

Inner City Coalition Questionnaire ((to be filled in by 25 Sept)

1. Affordable, low income housing: What policy changes, or practical action such as leveraging existing funding can you initiate for Council to address this issue in the long term and the short term?

There are a host of steps I'm working on now and potential for the future

- Leverage all existing funding first to maximize housing for the hardest to house
- A City Affordable Housing Strategy taking account of non-profit opportunities as well as those of Calgary Housing Company
- Maximize opportunities afforded by rent subsidies (and make them portable)
- Persuade Province to enable municipalities to exercise inclusive zoning whereby a percentage of all major development projects must include affordable housing
- Persuade Province/Federal to grant tax incentives for the private sector to develop/maintain below market rental housing
- Create education and appropriate implementation tools to facilitate secondary suites throughout all municipalities
- More supportive housing for those with mental health and addictions issues
- Better transitional housing for youth emerging from Care of the Province status
- One-stop shopping for those in need of housing
- Use surplus school sites for affordable housing and other municipal purposes
- Sell air rights at C-train and bus stations for affordable housing

2. The Transportation Dilemma; Are you willing to take a leadership role and implement the GoPlan and its principles of balanced growth strategy?

I have been taking a leadership role to implement the GoPlan since elected to Council in 2001.

Now I am excited by the forthcoming Plan-It Strategy which is tying Council's new 11 Sustainability Principles to the new land use and transportation plan. Developing walkable communities all over the city is essential. We must ensure people can work and recreate in close proximity to where they live. The days of developing auto-dependant areas of the city must be at an end. New C-train alignments must include employment centres to ensure reverse-flow. Transit-oriented development is an important policy tool. The Centre City Plan already has Council's recent endorsement to prioritize pedestrians and other alternatives to vehicles.

3. Tax Fairness: What policy initiatives would you implement to mitigate the imbalances of Market Value Assessment and ensure taxation fairness?

Council recently concluded that market value assessment ensures a fair basis for taxation. I did not support this motion, but it certainly will make it more difficult to realistically expect change in the short term. One possible alternative is to reduce our dependence on property taxation (in the U.S. it comprises a significantly lower percentage of a city's revenue) by relying more on user fees which are the same for everyone and other forms of taxation and City financing.

I have a long history of fighting for fairer taxation. On Council, I initiated the Cost of Growth Study that demonstrated inner city residents were subsidizing homes in new suburbs by approximately \$3,500 each. Because of this study, Suburban Developers now pay a new home levy that reduces this unfairness to inner city homeowners.

My Tax Impact Motion asked important questions about how best to mitigate unfair tax increases on seniors and other lower income citizens.

4. Environment and Sustainability: As a Municipal Leader, what types of policy have you or would you initiate to reduce our environmental impact and maintain our quality of life?

Understanding the importance of sustainability principles for all decisions made by Council is hugely important. Reducing our environmental footprint will also be important and a constant goal. I have been an active and strong supporter of ImagineCalgary, which is Calgary's best current hope of setting good goalposts for the next one hundred years. It sets out where current Calgarians want the future to be for their great grandchildren, and should be respected until we have better goals.

We are currently prioritizing where the City can most impact our environmental sustainability, and where taxpayers are likely to see the "biggest bang for their buck" – and those priorities will be presented to Council during November 2007 deliberations on the three year budget cycle. I was personally involved in this part of the initiative, and believe it will play a major role in helping to "green" our city.

5. Democratic Process and Policies: What election financing policies would you champion to provide limits, checks and balances against actual or perceived preferential treatment?

I believe the financing of election campaigns at the municipal level in Calgary should represent best Canadian municipal practices. I would propose to ask Council to adopt such a new accountability structure well before the next election

The new structure will need to recognize a difference from federal and provincial accountability structures because donations at the municipal level involve no tax support, and neither are they (in Alberta) linked to political party finances – they are treated by Canada Revenue purely as personal gifts.

Regarding accountability, I was the key Council member to push for corporate risk management system within City Hall, and have supported the new whistle-blower program.