



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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

My name is Abed Harb. I grew up in Ward 10, and I've lived almost my entire life in Northeast Calgary. I'm a community activist, volunteer, and political organizer. I was a senior business development analyst at a major pipeline company and a senior advisor to the Minister of Agriculture. As a result of my experience, I have a thorough understanding of the municipal issues that affect Ward 10. My desire to run for councilor is rooted in my deep and long-standing connection to the area and the people who reside in it.

My platform is a compilation of my community engagement and activism in Northeast Calgary. I have seen firsthand the obstacles and challenges that Ward 10 residents face and have repeatedly seen our community overlooked at City Hall. I know that this Ward has not received its fair share of investments. As a councilor, I will ensure that these issues are addressed and that Ward 10 is able to get the attention it deserves.

2. Why should Calgarians vote for you?

For 10 years Calgary has been ranked in the top five for most livable cities in the world by the Economist, and in 2019 Calgary was ranked 1st in North America. We are blessed to live in such an amazing city, but we are at an important crossroad, and if we don't attract more businesses to Calgary our economy will continue to struggle.

Having worked in the Oil and Gas sector, I understand that it remains Calgary's most important industry. I know how important oil and gas is to our economy, and pipelines remain the safest, most environmentally friendly way to transport oil. However, we cannot continue to be overly reliant on just one sector. City council needs to make sure that it creates the environment that will attract diverse industries in order to secure an economically viable future. We also need to support more rapid retraining programs to ensure that Calgary's strong talent pool can continue to succeed.

I am committed to attracting the economies of the future that will help ensure that Calgary's best years are still ahead of us. And for Ward 10 residents, I am committed to doing everything that I can to ensure that Ward 10 receives the attention to become fully a part of Calgary's bright future.

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 support the Green Line Project. There are four transit stations in Ward 10, and I recognize the critical importance of more public transit options for commuters. The Green Line is long overdue. We need to make public transit in Calgary more affordable, more accessible, and more reliable.

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?

The most important issue that will help Calgary thrive is diversifying our economy. We are blessed to live in such an amazing city, but if we do not attract new businesses to Calgary we will continue to struggle. I am confident that Calgary's best years are still ahead of us. We have the stability, healthcare, culture, environment, education and infrastructure that can ensure Calgary maintains its position as one of the best cities to live in.

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

I intend to push for full implementation of the recommendations in Calgary Economic Development's Report entitled "Calgary In The New Economy." Diversifying Calgary's economy is key to our resiliency. We can no longer live, and die, by the boom & bust cycle of the energy sector. Even the local businesses in Ward 10 feel the pinch when the energy sector takes a hit. By diversifying Calgary's economy, we can ensure that Calgary continues to grow and is never susceptible to shocks in one sector. A more diversified economy will help keep young Calgarians from leaving our great city.

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?

I am a strong believer that a healthy public sector can bring great value to a growing city. Effective and sustainable public services are key to ensuring Calgary's future. The public sector provides the services that allow Calgarians to work, play and live in one of the best cities in the world.

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

I am a firm believer in the public sector, and I do not believe in a "race to the bottom" when it comes to the provision of public services. For future projects, we should consider options for investments that the government alone cannot access. The Canada Infrastructure Bank, for example, has enormous sums specifically set aside for public-private partnerships. Some of these projects have the potential to be transformative for Calgary's future, creating jobs without further burdening our public finances. I will not support sacrificing long-term prosperity for short-term benefits.

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?

For the reasons stated above, no, I do not. Ward 10 has already been neglected for far too long, and requires serious reinvestment in basic public infrastructure. Taxpayers from Ward 10 have contributed with our tax dollars to the growth of Calgary, but now we are at a critical point in our infrastructure life cycle, where not investing in Ward 10 risks having the established neighbourhoods of the area become degraded. Reckless cutting of basic city services is not the path to long-term prosperity.

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?

Calgary is already one of the largest cities by area in North America. Again, much of the infrastructure in Ward 10 is in critical need of revitalization. Whether planned or not, density has already come to this part of the City. We need to focus on reinvesting in the established communities that make up Ward 10 to ensure we receive the investments we deserve.

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

Each project has specifics that need to be consulted on with stakeholders, community members, and neighbours, to ensure that we are doing what the residents of the community want. I am committed to ensuring that this consultation takes place, and I welcome many of the tools recommended by the Guidebook for Local Area Planning to accomplish this.

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?

What is good for downtown Calgary is good for Ward 10. But, at the same time, the residents of Ward 10 have struggled to receive their fair share of investment. While supporting investments in other Wards, I stand committed to making sure Ward 10 gets the investments it deserves.

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 am not a fan of giving millions to billionaires. Every tax dollar is a public trust and we must ensure that every dollar is spent in a way that optimally allocates our limited resources. We must ensure that the city pursues major infrastructure and improvement projects like this in a reasonable, equitable, and transparent way, while engaging with the public to ensure that their interests are taken into consideration.

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

I am a strong believer in Indigenous reconciliation, and as a Councillor will do everything that I can to further such efforts.

I stand in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters who have suffered, and are still suffering, from the trauma of residential schools and countless other injustices.

Governments must acknowledge the historical and ongoing wrongs that affect the First Nations in Canada. Although we will never be able to right the wrongs of the past, reconciliation is a process that must be sincere and meaningful. Calgary's White Goose Flying Report has great recommendations that I am committed to seeing through.

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?

Building relations is key, and toxic relationships with other levels of governments will not help Calgary succeed. In my professional career, building positive and constructive relationships was key to accomplishing goals that would otherwise have been impossible. I plan to work with the provincial and federal governments, while pushing back and offering productive criticism where needed to ensure that the residents of Calgary and Ward 10 are treated fairly.

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

I've built a grassroots campaign based on the lived realities of the constituents who call Ward 10 home. We have amazing people who are proud to live in Ward 10, and we need a councillor who is going to fight for us. I have seen firsthand the obstacles and challenges that Ward 10 residents face and have repeatedly seen our community overlooked at City Hall. As a councillor, I will ensure that these issues are addressed, and that Ward 10 is able to flourish.

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

<https://www.voteharb.ca/>

<https://twitter.com/AbedHarb>

<https://www.facebook.com/AbedHarbYYC/>

