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| Ward: | Mayoral Candidate |
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1. What are the top three issues facing the city?

Quality of life is bar none the most important issue in Calgary. All others are merely spokes emanating from the core problem that weak management and short-term planning has eroded quality of life for all Calgarians. The people making the decisions (i.e. City Council) should be held accountable for failing the City's citizens, not only in the quality of management and planning, but also in cases where mistakes have been made which have cost squandered significant quantities of taxpayer dollars.

2. 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)?

I think it makes perfect sense to develop housing close to the LRT. I personally live a half a block from the LRT, and it causes no trouble. NIMBYism may be rampant, but such things must be somewhere.

On the other hand, many current frustrations are indicative of a conflict in long- and short-term planning: people bought into neighbourhoods with the expectation of maintenance of a certain character, only for it to come to light that (due to earlier poor long-term planning, and in the interests of the city as a whole) this character needs to be radically altered.

- 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?

Of course we are. There are close to 1,000 people on the fringe of requiring

'affordable housing'.

Issues outside the purview of the municipality, such as low interest rates and ease of credit have worsened some problems (for example, by creating a rabid market for condo conversions, thus further dwindling the rental pool).

Many municipalities exist that have been forced to tackle similar problems. We need to be more actively researching, and more quickly adopting, applicable solutions from elsewhere, including construction subsidies, rent controls, rent subsidies, public housing, required non-market units in each new development, conservation districts, temporary accommodations, and tax concessions: if it's feasible and makes sense, it should be considered, even (maybe especially!) if it's not 'standard procedure'!

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

Despite being a significant irritant for many people, secondary suites aren't going away, whether they're 'legal' or not. Is legalization reasonable for all neighbourhoods? Perhaps not, but we should explore it for at least some: management of an inevitable situation is far better for all stake-holders than turning a blind eye.

- 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.

I think you mean 'growth', as David Bronconnier describes it.

I would like to see a freeze on expansion and development of the city's borders: smarten up, and grow up.

Once again to look beyond our borders, Portland, Oregon incorporated in the 70s a challenging program to ensure the long-term -planning would maintain the city's relationship to the rural.

No solution is perfect but unfettered growth is responsible for most of the problems we're currently experiencing.

It is imperative that we maintain positive relations with the Municipalities, townships, and Tsuu tina nation (notice the latter will not talk to Bronco; indicative of bullying and arrogance).

Initially annexing 77 square km and later instead 177; without controls in place, how will we stop sprawl?

3. Transportation

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

Simply, no. Recently the city unveiled a banner announcing over a million people living here with the slogan "Planning For Growth". Whereas in a proper context it would've said "continuing to [incompetently] manage growth".

A complete re-evaluation of Calgary Transit is necessary, paying close attention the resources at its disposal, and the relationship it has with its customers, the citizens of Calgary.

I would hold off on the West LRT as I strongly feel that the current plan does not make sense: the areas through which it is supposed to run are relatively low density, and the proposed plan does not include stops at significant spots like Mount Royal College. An investment that's going to be with us for the next 100 years or longer requires more consideration.

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

I use both just about every day, in a 90-10 split with C-train being primary.

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

Absolutely not. It is preposterous that you don't have even skeleton 24-hour LRT. This is something I would add immediately.

Coming back to the accountability in this city, I would like to talk to whoever was responsible for recent decisions regarding the LRT cars. Particularly nonsensical was the decision to revert from the U2 seating configuration (facing each other) to the SD160 configuration (benches) which are more cumbersome to exit, provide a social disconnect as you face the back of peoples' heads, and is actually potentially dangerous as you can't see who's behind you.

On a second note, the LRT platforms are sterile, with mediocre architecture (take 1 St SW at a cost of \$1.6 million dollars – is this value?!). I would like to know who made the decision to not include, or had air conditioning systems removed from, the trains that are identical the ones in Edmonton (which have air conditioning, and carry 1/6 of the number of people Calgary's do!).

Lastly, a proper lighting system (not unlike Vancouver where they can adjust this ambient dimension) so as to minimize glare while maintaining safety should be contemplated.

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

What strategic plan?! I'm curious to know who's driving it, and where are the public hearings? Where is the organizational flowchart of the management structure of Calgary Transit?

Changes: Although it doesn't seem to be a related issue, the not only free newspaper program that currently charges vendors like 'Rush Hour, 24 Hours and Metro' pay a grand total of less than three cents per day per box to litter the transit stations, bus stops, and transit vehicles in an appalling manner. It has been suggested the City administration is going to up that rate to fifty dollars a box (or 13 cents per day). That's pretty cheap for a litter program that as far as I'm concerned contributes nothing to the quality of life here.

Current cleanliness issues blighting Calgary Transit could be remediated by using some of the under-employed people in the city to do a quick turnaround at end-of-lines that would include litter removal, cleaning of hand-grips and poles.

I have been waiting 4 months for a response regarding air conditioning. If you refer to the Calgary transit site, there is a 128 page survey that seems data driven and very thin on customer opinion. Cases in point: 1) where are transit vending machines that provide change, and/or change machines at the stations? 2) when they say there's free transit on New Years' Eve there's no signage (let alone Happy New Year messages. 3) The implementations at Stampede Station, where transactions get done manually because the machines 'can't keep up'. The survey reflects none of these things, as there appear to have been no open-form questions.

- 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?

Of course! Any expansion plan that does not envision direct C-Train service to these crucial hubs is no plan at all.

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

I am not completely aware of all areas. If Calgary transit doesn't already have that information, they should: isn't that their job?

I believe in 2000 a private operator was trying to institute private door-to-work and vice versa pickup and delivery which would cost more than transit but less than a taxi. It would have alleviated congestion. The biggest opponent to that system was Calgary Transit.

4. 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.

Speaking from experience, I live in a 330sf Leonard Cohen-lite studio in downtown Calgary and despite being a change from large living it's forced me to re-evaluate our priorities, I find it preferable.

We don't need conventional housing approaches to solve the problem. Sometimes less is more. If we have to stack Atco trailers 4 people per unit to provide basic necessities (shelter, heat etc.) that would be a marked improvement over what's happening now (i.e. people freezing, sleeping outside office towers).

I question David Bronconnier's sincerity about addressing this problem when City Hall allowed closure the St. Louis Hotel among many other useable but currently off-limits homeless housing solutions -- not to mention his April Fools' Joke of 2006 'drastic plastic housing solution'!

On a secondary note in that context, I have yet to understand the rationale of him facilitating the sale of the York hotel via the Calgary Housing Company therefore displacing approximately 200 people with readily accessible downtown services at their doorstep and dispersing them to all of the quadrants of the City whilst vacancy rates according to the Calgary Census Guide had plummeted from 3.75 to 1.73% in the previous year.

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

CADA has done a great job collecting data so far, and lobbying for justified increases in local arts funding. How the increased funds are disbursed is of the utmost importance: financial oversight and evaluation at least equivalent in rigourousness to the old CRAF models is absolutely. And no more conflicts of interest (or the perception) should be tolerated in filling spots on CADA's Board of Directors!

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

It's a step in the right direction, but its implementation should be sped up and the plan should include electronics and organics.

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

The Calgary Cigarette smoking policy is absurd. Although the administration is trying to discourage smoking, it doesn't change the fact that millions of cigarette butts are being discarded into the Elbow and Bow river systems via the storm sewers which is one of the worst environmentally polluting things you can do.

Public ashtrays should be installed throughout the City to obviate further such pollution, especially downtown where the quantity of cigarette butts is creating a glaring visual blight.

Also, we should implement mandatory investment recovery on all demolition projects. Penny Lane is an example of useable entities demolished and put into a landfill – why??!

- 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.

Living downtown as I do, I have witnessed and intervened many times threatening situations. Calgary's Police are under-funded in the respect that the city has grown so much. We need not just more bylaw officers, need more beat cops on the street, More high profile 'serve and protect' as public relations: that interaction on the street gives officers insight and gives people the opportunity to relay issues directly.

Another overlooked fundamental is that clean spaces are perceived to be safe spaces. This city has devolved into a very grimy place.

Also of great concern to me is the lack of continuity within the urban lighting framework. There are plenty of places that even I am leery of walking down because the lighting is off. For example, 8th and 8th medical clinic: high traffic, but bad lighting, therefore increasing perception of danger lurking in the shadows.

5. 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?

From what I can ascertain via the City's website, less than half the City's tax-supported operating budget currently comes from property taxes. Be that as it may, with efficient management no new taxes need be necessary.

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

Yes, there is. I don't think there's any question that long-term stable funding program is long overdue. There is no question that the municipal government is in control of much more money than is necessary. Currently, there is epidemic mismanagement, rampant misappropriation of funds, and things are being built for the sake of building; if these problems were corrected, the City would need to worry far less about money for projects.

6. Political reform.

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

Absolutely not! Candidates should not be allowed to keep the money they raise following their campaign; as in most municipalities, it should go to charity or flow to the City itself.

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

In the event we have a surplus, I shall donate it to charity. In fact, since September 17 I have had a document posted in the window of my car which constitutes a binding declaration to this effect, and a copy of which I urge all other Mayoral and Aldermanic candidates to sign.

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

All candidates running for Mayor or Alderman should be required by law to receive equal television time and print news coverage, and paid electoral advertising should be banned and/or campaign spending capped.