

The Better Calgary Campaign

Candidate Name: George Chahal

Candidate for Alderman Ward 3

Website: www.votegeorge.ca

Contact name/number: George Chahal 718-0005

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

Transportation/Infrastructure

Public transportation- LRT line needs to be extended immediately to Saddleridge. Need for mass transit to Northern Hills communities as well. Traffic congestion
Infrastructure/Transportation upgrades in road network, recreational facilities, High Schools

Affordable housing

Crime & Safety

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

Transportation/Infrastructure

Affordable Housing

Urban Sprawl/Environment

3. Urban Sprawl and Housing.

Yes, I support Transit Oriented Developments throughout the city as this is key in creating healthy and livable communities. It is important for our city to promote and use smart growth development.

All transit stations should be based on transit oriented development (TOD) principles which promotes higher densities around transit stations with mixed use development. Established communities and transit stations should be reviewed to determine opportunities for higher densities and mixed use around stations. By working collaboratively with the community and through a public discussion and consultation process determine the best way and methods to implement transit oriented development around existing stations.

Through public private partnerships we need to work with industry representatives that are willing to try innovative and sustainable practices in creating a sustainable Calgary.

As alderman I will actively lobby and work with our various levels of government to tie land use objectives and capital investment together to fund and implement planning projects such as transit. I will fight to bring LRT stations and appropriate levels of service to our ward to help our residents travel more efficiently as development occurs and which supports transit oriented development.

b. Yes we are facing a housing crisis in Calgary.

To tackle the issue of affordable housing we must begin by creating healthy and livable communities. Many market based initiatives can occur with good planning principles such as creating a diversity of housing types within communities and increasing densities which leads to more choice and greater affordability to a wider range of people.

New developments should also incorporate secondary suite options or flex housing options which would result in more rental housing options and mortgage help for homeowners. Agencies such as Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation have been researching these types of initiatives for years and should be consulted and collaborated more often for innovative solutions to growing housing issues.

Parking requirements need to be reviewed, particularly in new transit oriented developments where the money and space allocated for parking could be used for additional housing.

Provide incentives to developers in the form of density bonuses or developer set asides to increase affordable housing supply. This should be mandated through housing policy that a percentage of housing units built to go to affordable housing.

Engage in Public Private Partnerships

To create more non market based housing, by working collaboratively and by helping build the capacity of non-governmental organizations, faith and ethnic groups to obtain and build affordable non-market housing.

Work more collaboratively with the Province of Alberta to obtain and build more quality affordable non-market housing.

Secondary Suites see below.

c.
Yes

Within in Calgary there are many illegal and nonconforming suites that provide affordable rental options for residents. These secondary suites are a sustainable housing form that can enhance our neighborhoods while using existing municipal infrastructure. As alderman I would support such initiatives that provide safe, adequate and affordable housing options that are sustainable and cost effective. Established areas within the city should be reviewed to determine the percentage of illegal or nonconforming suites currently existing. The review should also explore whether opportunities exist for more secondary suite development, such as reviewing the design of the established communities so that they would be able to handle the additional traffic. By working collaboratively with the community and through a public discussion and consultation process determine the best way to legalize non-conforming and illegal suites in these identified areas ensuring that existing and new suites are safe, affordable and conform to all building code requirements. This process which could be done immediately and could take pressure off our housing market by adding additional affordable rental units.

d.

Yes,

As alderman I would support, encourage and implement such smart growth policies to increase the health and livability in our communities.

Livability in a community centers on transportation, housing choices, civic amenities, and quality of life. To achieve a healthy and livable community we must create communities that are compact, connected, and complete communities. This can be done by encouraging the development of transit oriented developments or pedestrian oriented developments that promote many travel options and safe pedestrian infrastructure for our residents to enjoy.

Established communities and transit stations should be reviewed to determine opportunities for higher densities and mixed use around stations. By working collaboratively with the community and through a public discussion and consultation process determine the best way and methods to implement transit oriented development around existing stations.

A healthy and livable community is one that we can be able to live, work, and play within our communities. This means that our communities must have a diversity of housing types, a mixture of uses within the community and access to a full range of services. To reduce congestion on our roads we must encourage and provide an adequate transit system and bring employment options closer to homes to reduce auto use.

4) Transportation

a) The City has not done an adequate job in dealing with transportation issues. Adequate transportation and infrastructure is critical for the future growth of our city. Our road infrastructure must be upgraded and be efficient to ensure the movement of passengers and goods. As a city we need to be proactive by strengthening relationships and working collaboratively with our neighboring municipalities to create a regional transit policy.

Over the years Ward 3 has been neglected with a lack of infrastructure such as inefficient roads, lack of infrastructure for community development, and no mass transit options. Ward 3 currently has no operating Light Rail Transit (LRT) station although it is the largest ward in the city. Prairie Winds Station is under construction but further transit stations are required to deal with the high levels of growth. As our city has become a major domestic and international destination, we require a more efficient transit link to the airport. Where LRT is unavailable, rapid transit routes need to be in place help move people quickly. To break automobile dependency, reduce road congestion, and have a healthy environment for future generations, we must develop a world class transit system to move our residents.

It is important for our city to promote and use smart growth development. All transit stations should be based on transit oriented development (TOD) principles which promotes higher densities around transit stations with mixed use development. Established communities and transit stations should be reviewed to determine opportunities for higher densities and mixed use around stations. By working collaboratively with the community and through a public discussion and consultation process determine the best way and methods to implement transit oriented development around existing stations.

Through public private partnerships we need to work with industry representatives that are willing to try innovative and sustainable practices in creating a sustainable Calgary.

As alderman I will actively lobby and work with our various levels of government to tie land use objectives and capital investment together to fund and implement planning projects such as transit. I will fight to bring LRT stations and appropriate levels of service to our ward and throughout the city to help our residents travel more efficiently as development occurs and which supports transit oriented development.

b. Not to often now due to poor links and inconvenient for my employment. During my university years I did use transit more frequently.

c.

No our current system does not meet the needs of the city. Need to extend the existing transit line to Saddleridge and the Airport. Also need to get LRT to S.E.

Calgary to connect residents and employment areas. The northern hills communities also are in desperate need of mass transit.

Public washroom facilities are required in LRT stations such as Whitehorn. In Ward 3 benches and shelters are required as many use transit and have no protection from the elements.

d.

The plan needs to be more visionary and we need to build city around mass transit. Other areas need to be included such as Mount Royal College and the Airport.

e.

Yes

Mount Royal College is destination for many in the city and a transit link is required.

f.

There are many areas that are underserved by transit. The city should have options such as LRT or Rapid Bus service. Need to work with residents, transit and government to ensure we have an efficient transit system.

5.

Engage in Public Private Partnerships

To create more non market based housing, by working collaboratively and by helping build the capacity of non-governmental organizations, faith and ethnic groups to obtain and build affordable non-market housing. Work more collaboratively with the Province of Alberta to obtain and build more quality affordable non-market housing.

Provide incentives to developers in the form of density bonuses or developer set asides to increase affordable housing supply. This should be mandated through housing policy that a percentage of housing units built to go to affordable housing.

For more information on this topic visit www.votegeorge.ca and download under the Learn section go to link City of Calgary or http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/cns/homelessness/planning_ethnic_diversity_calgary.pdf

b.

I support Arts funding, but currently not aware of recommendations.

c.

As alderman I would support and promote recycling initiatives to ensure our landfills are not being unnecessarily filled. While I support recycling initiatives I am concerned about the impact the additional costs have on fixed income or lower income individuals and families, and on the lack of a program for multifamily housing. We need to promote throughout the city the importance of our environment and recycling and I would lobby the provincial government for financial support and program integration across municipalities. I would also push the city to create an action plan and targets for the reduction of municipal emissions.

d.

A key initiative in tackling many of our environmental issues deals with our built environment. We must promote and encourage smart growth development such as transit oriented developments & pedestrian oriented development which is an essential part of creating healthy and livable communities. We must work collaboratively with our development industry to ensure conservation of land and encourage environmental protection and greening of our communities. Citizens should be able to enjoy the natural environment and interact with others while doing so. In Calgary we enjoy Nosehill park, which is one of North America's largest urban parks. The creation of this park is an excellent example of a proactive and visionary response to protecting our natural environment.

The city and the development industry need to partner together to be more innovative and encourage environmental sustainability. This can be done by promoting and utilizing green infrastructure and buildings through programs such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). A newer initiative for community development is LEED Neighborhood Development (LEED ND). In new multifamily or highrise developments promote and encourage installation of green roofs and vertical gardens. As a city we should promote, encourage and provide bonus incentives for greener options in developments.

e.

We need greater community awareness on indicators that may lead to better information and report of suspicious activities to the Calgary Police Service. By working collaboratively and more effectively with the Calgary Real Estate Board and community associations we can increase awareness.

We need to increase financial penalties on homeowners and businesses, who knowingly or unknowingly permit the use of their properties for illegal operations. Homeowners need to enhance monitoring of their properties or face financial consequences. At present houses are condemned and remedial efforts have to be put in place prior to occupation.

In reference to violence at large as well as directly related drug activity. We need to increase police presence in our communities; we need to look at further investments in our police service manpower as well as new technology. I am an advocate of the “broken windows theory” to policing; by responding aggressively to any criminal act we will ensure that every citizen understands and appreciates the consequences of their actions at a very early stage.

In community design we need to look at design alternatives such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CEPTD) which is an approach to planning and development that reduces opportunities for crime.

Fighting crime starts within the home and community, parents must know what their children are doing and all communities must be aware and work together with the police to fight crime. I am committed in working collaboratively with the police and community to find solutions that are community based. The police service also needs to continue to reach out and be working with communities to better appreciate their needs and concerns. I am a strong proponent of ensuring that our actions and conduct as public servants are inclusive and sensitive to the ethnic, social and economic diversity of our ward.

6. Taxes & Revenues

a. No, we need to review funding arrangements with provincial government

b.

No need more money. Need to look at public private partnerships in building infrastructure. As alderman I will actively lobby and work with our various levels of government to tie land use objectives and capital investment together to fund and implement large scale planning projects such as transit.

7. Political Reform

a. No.

To ensure participation and accountability within our municipal structure, as a city we must look at implementing campaign financing rules. As alderman I will support such initiatives to ensure that elected municipal officials are accountable to its citizens. Such initiatives would include:

- 1) Campaign contribution limits
- 2) Spending limits
- 3) Quarterly public disclosure of campaign contributions made to elected officials
- 4) All campaign accounts held by elected officials should be publicly disclosed

Within my own campaign we have taken initiatives to implement campaign financing rules. Upon completion of this election I will have a better understanding of the costs associated in running an effective campaign. We will be publicly disclosing on our website prior to the Election Day all our campaign contributors.

- b. Regardless of the upcoming election result, any excess funds shall be donated to a charitable organization.