

Inner City Coalition of Calgary Society
Response from Jim Rockwell, Aldermanic Candidate, Ward 11

Question 1: Affordable, low income housing
Jim Rockwell's response to the statement: yes.

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 short-term?

Warehousing the homeless and marginalizing low-income renters needs to stop. We need to innovative communities that include a mix of residential housing options. I believe Calgary City Council needs to work with the provincial and federal governments to provide affordable, low income housing.

I believe a program similar to the Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Program Agreement of 2002 would be highly beneficial. This program was jointly funded by Alberta Seniors and Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation and offered grants builder grants to provide affordable housing for seniors and individuals facing the threat of homelessness. It results in more than 250 affordable housing units in Calgary, including 132 affordable housing units and 70 hard-to-house units created by the City of Calgary.

This program was an excellent example of government working together to help people and to offer incentives for private companies to create affordable housing. And it is an example of how city funding can be leveraged to achieve real results.

Question 2: The transportation dilemma
Jim Rockwell's response to the statement: yes.

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

Ward 11 has some of the highest traffic volumes in Calgary. I would take a leadership role in transportation planning and spending and I believe in the principles of the Calgary Transportation Plan, or GoPlan. While I appreciate the complexities of long-term planning and implementation, I

also feel Calgary needs to regularly revisit and update such plans so that we can evaluate their successes and lessons learned.

Also, the GoPlan is not a document that has sat and gathered dust. Many of its principles have guided Calgary's development during the past decade. But Calgary's growth has been so explosive that sometimes strategic development has given way to managing and alleviating transportation problems and demands.

Question 3: Tax fairness

Jim Rockwell's response to the statement: yes.

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

Tax issues are one of the biggest concerns Ward 11 residents have been discussing with me during this campaign. Residents have clearly signaled they want imbalances balanced. Given that my priorities as Alderman of Ward 11 would be citizen-driven, this would be one of my first tasks in office.

As well, seniors in Ward 11, like many across the city, are very concerned they'll be forced from their homes because they can't afford their taxes.

As Ward 11's Alderman, one of the ways I would address tax fairness is to investigate and measure the benefits and drawbacks of a municipal tax payment system that would allow taxpayers to defer their payments until they sold their house and cashed in on their equity.

I do not want a single resident to have to leave their home because they feel they can't afford to pay taxes – or that their local government can't find creative and alternative ways to address this concern. This isn't just an issue of taxes but an issue of having communities where people can live for life.

Question 4: Environment and sustainability

Jim Rockwell's response to the statement: yes.

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?

My candidacy comes from a desire to ensure Calgarians' quality of life remains high and that we continue to have an environment, communities

and facilities that can be sustained and enjoyed – now and for generations to come. For several years, I have worked to have the number and quality of recreational facilities keep pace with the city's growth, in particular the expansion of Ward 11's Calgary Centennial Arenas.

As well, I believe the vast majority of people in Ward 11 and throughout Calgary want a city-wide recycling program. That program may differ somewhat from the one proposed earlier in the year by the City of Calgary, but those principles and intentions are sound and need to be supported.

In addition, efforts by groups and initiatives such as Sustainable Calgary, Imagine Calgary and Clean Calgary need to be promoted and encouraged. And Calgarians need to have a better understanding of how their everyday actions can – and will – make a difference in reducing our environmental footprint. I also support in principle a proposed bylaw to phase out the use of unnecessary (or cosmetic) pesticides.

I am a staunch and passionate supporter of Calgary's parks and paths, and want to see them protected, preserved and expanded. They are among Ward 11's and our city's greatest attributes.

As a long-time independent businessman, I feel it is important to encourage sustainability as a business practice than can contribute to a business's viability, profitability and competitive advantage. It's a time-worn phrase, but all aspects of sustainability must balance environment, economic and social needs.

Question 5: Democratic process & policies

Jim Rockwell's response to the statement: a qualified no.

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

I believe campaigns at the municipal level should be subject to similar guidelines and rules as provincial and federal elections. Primarily, campaign contributors should receive tax receipts for their support. My feeling is that more people would contribute to municipal politics if they were to receive a tax receipt. This in turn would lead to greater civic engagement and higher voter turnout.

I would champion policies that encourage more people to get involved in civic politics – from initiatives that recruit and educate candidates to creating reasons for people and business to support campaigns and candidates. The more people and business actively support local government, the less reason there would be to think preferential treatment is being given.