



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

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

My family and I live in the Ward 4 community of Winston Heights–Mountview, where I am the former president of the community association and currently serve on the finance and development review committees. My day job is as the Manager of Community Engagement at the University of Calgary and I have previously worked for United Way of Calgary and Area, the City of Calgary and a number of non-profit arts organizations. I am an active volunteer. I currently serve as chair of the PechaKucha Night Calgary speaker series and am the former chair of Nuit Blanche Calgary, the Calgary Professional Arts Alliance and the Betty Mitchell Awards. With Calgary Economic Development, I previously sat on the Quebec City Sister City Committee and the Houston Bi-Lateral Agreement Committee.

Through these, and other projects, I have been blessed to meet many Calgarians who have their community's best interests in their heart. As a result, as the calendar flipped over to 2021 and people began looking forward to the New Year, I had a lot of neighbours and friends reaching out to me as they realized there was going to be an election in October, that our neighbourhood would be moving to Ward 4, and that meant Sean Chu was likely to become our councillor. They were concerned and were soliciting my knowledge about who would be running against him. As I called around it became clear that because there are so many open seats this time around there was no experienced candidate stepping forward to take on the Ward 4 incumbent. That's when the calls turned to, "well, then you have to run."

I love my larger community, and I believe I have the skills required to be a successful councillor, so while I may have been the last one in my circle to come on board with the idea, I was finally convinced that putting my name on the ballot was the right thing to do to ensure the neighbourhoods of Ward 4 have an effective councillor moving forward.

2. Why should Calgarians vote for you?

Whether it be because of the pandemic or the downturn in Calgary's traditional economic drivers of oil and gas, which we can't afford to bank on them bouncing back the way we wish they would, Calgary is in a tough spot right now. The prevalence of social issues such as poverty, poor mental health and addictions have increased correspondingly. Providing opportunities for meaningful and stable employment is key to reducing them. As a result, I believe this places extra urgency on diversifying our economy. Council must ensure that the ground is fertile for entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized businesses. We need to set the table so existing businesses choose Calgary. This means a lot more than simply having the competitive tax regime some candidates pitch – it means quality and affordable housing, services, arts, culture, recreation, green space, transit, and inclusive neighbourhoods. We need people to WANT to live here.

I don't want to sugarcoat this – this will not be easy. The only way Calgary will bounce back is if our council is made up of innovative individuals, who bring new ideas for how to accomplish these objectives, and who are able to work together – with each other, with experts and with the community. Unfortunately "innovative" and "collaborative" are not words I've heard anyone use to describe Sean Chu.

I believe these are skills that I bring to the table as a certified project manager and a trained facilitator. For example, my current role as Manager of Community Engagement at the University of Calgary is all about partnership development between the university and other community stakeholders such as Calgary Economic Development, Calgary Stam-

pede, Calgary Pride, United Way of Calgary and Area, etc. As a citizen I worked with City Council to initiate the City of Calgary's Open Data Catalogue, making City data available to the public, and the Calgary Poet Laureate, a program funded at no cost to taxpayers. As a result of my community work I have received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, was named to Avenue Magazine's Top 40 Under 40, and projects I've led have received United Way of Calgary and Area's President's Award, International Association of Facilitators Platinum Impact Award, and earned the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Organization of the Year. I am willing to put these skills to use for the people of Ward 4 and Calgary because this is my family's home.

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?

First of all, the Green Line has been studied, re-studied, and finally approved. We have funding from other levels of government to support the plan. It is likely the most important infrastructure project in the city since the original Red Line. It is time to get started with building it.

The Green Line runs right through the heart of several Ward 4 communities and will be a vital mode of transportation for our neighbours to have their workplace and businesses they would like to frequent be more accessible. Why has Sean Chu not been a more vocal supporter like the councillors in the southeast? He regularly appears uninformed about the Green Line, and this is not something we can accept from our representative.

The jobs and support work for those jobs will be welcome today, and the neighbourhoods that gain new access with the Green Line will see many benefits in the future. In Highland Park, for example, the Green Line means investment in a deteriorating corridor. This isn't just about getting people into downtown, it is about moving people around neighbourhoods and connecting businesses and communities along the line. Not everyone loves the idea, and that's fine, but a decision has been made and it is time to move on and get the Green Line built.

That doesn't mean, however, that we don't watch the price tag and any problems or cost overruns like a hawk. We need to be prepared to make adjustments. We must also be diligent to make sure that Stage 1 crosses the river to 16 Avenue N because there is a very real risk it doesn't without effective advocacy from council members in the north, such as Ward 4.

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 currently work at the University of Calgary so I am surrounded by young adults all day long. I get to witness the highs and the lows of individual students and recent graduates as well as a group of tens of thousands firsthand. In speaking with young adults who are considering moving away from Calgary the reason they most often share is that they don't feel the values of the place align with their values and that there are limited opportunities for them in Calgary as a result.

The important thing to note here is that their decisions are not necessarily being motivated by reality, they are being driven primarily by perceptions and feelings. This is something that City Council absolutely can take part of the blame for. Every time a politician gets into an ideological fight the young people take note. Every time a councillor disparages the things they believe makes a city a great place to live - like public art or an active transportation network - they notice, and they start looking at other locations. Unfortunately, Sean Chu has been at the heart of far too much of this rhetoric and he is negatively affecting the future of Calgary as a result.

Many young adults want to be here because of Calgary's natural beauty and closeness to family, but we compete for their talent globally now, and we can no longer afford to assume the actions of politicians don't have a real economic impact. More elected officials need to realize the "Alberta Advantage" was never just about being a low tax environment - it was also about having plenty of good-paying, challenging jobs in an innovative field, and those in a place people wanted to build their lives. The focus lately has been on the former while nearly completely ignoring the latter. As a result, there are many places in the world that are now more attractive to our young people and they are willing to leave home to experience what Calgary used to be one of the best in the world at. This adds an extra layer of urgency to diversifying Calgary's economy.

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

First and foremost we need to listen to what they are telling us every single day. We need to compete with the other cities they are considering moving to. This means investing in the things they want. Frequently good quality transit and walkable, diverse communities are at the top of their list. They don't want to have to own a car - especially early in their career when money is expected to be tighter - and they want affordable places to live. Unfortunately, in Calgary, both of these things are affected by a transportation network that is not as connected to the affordable places to live as it could be. Students also value arts, culture, recreation and the outdoors much more than council has. They want to live in a vibrant community with world-class amenities. (Coincidentally enough this is what people in other cities who are contemplating relocating are looking for too, so investing in these areas also attracts outside talent as well.)

There are opportunities that we can take advantage of as well, such as partnering with post-secondary institutions to provide more unique experiential learning opportunities. Not only do ideas like this lead to making Calgary a more attractive place to start your career, but it also helps diversify Calgary's economy.

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?

They are vital. This is a bit of an odd question to me because I believe that if a city is anything it is public services. We all chose to live in a place because we believe it will meet our needs. Municipal governments exist to meet those needs, to serve the public interest. That interest is served through ensuring safe, accessible and affordable public services - that is the entirety of a city's role.

Municipal governments are able to ensure equity and inclusiveness in their programs that private organizations simply aren't able to prioritize. Private corporations must turn a monetary profit. Public organizations are able to accept a social benefit as return on their investment

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

In my experience, I can't really think of examples where the privatization of public services ends with a better public experience, let alone that there is actually less expensive service delivery in the long run. Public dollars should have public benefit; full stop. As a result, I will view any P3 proposal as very suspect from the start and I will have a high bar for any proponent to clear.

That being said, being innovative and taking advantage of emerging technologies created by other organizations is something that Calgarians may benefit from. More opportunities to partner with non-governmental organizations, post-secondary institutions and corporations with aligned values should be explored to see if there are chances to increase public value beyond simply cost savings.

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?

Absolutely not. While I agree that we should be looking to deliver services as efficiently as possible, most discussions about the city's finances start in the wrong place. Cutting services or raising taxes aren't where you start. During the budgetary process, goals and cash flow are identified first, and only then can you address the services that need to be delivered to achieve those goals and within that budget. This will go a long way to forcing focus on our stated goals and increase our agility to respond to a changing landscape – two things council don't have a great track record with.

The City has made some cuts and implemented several savings initiatives over the past few years, and to make further progress isn't a simple matter of turning over the couch cushions. We need councillors who actually care about the details and can provide strategic direction and leadership on the impacts that savings and spending have on service levels. City administration prepares a lot of performance measures, but I don't hear councillors like Sean Chu referencing these metrics in their rhetoric. Are we reaching our stated goals? If so, are there ways to save money? If not, what do we need to do differently?

That means clear and agreed-on measures for success that councillors are accountable for. It means trying something different when we fall short. This is not complicated but our current Council certainly has made it so due to outdated methods and being unclear about what Calgarians expect from our city.

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?

The City of Calgary needs to focus on retrofitting the amenities that we currently have. This is far and away the most efficient use of our tax dollars and the best way to ensure Calgary is a connected community. It is far less expensive to service these existing neighbourhoods than it is to service ones that are farther afield. It is also the type of spending that will most benefit Ward 4.

When we must build new - whether brownfield or greenfield - the priority should be on building mixed-use, complete communities, where affordable and diverse housing choices are closer to places of employment and places of employment are closer to schools and daycares. Community centres should be designed into communities and the whole neighbourhood needs to be connected with multi-modal transportation choices. Especially with brownfield development in existing communities, this means we need to be planful and open to new land-uses that are aligned with the needs and desires of current and future residents. Being purposeful like this will ensure a more equitable and livable city for everyone.

This priority becomes even more important when we examine where young people want to live and the threat posed by climate change.

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

The personal opinion of any individual member of council on this topic should matter far less. The opinions that matter most to me are those of the Calgarians who participated in the development of the Guidebook and the expertise of professionals in the urban planning field.

But, personally, yes, I fully agree with the Guidebook's goals. It represents policies that the successful Winston Heights-Mountview Area Redevelopment Plan was built on. I sit on this community's Planning and Development Review Committee and the result of work put into our ARP can be seen in the diversity that exists within the neighbourhood - everything from million-dollar homes, modern duplexes, low-rise apartments, original 1950s bungalows, century homes, co-housing, townhouses, and until recently a mobile home park. (I'll bite my tongue here on how poorly I believe The City handled the Midfield Park file, contrary to the community's desires as sketched above.)

There are items that I believe are missing from the Guidebook, such as design principles to ensure diversity of the streetscape, but on the whole, this is better than the piecemeal, inefficient approach The City has taken up until this point.

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?

As I mentioned in an earlier question, economic diversity has to be the number one priority of Calgary because many of our biggest issues - poverty, mental health and the opioid crisis - are connected to our recent decline in ability to provide stable, good-paying employment opportunities. For too long we have relied on one industry to do the heavy lifting in Calgary and we know those jobs will not be returning after the pandemic in the way we wish they would.

Downtown Calgary is geographically and figuratively central to our ability to diversify our economy. As we welcome new business models to our community we must be able to accommodate new industries. The recently approved Downton Strategy is an excellent starting point because it recognizes this reality.

The attention on revitalizing our downtown also provides an opportunity to purposefully design spaces that are welcoming to more community members to live, work and play. We can address why some people do not feel safe downtown and build a place that welcomes Calgarians of all backgrounds and abilities. (I especially like the recently raised idea of building a new Public Market which I envision as a welcoming, inclusive space similar to what the new Central Library has been.)

I also should note that the attention on downtown should not be to the exclusion of expanding other employment nodes across the city. Many of our planning challenges can be improved by taking similar steps on a smaller scale in other parts of Calgary.

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?

While the current event centre/arena agreement may not have been the one I would have wanted I will begrudgingly honour it. A deal is a deal. I believe the plan has benefits for Calgary but whether they equal the funding commitment I'll leave for others to debate because it is too late now.

My default position moving forward is no more public dollars should be provided to this project. If any additional funding requests come to council I will weigh them against the very high bar of additional public benefit/access.

Part of the reason I was not completely outraged at the original deal is that CMLC was meant to be the project manager. Their track record in the East Village made me more comfortable that the public funding would be stewarded well. Now that they are no longer involved I am very worried that the resulting plan will be an excellent hockey arena with very little additional public benefit. The recently released designs have not inspired me to believe this will not be the case. The event centre represented a massive opportunity that the current council missed and that should be something all Calgarians remember come October 18.

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

The White Goose Flying Report is one of the best City of Calgary documents I have read. CAUAC did a wonderful job in creating it. It is filled with historical significance and rationale for its recommendations, which are delivered in a clear, executable way. The next step is to ensure this isn't just another document the City leaves on a shelf. As councillor I will

be a champion for ensuring the work is completed. I will be looking at every file Administration brings forward to show how it is furthering the Calls to Action in this report and I will be looking for regular updates on The City's progress on completing the Calls to Action. This is vitally important work that can not be ignored or forgotten.

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?

I have a reputation for being able to work with almost anyone. My current role as Manager of Community Engagement is all about partnership development between the university and other community stakeholders such as Calgary Economic Development, Calgary Stampede, Calgary Pride, United Way of Calgary and Area, etc. Collaboration is key in negotiating activities that our organizations can undertake together. This skillset is vital to being able to build bridges between various partners who have a stake in The City. Unfortunately, despite its cruciality, I have not seen much evidence of an ability to do this from the Ward 4 incumbent.

The approach I typically take is to find common ground between the parties and focus efforts on those aligned objectives. City Council is currently working from a deficit on this front because they have not done the work of establishing a common vision, complete with objectives and priorities. As a result, it becomes hard to find common ground with other partners when you don't have agreement on even what you want. It may not be an exciting election topic, but I believe that establishing a document of this type, that the typical business planning and budgeting process would be built upon, could solve many council and City of Calgary issues. It would also allow for more focused discussions in advocating for the needs of Calgarians and an ability to align our limited tax dollars to achieve the greatest impact. It is tragic the current council has not been able to prioritize this, and as a result, we get the disorder we have sadly come to expect from Alberta politicians.

I have no problem standing up to people, but I will always do it respectfully.

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

Sean Chu is a known quantity, for and against. Well established in the UCP and CPC parties, his campaign has a fundraising and data advantage to go with the name ID advantage in incumbency. However, despite spending more per vote than any other candidate in 2017, he still has never received 50% of Ward 4 votes. There is a significant anti-Chu vote available, and I believe our campaign has the network and the resources to beat him. I hope Calgarians agree and choose change by joining our campaign.

I also want to thank you for the great work that you are doing through Calgary's Future. Having been involved in voter education initiatives in the last three municipal elections I know how much work it is but I also know how much of an impact you can have. Kudos to each one of your volunteers for stepping up and playing your part in making this election one with the issues you value front and centre.

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

Web: djkelly.ca

Twitter: @djkelly

Facebook: /djkellyYYC

Instagram: @djkellyYYC