

THE BETTER CALGARY CAMPAIGN

Candidate Name: John Mar
Ward: Ward 8
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1. What are the top three issues facing your Ward?

- Rising rates of crime in Ward 8; while crime rates have been falling in the rest of Calgary, they've increased by over 40% in the core.
- Affordable housing crisis
- Infrastructure challenges

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've been a strong advocate, and if elected will be promoting transportation oriented development (TOD).

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?*

Yes, we are facing an affordable housing crisis in Calgary, particularly in Ward 8. I support allowing secondary suites as well as creating incentives so that new development will have affordable housing components.

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

Yes, because the residents of Ward 8 have been clear in their support for secondary suites, and I believe it to be a fairly obvious solution to dealing with the immediate need for affordable housing in Calgary.

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, I believe it to be a problem. We need to encourage and provide incentives for development that will create greater population density.

4. Transportation

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

Overall Calgary needs to do a better job. This means expansion of the LRT, looking at ways to add more trains to the existing LRT system, and adding more buses. We need to reach new communities but also have the capacity to transport people all around Calgary.

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

For the most part, I walk. I don't use the transit system as an option because I am able to walk to work and also able to walk my children to school.

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

No, we do not have the capacity to meet the city's current needs and as answered above in question 4. a).

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

Public Transit needs to be more accessible to the commuter. It needs to ensure the safety and security of the ridership, and must be expanded to provide as much coverage throughout the City

- 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?*

Both Mount Royal College and the Airport are key stops for a transit system. Because of the likelihood of students requiring public transportation and the proximity to built up areas of the city, I think this is much more achievable than the Airport. Having said that, clearly a LRT stop that could service the Airport would be most advantageous.

- f) *Are there other areas of the City that are underserved by transit? How would you address this?*

I have been an advocate for the West LRT expansion for sometime now. It is a critical extension that will serve thousands of Calgarians and will help to alleviate our impact on Calgary's core and the people who live there. It is my goal to incorporate a LRT station in Sunalta to provide even better and more convenient access.

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.*

I have been working on a plan with representatives from the Mustard Seed and from the development community. We are working to come up with innovative ways to address this growing challenge. I am very proud to have spearheaded this group and I look forward to seeing some of the ideas that will come from it.

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

Calgary needs to be a world-class centre for the Arts. Art is a vital component to humanity and is a major way that we differ from any species on Earth. The City has made significant progress by raising the level of Arts funding, but are still behind many similar sized Canadian cities in terms of per capita spending. The Calgary Arts Development Authority's policy to evaluate Calgary's commitment to the Arts is commendable. Artists are having great difficulty in finding studio space. I would like to work with the community stakeholders to help to alleviate this situation.

- 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 am in favour of curbside recycling and believe that it should be extended to organics and plastics. We need to not only encourage green choices, but also make it as easy as possible for a citizen to do their part.

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

I believe that the city should examine a phase-out of the use of cosmetic pesticides, and we also need to do more to encourage our citizens to use composters.

- 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.*

I am advocating the hiring of 400 new police officers with 100 of those dedicated to the core. I also believe that we should work with developers to create incentives to encourage affordable housing components for emergency workers in new developments.

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?*

I do not believe in new taxing powers for the city of Calgary. I believe we need to work with federal and provincial governments to establish predictable, long term funding to meet municipal needs.

- b) *Is there enough money in the system currently to fund your priorities? If not, how will you fund them?*

I believe that the new municipal funding program is a good start, however we need to continue working with both the federal and provincial governments to deal with the issue of long term funding. I believe that there are other areas where the city can save taxpayer dollars, for example the use of cosmetic pesticides.

7. **Political Reform**

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

I would create more transparency and accountability within the system. This should include donation limits and disclosure requirements. I have placed a restriction on my campaign donations, from all individuals and corporations of \$5000 and I will be disclosing all of my donors.

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

I will disclose any leftover funds and use them for future re-election or in the event that I don't run again, I will donate the funds to charity.

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

I would like to see the return of “Alderman-at-large” that would work in conjunction with the rest of City Council.

8. **For Incumbents Only:** *What are your three major accomplishments this term? OF what are you most proud?*