

Jonathan Joseph (JJ) Sunstrum's Answers To
The Inner City Coalition Of Calgary Society's
Up Front On Line Forum Survey

Question 1

Yes!

There is no question this City has the financial wherewithal to leverage or divert funds being committed to what I consider to be wasteful projects that run contrary to the 1999 CTP plan. I question whether the administration of the past 6 years has paid any attention to the fundamentals and the foundation of that triangle. First and foremost stating that there is no urban sprawl, only 'growth' is a joke. The 'all growth is good growth' mentality is absurd and has produced a wider discrepancy between the haves and have-nots while not leveraging existing infrastructure and land (for example the East Village) to increase the density, mobility, community, and environmental quality of life. To look beyond our borders to solutions from around the world means that rather than expending additional resources on more consultants, we don't have to reinvent the wheel. What San Francisco has implemented may be feasible for this City, and there may be other shining examples from which we can learn.

Question 2

Yes!

I find it perplexing that the 'Go' plan has not been implemented when one prominent slogan of the Mayor for the last two terms has been 'Get Calgary Moving'. Going from point A to B only to discover a bottleneck at C is not a long-term solution. What I have observed a lack of, once again, is looking beyond our borders. Creative solutions exist, from ferris wheel parking in Germany to the three-tier car stackers Mercedes Lonestar has right in Calgary. The goal should be to scour the globe for creative solutions resulting in maximal utilization of space with minimal footprint which we can immediately and efficiently implement here.

Also, I find it difficult to fathom the profligate spending announced when we get money with 'no strings attached'. Why expand to a West LRT when the current one isn't working?

Another solution to the acknowledged transportation crisis is shifting more employment away from downtown. This can not only be a solution 'from the bottom up' but also 'from the top down': the City can, and should, encourage more telecommuting and 'flex time', even amongst its own employees: a opportunity on point: although not in the downtown core, the 311 offices have more than 100 people at a time to provide services based around a computer terminal; this is wasteful at a human level, not to mention office costs.

Question 3

Yes!

I intend to push for implementation of taxation policies at the Provincial and Municipal levels which congruent with each of the five values you enumerate.

I also want to take to task corporate entities that disrupt if not eradicate inner city neighborhoods. For example, I would like to hear a full, public exposition of how the value to Calgary as a whole of expanding the Stampede grounds versus revitalizing the formerly present urban neighborhood.

Speaking from experience of living in the downtown core on Stephen Avenue and Centre Street, I question the poor percentage return commercial and residential inner city dwellers receive on their property tax dollars. It's a well-known fact that the inner city has had its

financial lifeblood drained to fund other areas and projects, coming very close to killing the literal and metaphorical heart of the city.

Question 4

Yes!

These principles were adopted by Council in 1999, and the strength of potential arguments that during the last two administrations they “have been honored more in their breach” is emblematic of the disconnect between pre- and post-millennial administrations. It's a futile endeavor creating blueprints like the Calgary Transportation Plan unless ongoing administrations adopt them in both spirit and practice.

It is imperative that not just the municipality of Calgary but surrounding municipalities and Tsuu T'ina Nation work hand-in-hand. We must end the adversarial attitudes engendered by the current administration. Ideally, I would like to see a moratorium or freeze on any further eradication of land surrounding Calgary for development.

Question 5

Yes!

In the window of my car since Monday September 17 has been posted a legally binding document stating that I intend to place excess campaign funds raised for municipal elections in trust after Monday October 15, 2007, to be designated, and immediately dispersed, for donation to one or more Registered Charitable Organizations. I encourage all currently standing candidates in this election to sign such a document.

Current election financing policies are a joke; unfortunately, the joke's not funny. Calgary's 'wild west' approach even after last year's campaign finance review was nothing short of appalling. A simple Google search of other municipalities shows up how askew the rules are, and how they favor incumbents, especially the current Mayor, who has collected an unprecedented amount of money to be used and potentially abused on a municipal campaign (and beyond: since there is no obligation for candidates to relinquish these monies after the campaign concludes, and the current Mayor himself has only gone so far as to say he would do so at the conclusion of his entire political career, these municipally raised funds, collected ostensibly for municipal purposes, can in fact easily – and, legally -- become a springboard for other political endeavors, such as running for Provincial or even Federal office; this runs contrary to both the spirit and substance of campaign legislation). We should come up with something far more stringent.