



Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Jennifer Banks \_\_\_\_\_

Ward: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Website, if any: \_\_\_\_\_ [www.jenniferbanks.ca](http://www.jenniferbanks.ca) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name/number: \_\_\_\_\_ Jennifer Banks 288-5320 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the top three issues facing your Ward?

Poor planning and lack of vision for the future, leading to:

Urban sprawl creating car dependent and poorly serviced communities, and contributing to green house gas and global warming.

Lack of affordable housing

Lack of social infrastructure such as recreation centres and social service

Unsafe neighbourhoods, unsafe transit, and inability to deal with these issues as a community

2. What are the top three issues facing the city as a whole, if different from above?

Same as above

**3. Urban Sprawl and Housing**

- a. Do you support the concept of extending Transit-Oriented Development throughout the city, including in established neighbourhoods generally and in your ward? What is your stance on the proposed development at Dalhousie Station (in Varsity)?

Yes I support TOD. Varsity is a tough one as the community is so opposed to this development. I agree that we need to increase housing density around transit hubs, however it needs to be done with careful planning in terms of how traffic will be routed, how it will affect homes in the neighbourhood, etc. I think that our current process for designing and implementing new developments needs to be far more inclusive of community residents, far more creative, and part of an overall plan for the city. The current process pits different interest groups (residents, city, developers) against each other, and it is very painful for all involved. It doesn't need to be that way.

- b. Are we facing a housing crisis in Calgary? If so, what should be done about it? If you are an incumbent, what have you specifically done about this?

We are definitely facing a housing crisis. Firstly I think we need to deal with the secondary suite issue. Illegal suites are all over Calgary and the City has chosen to largely ignore them unless they are reported. This leaves tenants in a very precarious position, not knowing how long they will have a home. It is also unfair to property owners who depend on rent to pay their mortgage. There are many people who would like to rent an existing suite, or create a new suite, and thereby increase the rental stock. But they don't because it would be an illegal suite and could be reported. We must look at what other cities, like Vancouver, have done to legalize suites and bring them up to standard, and learn from these examples. We must develop a public education campaign around the need for housing, and what to do about rental housing in your neighbourhood. Perhaps there is a better system to deal with neglectful landlords and inconsiderate neighbours that we could implement so people feel more comfortable with secondary suites in the house next door.

Secondly I think we need to do careful planning around what our communities should look like in the future. This includes how do we ensure a diverse range of housing options in every community? How do we create incentives for people to live in higher density housing instead of punishing them for it, and making this the least appealing option? We need to create inclusive and diverse communities with mixed housing, rather than putting all the low income housing in poorly designed big clumps and creating "ghettos" where no one wants to live.

Thirdly, all levels of government have some responsibility for housing so all levels need to work together instead of passing the buck and ensuring that there is very little accomplished.

- c. Do you support legalization of secondary suites in all existing neighbourhoods, subject only to reasonable safety concerns? Why or why not?

Yes. This is a very contentious issue and legalization needs to proceed with much sensitivity and consultation so that people are educated about what this entails, what the benefits are, what the possible problems will be, and what their recourse is. We need to build in an effective system for dealing with neighbourhood disputes, regarding the renters next door, as well as all the other things that cause problems in communities. We need by-law officers and police officers who are trained in community development and community building. But also strong community groups with appropriate support. For example, we have a Block Watch program right now, but it is impossible to find a staff person to help a group who needs it.

- d. Do you believe that urban sprawl is a problem for the city? If you believe it is a problem, what will you do to address it? (If you are an incumbent, what have you already specifically done?) If you don't see it as a problem, please explain why.

Yes. Stop allowing communities to be built that perpetuate sprawl. Change the process of approving development permits so that creative and comprehensive developments are encouraged and permits are expedited not delayed. Change the zoning in current communities so that they can have a commercial heart, increased housing density, and so services can move in. Improve transit by having express buses and c-train stations, not one or the other, and lengthening the c-train platforms so we can add more cars and transport more people. Also improving security on c-trains.

#### 4. Transportation

- a. Has the City been doing a good job of addressing transportation needs? What, if anything, would you do differently?

Spend more on transit and less on roads. Develop an agreement with the province to help pay for transit and roads used by people not living in Calgary (commuters). Build communities that are not car dependent and where transit is viable. Create bike paths that are separate from walking paths so as to increase safety on crowded pathways. Possible use train tracks for “go trains” as the c-train does not cover a large enough area of the city.

- b. How often do you use public transit? Bus, C-train, or both?

I use the bus if I am going downtown for the whole day. I use the c-train occasionally but it means going out of my way to get to a station, so the bus is usually more convenient.

- c. Does our current transit system meet the needs of the city? If not, how specifically would you improve it?

NO. See above.

- d. Are you in favour of the current strategic plan for transit? Why or why not? If not, what changes would you make?

Yes and no. I don't think the west LRT is the best use of money as this area is not high density and a lot of these communities will not be using the c-train. I would rather see it expanded in the east as a lot of people work in the industrial areas of town, and also I would like to see ways of bypassing downtown by c-train as it takes too long to go through downtown and is very inconvenient for a lot of people.

- e. The City's current plan does not envision direct C-Train service to either the airport or Mount Royal College. Would you favour amending the plan to reach these two destinations (both within close distance of planned lines)? Why or why not?

Yes, it only makes sense to route it this way.

- f. Are there other areas of the city that are underserved by transit? How would you address this?

See above.

## **5. Vibrant and sustainable communities**

- a. What will you do to address homelessness and urban poverty in the city? (If you are an incumbent, what have you already specifically done?) If you don't see this as a problem, please explain why.

See comments above on affordable housing. We need to continue to invest in social infrastructure and ensure that the province properly funds this. We need to stop using NIMBY as a way to make decisions and communities need to come together with government and business to decide as a city what to do and where to put services related to homelessness. The current Committee to End Homelessness is not nearly inclusive enough of citizens and communities. We need to focus on economic diversification and reducing the income gap between oil and gas, and the rest of us. Changes to the royalty structure will hopefully help decrease the gap a bit. The city needs to do more social marketing around these issues so that people understand the root causes of poverty and what they can do about it. We need to design communities to be safe and inclusive, rather than hierarchical and divisive.

- b. What is your stance on arts funding? Do you support the recent recommendations of the Calgary Arts Development Authority?

We need government funding for the arts. We need to do more social marketing on the value of the arts and artists in our community.

- c. What is your stance on the city's curbside recycling plan? Would you extend the plan to include recycling of organics and plastics? Why or why not?

I support a full curbside recycling program, including plastics and organics, and including all residences and businesses. It should be implemented as soon as possible. Not doing this wastes precious resources, requires that we build more landfills sooner and with higher technology because of organics. We need to apply full-cost accounting to this and other environmental issues so we know the real cost of acting or not acting, not just the cost of implementing a new program.

- d. What other environmental initiatives, if any, would you favour?

Please see my "issues" page on my website [www.jenniferbanks.ca](http://www.jenniferbanks.ca)

- e. What will you do to address crime and safety issues in Calgary? (If you are an incumbent, what have you already specifically done?) If you don't see this as a problem, please explain why.

Please see above. I think we need better designed communities with more "eyes on the street." We need better ways for communities to come together around these issues e.g. Town halls, and community building activities and processes that are properly supported by city staff e.g. A properly resourced Block Watch program. More activities for youth. Police and By-law officers that are properly trained and believe in community policing methods.

## **6. Taxes and Revenues**

- a. Does the current system of funding municipal government largely through property taxes work well? If not, what changes would you recommend?

No it doesn't. Better partnerships with the province so that the City gets a greater proportion of money back that the province currently collects.

- b. Is there enough money in the system currently to fund your priorities? If now, how will you fund them?

Use full-cost accounting to figure out the real cost of things. Work with communities to fund-raise for community priorities. Require developers to build comprehensive communities, and penalize them financially when they don't so that money is there for the city do it right.

## **7. Political reform.**

- a. Does the current system of campaign financing work well? If not, what changes would you favour?

No. All donations should be disclosed. Maximum limits per donor should be set. All unused donations should not be pocketed by the candidate, but rather should be invested in Ward specific funds to be used for community projects. There should be a specific code of ethics for elected officials, and a way to enforce it. It should include specific rules around undue influence by campaign donors.

- b. In the absence of rules around disbursement of campaign surpluses, what will you do with any leftover funds?

Donate to a local community group.

- c. Are there any other structural reforms you would favour?

See my issues page on my website.

- 8. **FOR INCUMBENTS ONLY:** What are your three major accomplishments this term? Of what are you most proud?