



Think City: Citizen Budget Priorities 2007

Think City canvassed nearly 10,000 Think City event participants, supporters and email bulletin subscribers by broadcast voicemail and email between Jan. 16 and Feb. 19 on their budget priorities for the city. In all, 336 people completed the Citizen Budget Priorities 2007 comments form on the Think City web site at www.thinkcity.ca.

Citizen Budget Priorities

The priorities for city council are outlined below with the percentage support and the total numbers of individuals surveyed who are supporting the priority in brackets:

1. more affordable housing – this includes both social housing and middle-income housing (69.2%, 229 individuals support this priority/336 total number of individuals who completed survey)
2. better public transit (41.1%, 136/336)
3. a reduction in homelessness and poverty (32.9%, 109/336)
4. more parks and recreation services (21.8%, 72/336)
5. action on climate change by the city (20.5%, 68/336)
6. more childcare and daycare services (19.6%, 65/336)
7. continued support for the Owen/Campbell Four Pillars Drug strategy (19.3%, 64/336)
8. no additional civic funding for 2010 Olympics (19.0%, 63/336)
9. more resources for public libraries (10.6%, 35/336)
10. no additional civic funding for police department (10.3%, 34/336)
11. more public input on growth and development (9.1%, 30/336)
12. other – e.g., improve healthcare system, improve schools, cancel/expand specific city programs, job creation, reduce property taxes, increase spending on police, remove social housing, etc. (7.9%, 26/336)
13. more spending on public works with an emphasis on improving roads (5.7%, 19/336)

Citizen Priorities Quotes

The following quotes by citizens are excerpts from a selection of the budget priority submissions made to Think City:

“As a hardworking parent and student I **have found that the lack of financial support in the areas of child care and housing to be the biggest back breakers.** There is the new rental subsidy for those working and earning a low enough wage to qualify for a subsidy but what about those of us who are single parent students who barely have enough time and energy to get through school work and parenting....The system is creating an environment where it is impossible for single parents to be educated in order to become decent wage earners.”

“I am single and have lived here 20 years but am looking at moving away because **rents are rising too fast.**”

“Do not increase the police budget. Despite comparisons being drawn that Vancouver's per capita policing is low within North America, I do not accept that this approach will really make my local neighbourhood safer. Fewer police/capita exist in other jurisdictions with lower crime rates. **We need to reduce the causes of criminal activity, often drug addictions,** instead.”

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Priorities Quotes continued...

"**More daycare spaces**, just not enough supply. Prices are too high for me and my wife to afford one and, therefore, we are getting by with one salary (cutting all other expenditures to the max). This means less taxable income for the city, less disposable income for us to spend on local merchants, and lower affordability all around."

"The **City of Vancouver should ensure that the low income family can find affordable housing** especially those who are single mothers. The rents are increasing all the time. Family who are only earning less than 10 dollars can not afford to pay high rents and there is no spaces from BC Housing. Family who are earning 10 dollars per hour can no longer provide the basic needs of their children."

"**Your creative class, the hard working and often low earning folks who are making this place a beautiful, vibrant place to live are being evicted from their rented pads....** These are the folks who are fostering creative thinking and working with children; they volunteer and work in the Downtown East side; they paint murals; teach and perform; plan and orchestrate community parties and festivals.... I personally have recently been forced out of a shared studio space due to raised rent. I face the ultimate wreckage of the house I live in and love."

"The many **new developments in the new areas have no infrastructure** – local grocery stores, garages, drug stores, etc... These businesses cannot afford to have their businesses there."

"My beautiful Vancouver is suffering from the daily increase of the homeless. In the 2007 budget, the Mayor Sam Sullivan and Council must make it a priority to **create affordable rental housing for low income citizens and the many homeless people** that are at the moment ignored."

"[A] priority has got to be affordable housing, none of us feel there can be a future in a city where our neighbours sleep on the side walk. As well, **there needs to be safe, affordable housing for those of us who work here**. Rents have sky rocketed in the last year and are out of range of the average income earner. There is no way families can spend half of their take home pay on housing and still pay for recreation or the killer school fees that accompany their children."

"[P]rovide **community centres with extra budgets and staff for extended hours so young people can access programs** at a time when they 'buzz' which is often after community centres have closed! Where do young people go these days at night?"

"My top, top priority is to **ensure there is affordable rental housing in place before any more conversion of SROs takes place**. This is becoming a city where only the elite can afford to live as affordable housing for average income earners is becoming non-existent."

"**No reduction of hours at community centres, recreation facilities, and libraries**, and preferably expanded hours at all of them.... Increasing literacy benefits society as a whole as well as the individual, since people are more able to contribute to society as a result. People who participate in recreational and cultural activities in their community are less likely to feel alienated from that community, which also has benefits for society as a whole."

"This city needs **more transit**. The situation at UBC is appalling. Waiting 20 minutes on the DTES on a route which is serviced by over five buses is annoying but being left behind by full buses leaving downtown and having to wait 20 minutes for the next full buss to UBC is unacceptable."

"**Southeast False Creek was supposed to be a model of an environmentally and socially sustainable community** – I would like to see this happen by increasing the percentage of low-income housing in this area, car-less streets, ample space for community gardens, less marina space."

"**Safe injection sites need to be a priority**, not something that is put on hold and then put on hold again. Drug addiction, prostitution, petty crime, these are huge problems in this city, and the broken windows policy is not solving any problems. "

"The many **new developments in the new areas have no infrastructure** – local grocery stores, garages, drug stores, etc... These businesses cannot afford to have their businesses there."

"My budget priority for Vancouver this year is: **support services for the most vulnerable in our city**. In my neighbourhood, almost all the bidders are people who live in my neighbourhood. There isn't much left over for the homeless. That's how bad it's getting out here in Hastings North."