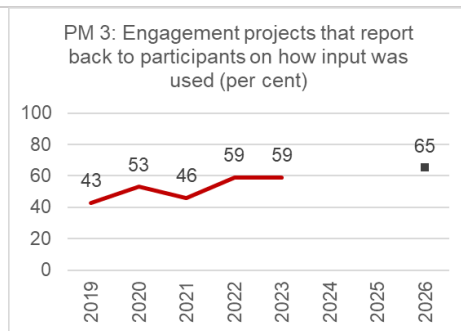
This service is committed to providing customers with actionable and objective insights that inform City decision-making.



2023 was the baseline year for surveying our internal service providers to determine if results had contributed to decision-making, with 84 per cent of respondents indicating that they agreed.

Greater than expected performance can be attributed to research-led initiatives such as regular meetings with City leadership to provide updates on research results and increased dialogue with Councillors.

Achieving the expected future performance of 65 per cent by 2026 remains on track.

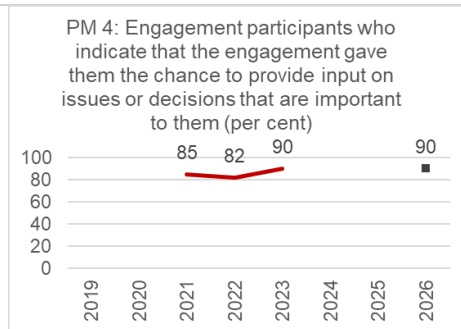


Calgarians expect The City to be accountable and transparent on how decision-makers use their feedback.



This measure captures the percentage of projects that report back on how engagement feedback has been used by project decision-makers. Performance in 2023 has remained on par with 2022 levels, with 59 per cent of engagement projects having included a report back on how feedback was used.

Users of this service will see continued prioritization of reporting back on engagement feedback over the course of the cycle, as the service currently remains on track to meet its 2026 expected future performance.

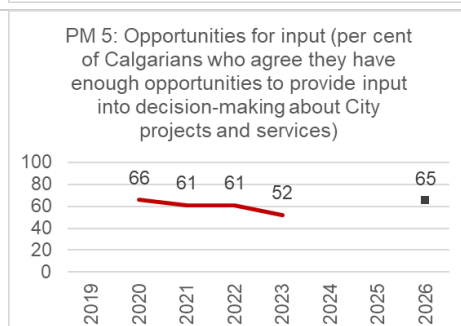


This service ensures that The City's decision-making process is inclusive, accountable, and transparent for Calgarians.



Results from the baseline year indicate an overall high level of satisfaction with The City's efforts to engage Calgarians on issues or ideas that are important to them. This measure does not track how satisfied participants are with the outcomes of engagement as most City decisions involve a range of perspectives or potential outcomes.

Continuing to engage on topics that are important to Calgarians will result in future success, including meeting the 2026 expected future performance.

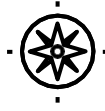


It is important that Calgarians feel they have sufficient opportunities for input into City decision-making.



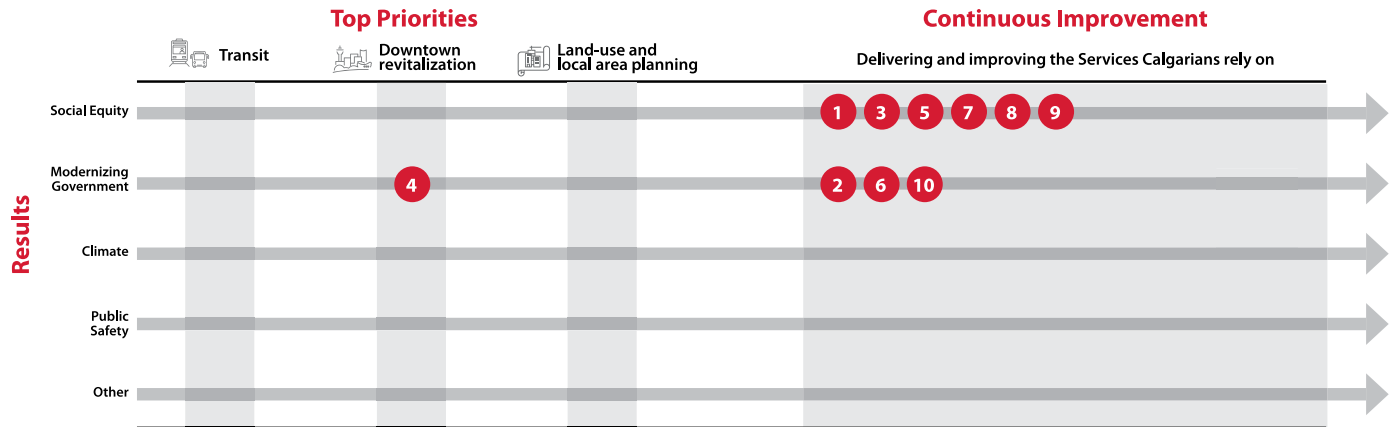
Perceptions about the number of opportunities for input have declined since 2020, with the Fall 2023 data experiencing a significant drop. This decrease in performance coincides with growing expectations around consultation, coupled with a lack of trust in The City and government in general.

Despite these factors, more online and in-person opportunities for input were provided in 2023 than 2022, and the service will continue to focus on meeting the growing expectations of Calgarians.



# Progress on Service Delivery

## Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



- Legend**
- Completed
  - Progressing as planned
  - Not progressing as planned
  - Not started
  - Initiative number

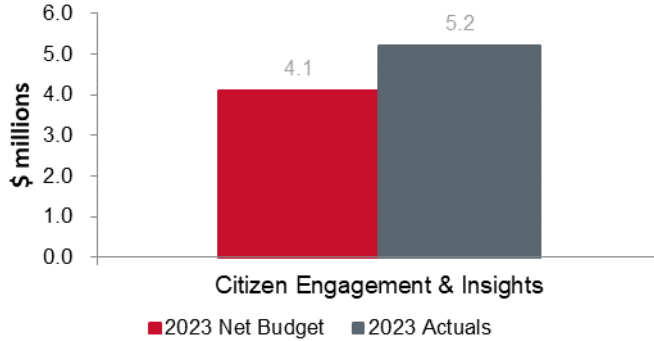
Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
1 Provide opportunities for input on City programs and services that are safe, fair, accessible, and representative of all Calgarians through the new target research and engagement activities and further implementation of the Inclusive Engagement Guide.	The 2023 Spring Survey of Calgarians provided an avenue to rate 44 programs and services based on their importance and satisfaction. The Corporate Research team ensured the study was representative, providing all eligible Calgarians with a chance of being selected to share their inputs. The Engage Resource Unit continued to foster equity discussions and find new ways to connect with Calgarians by partnering with a new vendor to engage with hard-to-reach cultural communities. The Inclusive Engagement Guide was also updated to incorporate current practices and emerging trends.	
2 Improve organizational understanding of our scope and scalability through education, awareness and expectation-setting as an input into City decision-making.	In 2023, the Research team met with Councillors to analyze detailed ward-level findings from the Fall Survey. As a result of these findings, Councillors will gain a deeper understanding of the values, concerns, interests, and priorities of the Calgarians they represent.  The Engage team began the development of an employee educational module aimed at enhancing organizational comprehension of engagement principles in 2023. By improving employee education in this area, Calgarians can expect more effective utilization of their input to inform City decision-making.	
3 Improve The City's ability to provide social equity and more accurately reflect its diverse population through the enhancement and expansion of online research panels. Larger panels with a wider population increase the overall representation of individuals and businesses and are critical to the success of the panels research program.	The Corporate Research team achieved notable success in broadening its online research panels in 2023. Implementing innovative strategies resulted in a 10 per cent expansion in the Panel of Calgarians participation and a seven per cent increase in the Business Panel. This growth has enhanced the overall representation of individuals and businesses in Calgary.  An initiative to retain panelists and improve survey response rates has also been implemented.	
4 Deliver broader context and insights into business leaders' attitudes and behaviours by initiating additional qualitative research. This work will provide critical information for key corporate initiatives such as the downtown revitalization and will aim to enhance The City's global positioning.	In 2023, the Corporate Research Team successfully conducted two waves of qualitative research with business leaders during the spring and fall.  This work yielded insightful feedback from business leaders, delving into crucial civic and economic matters. The research explored challenges confronting local businesses and examined perceptions of the local business environment that will provide an important input into future City decision-making.	

Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
<p>5 Gain insight into perspectives, lived experiences, and expectations of equity-deserving Calgarians by conducting primary research and advanced analytics. Research has seen increased demand for further analysis of Calgary's diverse communities. Advanced analytics and new data collection will address this need and provide insights into communities to improve social and service equity.</p>	<p>Equity Deserving Community analysis was carried out by the Corporate Research Team in 2023. This work provided insights into how different population groups in Calgary respond to key accountability measures for The City.</p> <p>Completion of this work ensures that all Calgarians have equitable and fair access to services offered by The City, irrespective of race, ethnicity, age, place of origin, colour, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socioeconomic status. Results were distributed across The Corporation to help The City better understand their services through this analysis.</p>	
<p>6 Improve access to data by expanding and better-leveraging external partnerships through benchmarking, academic research and partnering with other municipalities. Expanding collaboration will enhance connections, build relationships and knowledge-sharing opportunities and provide The City with enhanced global positioning.</p>	<p>The Corporate Research team collaborated with research teams in five Canadian cities to benchmark city performance across several areas in 2023. Findings from this research study were a critical input in the fall survey results presented to Council in October.</p> <p>The survey will also be conducted in 2024, and discussions are ongoing with internal and external parties to expand the survey both in terms of questions asked and the municipalities covered. This information will provide insights to The City and its strategic partners on how Calgary performs compared to other municipalities.</p>	
<p>7 Provide online engagement that is accessible to all Calgarians by enhancing The City's capabilities and mirroring the in-person experience of engagement.</p>	<p>All in-person engagement sessions in 2023 had an online equivalent. Offering both in-person and online engagement opportunities removes as many barriers to participation as possible, giving more Calgarians an opportunity to provide input and feedback.</p>	
<p>8 Provide greater digital equity for Calgarians who do not have access to technology by leveraging external partnerships to provide access to digital devices capable of gathering online engagement.</p>	<p>In 2023, the Engage Resource Unit strengthened its collaboration with the Calgary Public Library, working together to offer engagement opportunities on library computers for Calgarians without access to technology, thereby reducing barriers to participation.</p> <p>The service also acquired tablets in 2023 to use in tandem with in-person engagement sessions. This has enabled participants to engage in either the online or in-person experience, further enhancing digital equity opportunities for Calgarians.</p>	
<p>9 Improve engagement opportunities for equity-deserving Calgarians through the development and piloting of new tactics, tools and processes. Based on resource evaluation and reporting on effectiveness of the new actions, all of the recommended actions will be incorporated into future engagement projects.</p>	<p>The Engage Resource Unit completed two significant projects aimed at equity-deserving Calgarians in 2023 – the Forest Lawn Local Area Plan and Connect: Calgary's Parks Plan.</p> <p>These projects incorporated new equity tools and tactics focused on providing more engagement opportunities for all Calgarians. The learnings from these projects will be used in future engagement projects and will be reflected in updates to the Inclusive Engagement Guide.</p>	
<p>10 Build community trust, deliver greater efficiencies and reduce community fatigue with multiple project engagements in specific geographic areas by working to transition the community relations engagement pilot into a fully operational program.</p>	<p>The Engage Resource Unit concluded its community relations pilot with the Chinatown community in 2023. Following the completion of the pilot, resources were transitioned to other projects.</p> <p>Community relations work continues to be an important area of focus for the Engage Resource Unit, and insights gathered from the pilot have been applied to subsequent engagement activities and the Inclusive Engagement Guide. This service will continue to explore ways to foster long-term relationships with communities.</p>	



## Service Updates on Financial Performance

### Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of December 31, 2023

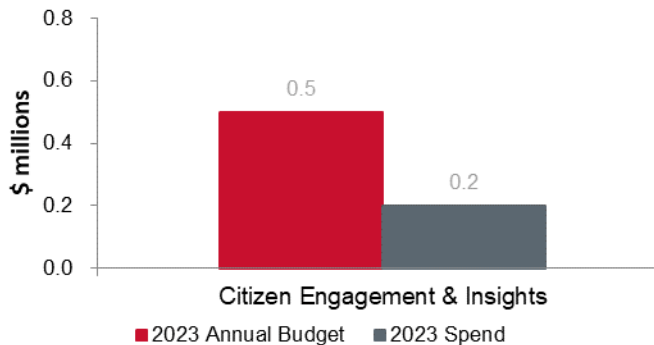


### Operating Budget Updates - 2023 net operating budget vs actuals:

Citizen Engagement & Insights has an unfavourable operating variance of (\$1.1) million due to salary and wages and contracts and general services.

The majority of the unfavourable variances are the result of budget items that require amendment through the assess and adjust phase of Realignment. Additionally, higher-than-expected expenditures on contracts and general services are attributed to strategic spending on surveys for corporate priorities such as public safety.

### Capital Budget and Spend as of December 31, 2023



### Capital Budget Updates - 2023 total capital budget vs 2023 spend:

Citizen Engagement & Insights has spent 51.3 per cent of the 2023 approved capital budget. The capital expenditures were dedicated to conducting customized segmentation research on Calgarians. This research aimed to gain a better understanding of communication preferences, lifestyle, and interactions, enabling The City to communicate and market services more effectively.

To fully leverage these segmentation results, the service line will allocate the remaining capital funds for advanced analytics research and a supporting communications roll-out to The Corporation.