

Inner City Coalition

Issues

1. AFFORDABLE, LOW INCOME HOUSING

Amidst the booming city growth, large numbers of Calgarians are homeless or are unable to find adequate housing. Working poor and new immigrants cannot find adequate accommodation for themselves or for their families. Fixed income families are being squeezed out of long standing residences

Question

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

- **As a Social Worker I have been dealing with this dilemma with my clients on an on-going basis. The short term solution would be to permit the renting of basement suites**
- **A longer term solution is to encourage the developers and builders of condo conversions to include a certain percentage for low income families. This might be done by offering financial incentives (tax breaks)**

2. THE TRANSPORTATION DILEMMA

Transportation is one of the critical issues facing all communities as the city continues to grow. Ways have to be found to sustain the quality of life in the inner city and established communities while ensuring access to and from employment and services for the larger

Question

Are you willing to take a leadership role and implement the Calgary Transportation Plan (GoPlan) and its principles of balance growth strategy?

- **I do not know much about the GoPlan agenda as it took place awhile back, so I am reluctant to make a comment. That is to say I will need to make myself familiarize with the whole project before I am able to make any comments. Incidentally, some of the issues will be to:**
 - **Improve quality of public transit**
 - **Implement and encourage car pooling as is in other cities like Toronto. Provide special lanes and parking facilities. Will minimize parking**

dilemmas and overcrowding rush hour traffic. Mount Royal College has already implemented this program

- **When 're' constructing the roads, the city must anticipate changes over the long term. Calgary's population is not likely to stay at a million for another 10 years, so any plan for road development must incorporate the potential demands of an even larger population. For example Deerfoot Trail. It would have been cheaper to add few extra lanes (and parking areas for carpool participants) when extensions and other infrastructure work were being done on it.**
3. The property tax system is fundamental to supporting municipal services and planning strategy . It has to be fairly administrated and it must treat all citizens in an equitable manner. Current market based assessment polices are raising taxes in Established Communities at a faster rate that city-wide averages. Fixed income seniors and low income families are being driven out of their homes and neighbourhoods

Question

What policy initiatives would you implement to mitigate the imbalances of Market Value Assessment and ensure taxation fairness?

- **I was against Market Value Assessment (MVA) and my reasoning was 'though the market price of homes has sky rocketed, Calgarians' incomes have not experienced parallel increases '.**
 - **I would like to reduce the financial 'hit' that is taken when long-term owners of homes wish to pass their dwellings on to family members such as children.**
 - **There needs to be some form of protective measure to prevent fixed-income seniors and low-income families. This might take the form of a limit on the proportion of a homeowner's income that can be charged as taxes by the city of Calgary. For a family earning \$150 000 a \$1 500 tax bill is 1% of their total income. For a senior with a fixed income of \$ 15 000 the same tax bill is 10% of their total income. The differential impact might push seniors onto the streets.**
4. Environmental concerns continue to be an issue to Calgarians, and council appears to support various initiatives. However, the real ecological footprint of individual Calgarians is increasing, not decreasing . Planning standards, even in the proposed Land Use By-Law, do not encourage innovative green solutions.

Question

As a Municipal Leader, what types of policy have you or would you initiate o reduce our environmental impact and maintain our quality of life?

- **Re-examine how recycling is done. Many marginalized and low income families would like to recycle but are not able to go to the 'bins' as they do not own vehicles. This should be helped by the new city recycling program.**
 - **Educate new Calgarians as to the benefits of recycling. This can be done by providing literature in their language.**
 - **Encouraging car pooling (as mentioned earlier) will also reduce gas emissions and further save the environment**
 - **Encourage 'paperless' practices. Many private companies presently offer e-billing as an alternative to paper bills. Perhaps city utilities can lead by example and offer e-billing to their customers who own computers.**
 - **Make it easier to recycle by placing recycling bins on the streets, parks, city owned facilities, C-train stations and bus stops and the Stampede grounds. We have to make it easier so there are fewer water bottles and soda cans in the city-supplied garbage bins at those locations.**
5. Democratic representation is based on aldermen representing the interests and beliefs of their constituents, even when this may be contrary to their own personal opinions. Other influences, such as industry lobbying, can overwhelm this representation. At the same time, donations to municipal election campaigns is unregulated and open to influence by opaque financial election support. The current election financing system is rife with potential for abuse and discourages balanced representation of its citizens.

Question

What election financing policies would you champion to provide limits, checks and balances against actual or perceived preferential treatment?

- **As a new candidate I am experiencing hardship in getting **resources** (both \$\$ and time) to campaign and meet with constituents in my Ward as my team members are volunteers and not able to take time off from work or school. Being visible is essential to a successful campaign but I cannot afford to print up signs and posters. There should be a source of funding for all candidates that reduces the obvious advantage of being a wealthy candidate.**

- **My strong asset is that I am community based and like to work with people hands on. I have voted for my Ward Alderman and have never met her or him and have never known who they were /are, yet I know all my MLAs, and the MPs.**
- **Being the base and the foundation of the government I strongly feel that municipal representatives should be working with and within the communities instead of from their offices in the City Hall via their Administrative Assistants.**