



Candidate Name:	Gord Lowe _____
Ward:	2 _____
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1. What are the top three issues facing your Ward?

Transportation, Transit, Recreation

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

Transportation, Transit, Affordability

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)?**

Short answer – yes absolutely! With respect to Dalhousie Station I encouraged the developer to come in with as much density as possible, and supported the proposal as meeting that goal. However, it remains my view the site is significantly underdeveloped. There is still hope for the remaining area in the study area!

It should be noted that I insisted the City owned land on the north side of the Crowfoot Landing LRT station be designated for TOD and I'm actively encouraging redevelopment of Crowfoot both as an employment center and very high density residential.

- 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. What the City controls is land use and we should (and are) using that ability to encourage multi family development not only in the city center, but also in the developed communities and in the new communities. The next step, in my view is to find a way to encourage the construction of rental multi family development which remains in the rental pool. To do that the City will require the active support and participation of the other orders of government.

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

What the new LUB does is exactly that. What it does not do is to “legalize” existing basement suites.

I do not support across the board “legalization” as it will not address either the safety issues or the impact on developed communities.

My position has remained constant. I support and encourage the inclusion of secondary suites as a permitted use in new communities – the rules with respect to lot size, access and parking are explicit. Safety issues are addressed in the Alberta Building Code. With respect to the developed communities, if a community wished to go through a redevelopment process (which they should and are) and if as a result of that exercise areas within the community which permit secondary suites are identified, then I will support their inclusion.

However, if a landowner comes forward seeking redesignation of a single, or even more than one property in a developed community to accommodate a secondary suite on a “spot zoning” basis, I will not support the application.

My communities are fully aware of, and to my knowledge fully support my position on this matter.

The reason is quite simple. People purchased their properties with an expectation – and that expectation must be respected until the community decides otherwise.

If there is a need to rethink the City's Area Redevelopment Plan process and to speed it up – then we should do that. If money and staff are required to review the ARP process, then we should get on with it. But we should not run roughshod over the developed communities.

I know there is a “shadow” population living in dwelling units not approved, nor likely to be approved under the current and proposed LUB, or which meet the current or suggested building code provisions. While on SDAB I heard appeals for and against these dwelling units. Action with respect to illegal dwelling units are the result of complaints, not a concerted effort by the City to locate and remove these units.

It is my view that even if every suite in existence today was “legalized” subject to “reasonable” safety standards” as suggested – this issue would not go away. For a variety of reasons – undisclosed income, change in property tax assessment, fear or knowledge that the secondary suite will not meet safety standards.

- 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.**

Actually, “rural” sprawl is more of an issue for the City of Calgary than urban sprawl. The development being permitted on the edges of the City by our neighbouring Municipal Districts poses a significant threat to the City of Calgary's ability to manage its own growth and costs. This speaks volumes about the lack of regional

planning, and the down stream effects on the regions ability to provide basic services to a regional population.

I have been a member of the Calgary Planning Commission since election in 2001. During that time density has been increased both in the inner city and the new communities. Alderman Farrell and I proposed a change to the Municipal Plan to identify a minimum, rather than a maximum density for development. That single change has encouraged innovative planning of new communities, and I believe will lead to the development of sustainable, self contained communities within the city's growth corridors. From my perspective, interest in these communities, their mix of housing choice, amenities, and proximity to employment suggests success which will lead to even greater innovation. There is no reason that development akin to Garrison Wood is not possible and very desirable within the growth corridors.

All of these factors, coupled with significant densification of the Beltline, the Downtown (which I believe will ultimately expand to the developed communities) will slow the City's lateral growth. The River's Project and redevelopment of Victoria Park are indicative of progress.

4. Transportation

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

Since 2001 – yes. Prior to that the City occupied surplus capacity on both its road and transit networks.

However, we are still behind where I think we should be, both in road and transit network capacity.

It's common knowledge that I was, and am not a fan of the "Go Plan". My objection to the plan, which I stated from the onset (I was Chair of SDAB at the time) focussed mainly on the lack of an implementation plan and what I see as the blatant influence of single issue groups and individuals. Outcomes of both are demonstrated in the abrupt end of Sarcee Trail north of the Bow River, and the sale of the right way for 50th Avenue SW west of Crowchild Trail. Both changed the possibility of an efficient, effective skeletal road network and expanded possibilities for north-south and east – west transit connections. I expect the current review underway to include an implementation plan, which if accepted can form the basis for an improved strategic transportation plan.

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

I use the LRT occasionally. My most common use is to attend evening functions either downtown, or at Stampede Park.

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

Not fully. There is an increasing need for a series of "circle" routes which would provide lateral transportation between future and existing LRT lines without having to go to the center of the City. There is an increasing demand for lateral connections across the

north of the City (north of John Laurie/McKnight Blvds) to enable those living in the residential areas in north and north west Calgary to access the emerging employment areas west, north and east of the Calgary International Airport, and within the airport itself. There is a similar need in the south of Calgary to provide service to the rapidly expanding transportation and distribution centers there.

The shuttle service between the communities and the LRT/BRT stations must be enhanced if we are to derive the maximum benefit we can from the LRT/BRT system. While crowding and cleanliness of the LRT are issues for the riders, the biggest and most common complaint has to do with the shuttle service – its frequency and hours of operation.

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

See above. The plan should be reviewed in light of current development and development pressures.

- 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**

The answer to both is "yes". I have long asked for a LRT link to the Calgary International Airport, and understand the cost and cost/benefit issues with this connection. I do know there will likely be a "tram" style connection to the NE leg of the LRT at some time in the future, and that the right of way has been identified and protected for some time. If, in fact the current proposed route for the west leg is the best, then I would advocate a "tram" style connection to Mount Royal College, and identification and protection of the right of way now.

The connection now, rather than later for Mount Royal College is easier to rationalize than the connection to the Calgary International Airport. Mount Royal is an emerging educational institution, with a huge amount of potential – realization of which will, to a significant degree be dependent on access to the College from all points in the city. Access to public transportation at the Airport is highly desirable – not just for the employees (and the airport is a large employment center) but also for the travelling public. Every "great" city I have flown into is served by rail. However, it's interesting that in every case in my experience the only point on the rail system where you can be assured of a seat when you get onto the train is at the airport! Which gives rise to the cost/benefit discussion. Could access for employees be better served by an effective lateral bus system?

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

Yes – Symons Valley, for example. For both employment and school purposes. Expansion of the BRT system sooner, rather than later or an increased community shuttle service. Both cost money and I expect to see those issues addressed in the 2009 – 2011 business plans. If they are not, I'll ask.

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 asking for a social plan for the city center for several years. I have yet to see a social plan which defines the nature of the issue and identifies who is responsible for what, and proposes a solution of series of actions pointed to a solution. And I am frustrated with what I see as the lack of a foundation for real action.

There are initiatives out there – like the living wage initiative. The task force to address homelessness will report to Council and I

expect their recommendations to contain a funding proposal or proposals. At the end of the day this will be a resources (money and people) issue.

As I understand it, homelessness is divided between those who are desirous, fully capable and willing to live independently, and those who by reason of disability, illness and/or addiction are incapable of independent living.

I know that conventional thinking says deal with the latter group first, then focus on affordable solutions for those who want to participate.

Easily said, but Municipalities are not responsible for the latter group. It's the Federal and Provincial Governments who are tasked with the duty for social care – a duty both orders are quite happy to abdicate – particularly if the municipalities take it on! And we do take it on because the problem exists on our door step.

What have I done? As mentioned somewhere earlier, the one thing the City controls is land use. Through that control we can make available, and in some cases even provide land. Something I do regularly both at Planning Commission and Land and Asset Committee – then at Council when the issue must be ratified by Council. As Chair of Finance and Corporate Services I supported the Universal Low Income Transit Pass and facilitated a source of funding for what is a Provincial responsibility.

Again, as mentioned earlier, I strongly believe the solution to affordable housing is by finding a way to get multi family rental accommodation built – something which will require the co-operation of all orders of government. Make no mistake, I do fear rushing out and building “projects” as they did in Toronto, Chicago and other cities – the end result of which were more social problems than they probably solved.

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

I was one of the original members of the Arts Review Committee – and with Alderman King proposed the creation of CADA.

Do we need more? In my view yes, but I would like to see it spread more broadly across the city. I think we have made a good start!

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 think I probably know more about the City's recycling plan and its funding than anyone else on Council! During the development of the plan I worked very closely with Solid Waste Services, both on their proposal, funding model and ultimate plan – their presentations to Committee and to Council.

I was bitterly disappointed when Council declined the \$21 per month per door “full meal deal”. And I shoulder some of the blame for not ensuring the message of what we got for that \$21 was not better understood – at least my members of Council. The media, of course put their own spin on it, and some members of Council spun it to the advantage of their personal agendas.

Even the series in the Calgary Sun over the past few days fails to tell the whole story. Unlike Edmonton, or any other City for that fact, what the initial plan offered was a full, curbside recycling plan, including all plastics and organics with no mil rate support .

What Council saw was “another tax of \$21 per month” in addition to what they paid in property tax to be agreed to in an election year!

Even one of your bloggers fails to have done a thorough analysis of the issue – and wants to know why it would cost 40% more in Calgary than it does in Edmonton. News flash – when you take the \$14.35 per month in Edmonton, then add their mil rate support – it costs about \$21 per month for solid waste services in Edmonton! And Edmonton does not deal with industrial or commercial waste issues. Calgary does! So who, on the triple bottom line basis is getting the better deal!

Yes we will revisit the organics issue. We must – it’s the elephant in the room and must be dealt with. If we don’t it will come back to haunt our children and grandchildren!

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

Monitor performance and cost and where practicable move towards increased use of environmentally sensitive sources of energy for transportation and service needs. (Bio fuels, hybrid vehicles, lighting systems, etc).

While the City has a policy of requiring LEEDS Silver certification for its own buildings, we do not have a policy concerning other construction. At planning commission we constantly “encourage”

achievement of an equivalent standard. If we are going this route, as a Council we should have the courage to create a policy - and make it clear that adherence to this policy is the price of admission to the city.

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 have urged Council to hire and train more bylaw enforcement officers.

I have supported initiatives to "clean-up" specified areas of the City (Forest Lawn, Victoria Park, the Belt Line).

I have supported the addition of Police and Bylaw Officers in the Clean to the Core initiative.

In my view, the next phase is to consolidate our bylaw officers into one unit. Today, there are bylaw officers for animal control, the Community Standards Bylaw, Parking, Development and Building, and LRT.

Each works in his or her own silo. Not efficient use of personnel!

In my view, Bylaw should be consolidated, cross trained and tactically dispatched to deal with issues as they arise.

Further – someone has to take ownership of bylaws and their enforcement. In my view that there should be a consolidated Bylaw Enforcement Division which encompasses all bylaw issues. It's my understanding these officers could even enforce speed issues in school and playground zones.

On the same vane – if ownership of bylaws was consolidated it would free up the Calgary Police Service to deal with the serious issues facing the City today. For example, if members of the CPS apprehend someone who is drunk (or stoned), those members are off the street for more than 2 hours processing the individual

through arrest processing! Why are these people not apprehended, immediately handed off to a bylaw officer who can either get them to the drunk tank or to a sobering center?

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?**

No, but given the options available to Municipal Governments generally, or in our case more specifically through the MGA it is the best option we currently have.

In my view until such time as the other orders of government recognize and respect the municipalities and in doing so create room within the global tax system for their capital and operating needs Municipalities will face a revenue/spending conflict.

The only avenue Municipalities have is to continue to lobby both other orders of government for recognition and for a stable and predicible funding.

- b. **Is there enough money in the system currently to fund your priorities? If now, how will you fund them?**

The recent agreement signed with the Province provides the capital funding required to move Calgary ahead. Changes made, particularly over the past three years with the Urban Development Institute with respect to levy's on development have gone some distance to ensuring growth pays the capital costs of growth. The challenge is with the operating budget – in other words to ensure that we can provide the day to day services and maintenance resulting from the capital expenditures. This is the constant balancing act between property tax and fee for service augmented by other revenue sources (investment income, MCAF, etc).

7. Political reform.

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

For me it does. I financed by first campaign and had I lost, I would have had to absorb that cost. If one is serious about the process, then you put your money on the line.

The question around campaign financing always comes down to where the funds come from, go, and how to control that.

At the point where the Federal and Provincial Governments grant my donors the same courtesy they grant their own – a tax receipt for their donation – we can start discussions around who can donate, how much, what happens to the funds, limits on campaign spending, etc. But until that courtesy is granted the point is moot.

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

I have announced to my donors that at the point where I leave politics – either by my choice or as a result of a decision of my constituents in Ward 2 any surplus in my campaign account will be donated to Habitat for Humanity. Two reasons for Habitat – first it's an affordable home ownership program which resonates with me, and second, it's a charity which many of my donors support with cash or in kind and their money should go back there if I'm not using it for the purpose for which they donated it to me.

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

I am concerned with the emergence of party style politics into Municipal politics.

A basic premise of Municipal politics is that they are not (or at least should not be) partisan and bound by party discipline.

I think candidates sponsored by, or financed by registered organizations or societies should be required to declare the name of their sponsors, the extent and manner of their support, and list the Board of Directors of the sponsoring organization(s). This is the only way in which electors can know who is setting the agenda of a candidate.

8. FOR INCUMBENTS ONLY: What are your three major accomplishments this term? Of what are you most proud?

Transportation, transit, employment and recreation improvements in Ward 2.

Multi year budget and budget reporting process based on Council approved business plans and performance measures meeting Council directed budget guidelines.

Changes to the Municipal Development Plan changing the density rules which facilitate far more innovative planning throughout the city.