

This is the response from Jeremy Zhao, Mayoral Candidate.

1. Affordable Housing, Low Income Housing

There are many small but practical solutions we can look at in the short term. By providing a free online website or agency that lists affordable rentals and housing at no cost for citizens, this will ease their process in finding housing. On long term solutions, the city needs to work with developers in order ensure inclusionary housing, linkage fees to set up public transportation, and bonus density for developers who will pursue building affordable housing units. We as a city need to look at opening up more opportunities to allow for secondary suites and basements suites. Affordable housing means affordable transportation, so a community needs to build around a solid public transit routes instead of the other way around.

2. Transportation

The GoPlan was reviewed and assessed by the public and it should be implemented according to needs to the public, not of what the council feels like. The problem from the start was building Calgary's transit system around the design of the city, and not the other way around. Now we have to look at other methods to fix our transit system via a land use strategy. Since the city is so focused on extending LRTs and adding more buses and trains instead of looking at ways to design how routes and density distribution may help alleviate some of the problems, we need a change in municipal thinking. The implementation of the GoPlan needs to move forward as soon as possible.

3. Property Taxes

Property taxes need to head in one of two directions: 1) Slowing down the hikes in property tax each year by either capping it for a certain numbers of years or having it raised below inflation. 2) A recommendation brought up to me was to implement a tax bracket system into property taxes, where low-income families would have to pay less than the property tax rate. High income owners would pay a little more than the tax rate, but since Calgary has one of the lowest property taxes, this would not substantially change anyone's income.

4. Environment

One action to look at is essentially banning incandescent lightbulbs and find alternatives to lighting. The city can look at a number of existing measures we have in place and start making them better. A push for aesthetic pesticide bans should be implemented as soon as possible. We need to convert more of the city vehicles into hybrid models, which may cost a lot, but the long term benefits eclipse the negatives. We need to push the curbside recycling program to include organic waste. We also need to work with the provincial government to help find solutions to our dying pine trees stricken by the diseases and insects.

5. Democratic Process

Calgary is one of the few cities with a poor election financing bylaw. There are things council needs to do in order to create a balanced

election and an opportunity for more candidates. Limits on how much a candidate can spend per voter should be in place. Candidates can only fundraise after the nomination process is over so that incumbents don't have 3 years to set up their campaign. Money from previous elections cannot be carried over, and all surpluses left over needs to be given back to the city or to local charities. Without these measures in place, incumbents have a major advantage over other small or unknown candidates.

I hope this helps you! If there is anything missing, feel free to contact me at my cell at 891-8650.

Jeremy Zhao, Mayoral Candidate