

1. Affordable Housing

In the ICC's background information, some examples from San Francisco were cited. It is difficult to use American examples to identify solutions in a Canadian context.

Legislation limits what a city can do around rent controls and condo conversions, for example, as those are under provincial jurisdiction, although providing rent controls in this over-heated market, and requiring more stringent rules around condo conversions, would be helpful. There are a number of solutions to the housing crisis that fall under the City's responsibility. To name a few:

- Promote secondary suites as one source of rental housing, and also as a solution to affordable home ownership. Identify the community concerns like parking and unkempt property, and establish rules to mitigate those concerns. Provide successful and attractive examples from other cities, and in communities like Garrison Woods.
- Density bonusing – Council can use their land use abilities to bonus for affordable housing.
- Use of City-owned land and surplus school sites for affordable housing.

For the long term, we need to work with the other orders of government to address the affordable housing crisis and provide ample rental supply. The idea of providing affordable housing “projects” is out of date. Rather we should be looking to provide access to rental units dispersed throughout the city, and for those who are chronically homeless, provide housing coupled with adequate social supports. I am one of the City's representatives on the Committee to End Homelessness, which is working on a ten year plan based on successful examples from the US and the UK. Our goal is to end homelessness in ten years. The findings from this committee will require a change in approach to how we provide services to people who are homeless.

2. Transportation

I have been very supportive of the GoPlan and the principles behind it, and the subsequent Inner City Transportation Study. It is time, though, to go beyond the GoPlan and focus our funding on public transport and other alternatives. The GoPlan is a moderate document, and the new emphasis on sustainable planning and the climate crisis has highlighted the need for change. The new planning process, Plan It Calgary, is looking at what it would mean for Calgary if we chose to freeze the boundaries of the city, and build new densities within the existing boundaries. This discussion demonstrates the radical change in thinking over the last six years away from sprawl and toward sustainability.

Historically, the most common land use adjacent to the LRT station has been low density residential, car dealerships, parking lots, or big box retail. I was one of the leading voices behind the Transit Oriented Development policy for all LRT stations, which encourages walkable, mixed-use nodes of higher density, adjacent to LRT. Council is now undertaking city-wide station area redevelopment plans. In established communities, the local community context is one of the key considerations during the planning process.

3. Tax Fairness

To paraphrase a well known Calgary architect, Andrew Little, “First decide what kind of city you want, and then establish a tax system that supports it.” While Calgary’s property taxes are still the lowest in Canada, and Market Value Assessment is the method of property tax evaluation as determined by the Province, there are a number of measures that the City can do to mitigate the impacts of MVA.

- Provide access to tax deferral programs for low income seniors. Real estate in the inner city is going up at a faster rate than in many other communities, creating extremely valuable assets for the homeowner. It’s hard to justify a subsidy for those who are sitting on a million dollar asset, but a deferral program, whether provided through government or a bank, would help those on fixed incomes. In British Columbia, deferral programs are provided by the Province.
- Determine what services should be user-pay. Services that we are trying to limit the use of (example, water use and garbage collection), should be cost recovery and not paid for through property taxes. Other services that we are trying to promote (recreation, libraries) should be subsidised through the tax system.
- US cities can raise municipal revenues from a large number of sources, so their reliance on property taxes is about 20% of total revenues. Canadian cities rely on property taxes for 40% to 50% of total revenues. Expanding our sources of revenues would help reduce our reliance on property taxes, although any new taxes would have to be thoughtfully introduced with an equal and transparent reduction in property taxes.

4. Environment and Sustainability

I have been a vocal supporter of sustainable planning, and was a participant in the Imagine Calgary process, which identified a long term plan for Calgary. As a result of that process, the City has removed the density cap of 6 to 8 units per acre and replaced it with a minimum density of 7 units per acre, with no cap. Any new community plans now need to demonstrate how they achieve eleven sustainability principles approved by Council last year. Council has also approved updating the Sustainable Suburbs Study, and is undertaking a planning process call Plan It Calgary, which will shift the Calgary Municipal Plan to a sustainable model.

The City of Calgary is considered a leader in green energy initiatives, like our new Enmax wind farm and district energy for downtown, which has helped us meet and exceed our Kyoto targets.

Calgary lags behind other cities in areas like recycling, and single occupancy car use, but with a new curbside program in 2009, and a major change of focus from roads to public

transit, I'm hopeful that we will be making major progress in those areas over the next three years.

5. Election Financing.

While I have established a personal limit for campaign contributions, I would be supportive of a change in policy to formalize a limit. I would also support a policy that requires turning over the remaining campaign funds to a registered charity of choice after leaving office.



Please consider the environment before printing this email