

Candidate Name:	Joe Connelly
Ward:	Ward Six
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Contact name/number:	Joe Connelly - 612 9233

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

Traffic and transportation and the fact that many of the changes (i.e. widening of Bow Trail) were done without prior consultation with constituents.

Lack of *collaboration* with residents, developers and city planning – there are too many surprises and projects initiated without constituent input

Community *safety* as it relates to crime and risk to personal safety

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

Overall *infrastructure* is behind the pace of growth. While growth has been economically healthy, it has brought its own challenges of trying to keep up with roads, schools, housing, etc

Gang-related crime, and *crime* overall. A prosperous city attracts new problems such as increased drug-related issues, which is a vicious circle that spurns yet more crime. I support increased police officers and bylaw officers to enforce rules and maintain safety. I also advocate security cameras in high-risk crime areas.

Homelessness – Calgary’s prosperity is an attraction to those less fortunate who see the city as perhaps one of generosity. There are higher incidents of “begging” and higher numbers of people with nowhere to call home.

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 support transit development both throughout the city as well as the proposed west line of the LRT that will provide service to ward six – provided it is done with minimal impact to the community. This will move people, not cars. But it must be done wisely and in collaboration with residents – for example, we need sufficient parking to support proper usage of the LRT in park and ride locations. It must also be done as a team, with residents and businesses that are affected notified at all times of the phases of construction and the effect it will have on major routes and particularly in ward six.

- 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 a housing shortage, particularly in relation to the economic boom and necessary attraction of labour to sustain the city's growth. Increased mass and affordable housing should be researched and planned. More model neighbourhoods like Garrison Woods, which has been recognized internationally, should be planned and built.

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

Yes, in collaboration with constituents. This is one solution to the current housing crunch and also addresses a bigger social issue such as the increase of families living together longer. For example, parents returning to live with their children, and children living longer with their parents. While this is not the case with all secondary suites, it offers a minor solution and provides for those families who do wish to live together under one roof. This needs to be discussed district-by-district and done, as mentioned, in collaboration.

- 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.**

Calgary, so far, is managing growth. I do not, currently see it as a major problem but if we don't manage it, it will turn into one. We need to design neighbourhoods properly, manage how new communities are being developed and look at other cities as far away as Europe on their progression and management of urban sprawl.

4. Transportation

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

Yes, the City has worked hard to address transportation and while the current headaches of road closures, expansion and construction have proven to be an inconvenience, it is short-term pain for long-term gain. We must remember that provincial funding was delayed so we have been forced into a position of catch-up with construction. Transportation remains one of the city's top priorities as it tries to keep up with the dramatic growth and economic boom that has allowed the city to grow more quickly than expected. What I would do differently is encourage greater collaboration sooner in the process so there are no surprises to residents and businesses affected by transportation construction.

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

I use the LRT in the downtown core to get to locations quickly and avoid contributing to downtown traffic congestion.

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

While the City has focused priorities on transportation, there is always room for improvement. One of the challenges I find is that we don't have the proper infrastructure, for example enough park and ride facilities, around the LRT. Planned improvements that I will support, that will benefit ward six specifically, include the west line of the LRT and improvements to Sarcee Trail.

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

Yes. We must, however, continually revisit the plan as our rate of growth is occurring so quickly. Some encouraging trends show that people are living closer to their jobs, that usage of the public system is increasing, and that social trends such as working from home is helping alleviate some pressure. As mentioned above, we continue to play catch up due not only to the dramatic growth, but funding issues as well.

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?

I would want to see the original research and statistics of usage on why these areas were not included. An amendment, if the strategy makes sense, is something I would support, however, not knowing why they weren't planned in the first place makes it difficult to support or not support a change. Further research may be required to determine a reasonable return on investment should the plans require changes in order to service Mount Royal College and the Calgary International Airport.

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

Without further consultation, I cannot speak to this issue in the other wards.

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.**

While homelessness is a provincial issue, Calgary as a city is responsible for building and providing homes. The City, in the past six years, has built 800 new units and should be commended for these efforts. Further research should be conducted to determine not only the number of homes required, but also addressing the bigger issue of working towards significant reduction of homelessness.

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

I support funding for a cosmopolitan city that supports arts and culture. Both are an important component to enhancing the quality of life for residents and an opportunity to broaden one's mind. Arts and culture are also critical to attracting and retaining skilled labour when competing for these individuals with other Canadian and US cosmopolitan cities. From a tourists' perspective, offering more reason to visit Calgary further grows an already strong economic impact – currently visitors to Calgary spend approximately \$1 billion per year which contributes over \$43 million annually to municipal tax revenues.

The recent research done by CADA shows that Calgarians want increased physical locations for the arts to grow, vibrant public spaces and to ensure that the arts are accessible and affordable, along with a number of other findings. Yes, I do agree with the findings and report. As mentioned above, I believe the arts are an integral part of who Calgary is and what they offer to enhance our quality of life. As part of the Creative City initiative, growth in this area is healthy, educational and an essential part of being a cosmopolitan city.

- 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 support the curbside recycling plan and further support a staged approach to extending the plan. Calgarians are already supporters of keeping our city green and conscious about preserving our natural attractions and great outdoors.

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

Other initiatives include preserving green spaces and parks such as Edworthy, supporting new planned park areas such as Clearwater Park in the west and plans that address renewable resources, ie electricity.

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 will work towards instilling pride in our police force – much like that which was evident during the 2004 Red Mile when our force earned the reputation of “Calgary Cops Rock”. Implementing a program that sees our youth, in particular, respect Calgary’s authorities. We need to make the police profession “elite” – put members of the force on a pedestal and recognize the great job they do. This will not only help in crime reduction, but also in recruitment of more police officers.

Support of organizations such as Block Watch. Research plans that would have cameras installed in areas that experience issues related to nuisance, crime, gangs, etc. We have cameras to monitor vehicular issues such as speeding and running red lights. I would also support the city’s current plan to increase police offices and bylaw officers.

I think we need to study other city’s initiatives such as Seattle removing all garbage dumpsters in alleys thereby removing barricades that allow illicit activities to occur. And New York’s “broken window theory” where graffiti and petty crimes such as window smashing are repaired immediately so as not to invite further crime in the same area.

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?

Yes, property tax and user-pay are two systems that work well towards funding municipal government.

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

Mayor Bronconnier has done an exceptional job of accessing provincial and federal funding recently that will certainly assist Calgary in working towards enhancing services and infrastructure for citizens. However, funding will always be a top concern as Calgary struggles to keep up with its growth. Some projects will be researched on a user-pay system, others will be evaluated and prioritized with other city initiatives as to each projects’ return on investment.

This is almost a yin and yang position where funding and priorities come together for the benefit of all of Calgary. Like all funding and budget processes, It is a matter of negotiating and prioritizing projects based on feedback of the community.

7. Political reform.

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

Yes, I believe it does.

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

I would expect that surplus campaign funds would be donated to a charity of choice.

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

no