



# CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

## 1. Tell us about who you are and why you decided to run for City Council?

I'm Jennifer Wyness, I am running again in Ward 2 for City Councillor. I decided to run in 2017 as I felt the needs of the community were being ignored and poorly represented by the incumbent councillor. I continue to think this is the case and Ward 2 would be better served by a councillor who sees the role as representing all the residents of Ward 2 and is a strong advocate for their needs.

## 2. Why should Calgaryians vote for you?

Ward 2 needs a councillor that will put their political partisanship aside for the needs of the community. We need a councillor that can work collaboratively with the city, constituents, and the rest of city council to accomplish the goals of the city. It is no longer acceptable to have a city councillor that doesn't put in the extra effort to find common ground with those they disagree with. Calgary also needs a new face on city council that represents a youthful and dynamic city. My combination of working on non-profit boards, public relations, public facilities, and mediation provides me with a full toolbox to tackle these challenges.

## 3. Calgary's current City Council has a history of erratically delaying the Green Line, and the provincial government continues to threaten the project with further delays. Do you feel the Green Line should be a priority? If so, how would you approach getting the project back on track?

I have always been an advocate for the Greenline. My concern has always been that the further we delay construction, the higher the costs would be and the later the positive impact would be felt. While I recognize the delays have already impeded the progress north of downtown, Ward 2 would be positively impacted by a Greenline North. As such, I will continue to advocate for accessible transit solutions specifically to the new communities in North Calgary that are under served. We must show people, businesses, and investors, that Calgaryians are committed to a sustainable future and that partisan politics will not impede our progress.

## 4. Over the past year, Alberta has seen more residents leave for other provinces than the reverse.

### A. What do you feel are the main reasons that residents (particularly youth and young adults) are leaving?

I think what makes Calgary so great is our diversity. So I will not take this as a negative, but an opportunity to look at how we present the value of Calgary. What is Calgary's culture, what is our main value to residents?

As someone who chose to move here, to me the value is clear, and always has been. This is an amazing city to raise a family. We have affordable housing, and despite recent setbacks, a resilient economy. What I want to make sure is that the skills and knowledge learnt by those who leave in their travels comes back to Calgary. We should not lose sight of who we are to retain people who are looking for new experiences to develop and grow.

### B. What would you do to keep young Calgaryians from leaving the city?

Where Calgary is missing the mark, is we don't do a good job of promoting our values. We need young, dynamic, and engaged leadership. We need to show that Calgary is a place where people get ahead, where people can afford a family, where the work and effort you put in is rewarded. Calgary is by far the best city for young people in Canada, where we are failing is not in our core values, but marketing and image. While the Civic government has a large influence in this, there are intergovernmental challenges where messaging is driving young people out of our city and province. The best thing we can do, is elect representatives that shine a positive light on our city and work diligently to promote our shared values.

**5. Thousands of Calgary residents are employed through our city's public services with even more relying on them to go about their daily lives.**

**A. In your view, how important are public services to fostering a successful city?**

Public services are the people that residents interact with daily. Focusing on an appreciated and engaged public sector will help improve morale and productivity in the people who provide those services. While wages are a large portion of the city budget, we need to look beyond short term cuts and hiring freezes; the results are burnout, lower productivity, overtime costs skyrocketing, and ultimately poorer service delivery for residents.

They support private businesses across the city, and make Calgary an enjoyable city to live and work in. It is fundamental that council works with city management to make sure employees feel valued, are supported, and are engaged in their work.

**B. Are there any instances in which public services could be cut in favour of private-public partnerships?**

I am open to looking into areas where public/private models may be more impactful to adding value to the city such as construction and maintenance projects. I am weary of two things with private contracts. The first is hidden costs. We hear of snow removal being privatized, however, how can we be assured we aren't paying higher amounts for lower levels of service due to having to compete with other customers of the private company during times when demand is highest.

The second is that privatization can result in wage deflation across many sectors including private sectors. I am not opposed to piloting projects to see if there are areas where the city is struggling to provide effective services, and a specialized private company would be better adapted to providing higher value.

**6. Some would argue that the solution to Calgary's economic woes is to cut our way to prosperity. Do you agree with this philosophy? Why or why not?**

I think my previous answer is well reflected here. While we as a city need to focus on value added services and projects, I don't think austerity produces positive economic outcomes. This has been shown time and time again. The negative impact on mental health as well as the economy and jobs tends to snowball into systemic problems. It also translates into a lack of positivity and can make the city unattractive to investors. If the people living in Calgary don't want to invest in Calgary, people outside of Calgary will not.

**7. Urban sprawl has been shown to increase costs for building and maintaining public infrastructure as well as creating more disconnected and exclusionary neighborhoods.**

**A. What solutions would you present to combat urban sprawl?**

I disagree with the concept that Urban Sprawl can be viewed as a silo issue, and that it starts on the outskirts of the city and moves inward. In Ward 2, we have higher density development than communities that border the downtown

core. I can walk in Sage Hill, and there are 4 story apartment buildings that overlook farmer's fields. I can also walk along Memorial Drive and see single family homes.

The reason we cannot look at greenfield developments as the problem, is because they also create sustainable market affordability which other major cities in Canada are really struggling with. I think Calgary having affordable housing is a huge value proposition to attract young families, talent, and business investment.

That being said, I think the initial land servicing and community buildings (like firehalls, community centres, etc..) costs need to be the burden of the final home purchaser and not the city tax payer. If new house prices go up \$20k or \$30k as a result, I think our housing market can absorb that quite easily. This will free up more tax dollars for services and operating costs of the city.

I also think we need to make our outer communities more independent of the downtown. This comes from flexibility in zoning, more commercial office space, and generally a diversity of amenities that currently doesn't exist. One of the issues is a lack of community spaces built in Ward 2.

I am also very hesitant to push more and more sprawl without building the community infrastructure to support it. This involves working with multiple levels of government to make sure we have transportation, schools, parks, recreation facilities, and community gathering places.

We also need to focus on how to incentivise inner city communities to densify. This is incredibly difficult to do without creating artificial land scarcity to drive up land values. When land values get too high, this is difficult on young people and new families trying to establish themselves in the community. I look forward to working with the city to develop innovative ways to build higher density. I think we really need to focus on not going so big. Instead of an apartment complex for half a block, perhaps we support 4-plexes and 8-plexes on smaller parcels in the inner city.

There are complexities to housing, and one solution can cause a problem where there was not one before. I support flexibility and small moves in a more balanced direction.

## **B. Do you support the policies laid out in the Guidebook for Guidebook for Local Area Planning?**

Fundamentally, the Guidebook has little impact on Ward 2 as the majority of the policies are already implemented in our community plans. The guidebook really tries to tackle how to rebuild inner-city communities in a positive and sustainable way. I like how the guidebook focuses on more mixed use and flexible zoning.

I think the issues with guidebook were not about what it says, the ideas in it were very practical. The issue was in miscommunication around what it was and what power it had. Unfortunately, it felt blown out of proportion and used as a political tool. I hope as councillor I will bring a sober non-partisan voice to issues when their message strays from their purpose.

## **8. Many Calgary businesses and residents in the downtown core are struggling. How important is a downtown revitalization plan to you? What solutions would you present to get the downtown core thriving again?**

I think we need to look at Calgarians and what they want in a downtown core. I fear that we are taking the same approach as we did with approvals of commercial space and we are going to continue to overbuild an area without attracting people. I support the initiatives in the \$200M downtown strategy, primarily because we are leveraging our city tax dollars to get federal and provincial funding. I am cautious that the outcome might not be what is desired. We should review in a few years what the impact is of this expenditure before we invest further. If attracting people to downtown is the goal, then we need to build it for the types of people who want to live in such an urban environment. At which point we are competing with Toronto and Vancouver. Which leads me back to Calgary's image and how much influence the City has vs other governments in marketing that image.

Also we are transitioning to more work from home, and less commuting which will continue to hurt downtown. I think we need to be very cognisant of the importance of adequate transit to a thriving downtown.

Fundamentally, I think the City needs to get creative, but in an entrepreneurial and organic way. We need to open up our rule book and start crossing out barriers so that Calgarians can really drive Calgary's downtown revitalization. I think as we create the environment and allow people and businesses to colour outside the lines, the downtown problem will be resolved.

**9. Calgary's new arena is already over budget before construction has already begun and CMLC has continuously been excluded from critical negotiations. What are your views on the arena deal and are you in favour of moving forward with the project?**

I have never been supportive of an arena deal without government partners to help cover overruns. The arena serves more than just Calgary, it serves all of southern Alberta and some of South Eastern BC. I'm also concerned about the lack of foresight into the impact of Calgary's identity. What will Calgary be without the Saddledome?

I'm not sure that City council after the 2021 election will be in a position to change the deal without costing the city taxpayers. Which will leave us in a position of stewardship of an ongoing project instead of initiating a project from the beginning.

**10. How do you plan to advance actions in the City of Calgary's White Goose Flying Report: Calls to Action report?**

This will require all of us to put our own wants and needs aside and open up to listening and learning about Indigenous history, the current challenges Aboriginals face in Calgary, and how local Indigenous see a shared future in Calgary.

This will start with education as directed by the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee. I support mandatory learning for city employees and contractors. As well as promoting learning opportunities and spaces in Calgary's public libraries. We should embrace local indigenous art and develop public spaces with this in mind. We need to work with local tribes to build healing spaces to provide supports to the indigenous community in Calgary.

I personally will sit down with local elders and advocates to hear what they feel is the best path forward. I will work with them to foster a better future for Indigenous people in Calgary. There is so much pain and trauma that we must start with listening. We are working to rebuild trust that has been dismantled over generations. I want to make sure that indigenous people see Calgary as a safe place, a city where they are welcome, a city where they feel valued.

**11. The provincial government continues to make cuts that affect the lives of Calgarians for the worse. How would you approach standing up to the province and advocating for the needs of Calgarians?**

We find ourselves working in a polarized political environment. A method that has been working well has been to find strong partnerships between the federal government and civic, as well as civic and private enterprises and non-profits. By working with other stakeholders in a collaborative and positive manner, the provincial government also wants to be part of the goodwill those actions generate, and they join in once the positivity of the endeavor has been established.

I always strive to find the common ground on issues, there we have a strong starting point to build from. As we get more positive outcomes, then it becomes easier to move away from entrenched ideologies. My focus is to bring a nonpartisan voice to the table to mediate conflicts that arise when we hold so strongly in our beliefs that we impede progress.

**12. Is there anything else you'd like us to know?**

13. Are there any websites or social media accounts that you would like to direct Calgary's Future supporters to?

[www.jenniferwyness.com](http://www.jenniferwyness.com)

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