

Barb
HIGGINS
FOR MAYOR

BarbHiggins.ca

A professional portrait of Barb Higgins, a woman with short brown hair and a friendly smile. She is wearing a dark grey blazer over a blue button-down shirt. The background is a blurred cityscape with tall buildings under a bright sky.

POLICY BOOK

BARB HIGGINS FOR MAYOR

As Mayor, I will be the positive agent of change we need at City Hall; I understand our community, because I come from our community. I have spent 21 years working with over 150 groups from every corner of this city. I have met and worked with thousands of Calgarians and I have learned and told their stories. I will lead us on a new road; a positive road forward.

We need to get seven broad things right to build and operate a great city, and then address the specific issues under those seven priorities.

Barb Higgins,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barb Higgins', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Fiscal Responsibility

Using our tax dollars wisely is the most important job of City Council. As Mayor, City Hall will be responsible, accountable, and transparent with how it spends Calgarians' tax dollars.

We need a top to bottom review of how we plan, budget, spend and measure our financial affairs, including a review of the \$951 million we have in Reserve Funds;

Audit

- There is currently an external review of the City's audit processes underway; we need to act swiftly on the recommendations when that review is complete;
- As mayor, I will propose a change to the composition of the Audit Committee. As opposed to 5 Aldermen and 2 citizen members, we need to reverse it, and have 5 citizens with financial backgrounds, and 2 Aldermen;
- I will also propose that the chair of the Audit Committee be a qualified member of the public and not a council member.

Taxes

- Regarding property taxes, I will work with Council and administration through the budget process and as mayor, my goal will be to do everything I can to return to the mantra of our past: to not raise taxes any higher than inflation.
- I would like to see business taxes reduced. I would not go so far as to eliminate business taxes because that would mean a drop in revenues to the City of \$150

million, and I do not think the City has the capacity to do that at this time. I would add, however, that I have had good discussions with the Chamber of Commerce and as mayor would seek to develop an ongoing dialogue between the Mayor's Office, City Council and small and medium-sized businesses to make the right decisions about business tax rates.

Deficit

- To deal with our pending \$60 million deficit, I propose four key steps:
 - i. Move up the budget schedule by a month to immediately deal with our \$60 million shortfall;
 - ii. Change bonus and incentive plans for senior management to reward intelligent spending reductions that preserve services;
 - iii. Implement a staffing freeze through to the end of the year which means implementing a hiring freeze, and no layoffs and;
 - iv. Working with the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy and Jack Mintz to organize a Mayor's Round Table on the City Budget, where business, labour, and other key civic stakeholders can discuss our budget and budget planning process.

PUBLIC SAFETY



Public Safety

Our police and fire services represent a special category of public service: The Protective Services. They must be given the resources they need to do their job. Public safety is not negotiable.

I stand alone as the only one who has said that these two Protective Services should be treated differently, and given special consideration – not a blank cheque. They will not be used as “political footballs” at budget time.

I support the review that is currently under way of the Public Service Communications Center – the 911 service – to ensure that staff training and morale issues are addressed promptly;

I strongly support an increase in diversity hiring in the Calgary Police Service so that it is more representative of the City’s diversity.

I also support crime prevention initiatives through involving our Police Services personnel as community liaisons and educators.



AN EFFICIENT CITY HALL

An Efficient City Hall

As Mayor, I would streamline processes to make City Hall an easier place to get things done for both business and personal affairs.

- I have announced the establishment of a 3-person panel with expertise in governance to review City Council's meeting procedures at both the Council level and committee level to make better use of everyone's time – both the public and the city staff – and stop the 16 hour meetings;
- I will also introduce new technology to assist in tracking Council's progress throughout the day so people can schedule their time;
- I will establish an online voting record;
- I believe Enmax should remain in the hands of Calgarians. That said; it is time to re-visit Enmax's overall mandate. I will ensure that their activities in generating and transmitting electricity and other business ventures remain in the best interests of Calgarians, and that Calgarians are receiving a proper return on investment;
- I will lead Council and administration to develop policies that further ensure transparency and accountability within City Council. The Peace Bridge is an example of what started as a sound public policy to increase pedestrian and cycling access to the downtown core, resulted in a breakdown of both accountability and transparency;
- On the matter of residential snow removal, Calgary simply does not receive enough snow over the course of the winter for a permanent residential snow removal program. We should have emergency, private sector, contracted, residential snow removal when there are 'extraordinary snow events';
- I will establish a Calgary Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Council composed of community leaders to address the issues of our ever-diversifying community;



TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation and Infrastructure

After a decade of phenomenal growth, I will lead a review of our transportation planning priorities to ensure that our future plans reflect a City growing at a slower pace and to use our dollars in those parts of the City that still need infrastructure.

I also propose the following improvements in the key areas of transit, commuter traffic and cycling:

Transit

- Eliminate the \$3 parking fee at LRT park and ride locations;
- Open up discussions with post-secondary institutions to expand the discounted student UPASS to all post-secondary students (including apprentice students at SAIT and Bow Valley College) and ensure it is available to students throughout the school year;
- Expand the BRT bus system;
- Investigate ways to incorporate smaller buses to get industrial workers to late-night jobs in industrial districts.



Commuter Traffic

- Implement more High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes to promote carpooling in and out of the core during rush hour;
- Promote a monthly downtown street-parking pass;
- Work to renew negotiations with the T'suu Tina Nation and the Provincial Government regarding the route of the southwest ring road through T'suu Tina lands. A route through the Weaselhead environmental area and/or turning 37 Street SW into a freeway is NOT the answer.

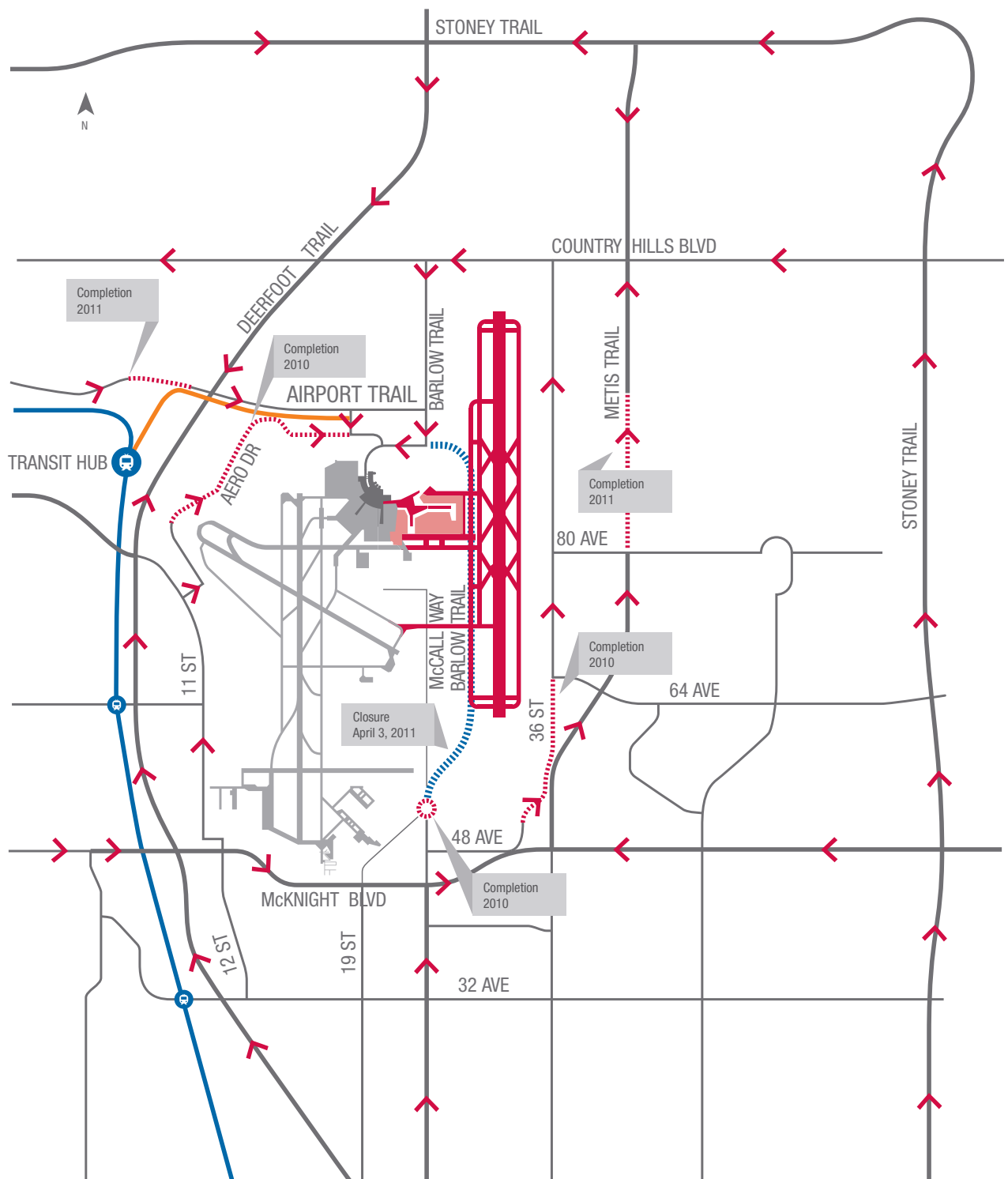
Cyclists

- Increase the number of bicycle racks on Calgary buses;
- Add more cyclist lanes in the city;
- Investigate seasonal bicycle highways for cyclist commuters.

Airport Tunnel

As Mayor, I would support the tunnel as it was originally proposed with a three way funding arrangement between the City, the Province and the Federal Government. The City cannot afford to go it alone at this time.

If a three-way funding agreement among governments is not possible, I will pursue the possibility of a public-private-partnership (P3) where the City would share the cost with the private sector.





PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Planning and Development

I fully support the activities of the real estate and development industry in building a great city.

I have announced key themes that will be the hallmark of my policy approach in this regard:

- There is a need to streamline the industry approval process for development applications and projects. A key commitment is to dismantle the 'Corporate Planning Application Group'; an internal committee meant to better coordinate planning applications that has actually slowed things down. Time is money – a complex and time-consuming process will inevitably result in increased cost to consumers, which is not acceptable;
- I will work with businesses and developers to create smart, sustainable growth and communities as described in the "Plan-It" report;
- We also need to be more collaborative with our rural municipal neighbours; as Mayor, I will immediately sit down with the Reeves of Rockyview and Foothills to discuss how to revive the Calgary Regional Partnership in a way that works for the City, our rural neighbours, and the real estate and development industry;
- We need to carefully expand the opportunity for people to have secondary suites.



Health and Lifestyle:

A city of a million people needs room to breathe – and that is represented by our parks, pathways and recreational facilities.

In 2011, the first wave of baby boomers will become senior citizens. We must be prepared. After a conversation with a group of seniors at the Kerby Centre, I commit to establish the Mayor’s Seniors Advisory Council and I commit to being an active member on that Council.

I will always support the financial resources necessary to protect, enhance and grow our green spaces, and our recreational infrastructure.

It is also important to provide citizens with the opportunity to be active as part of their working day. That is why my transportation platform includes looking into ways to make commuting easier for cyclists. We must do this for those who choose to walk.

A city of a million people must also be environmentally responsible.

- I support the extension of the blue box recycling program to our apartments and condominiums;
- I also support bringing back organic recycling to our curb side program.



ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORTS



Arts, Culture and Sports:

I have expressed my strong support for our arts, culture and amateur sports that show the world that Calgary is a creative, vibrant community.

- I strongly support the Calgary Arts Development Authority which currently has a budget of \$3.75 million and distributes it to over 140 arts groups and cultural organizations.
- I commit to protect the stability of that funding;
- I will expand CADA's mandate to allow for a 'micro loan' program based on excellence to both attract specific events to come to Calgary, and to promote Calgarians' talent abroad;
- Calgary is an expensive place to live for our emerging artists. I want to investigate the provision of arts 'incubator space' in certain vacant City properties in our inventory, and make the incubator space program revenue-neutral by seeking private sector support for its operating budget;
- There is currently \$165 million in funding for arts and culture from the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI). While \$109 million remains unallocated, I commit to ensuring those funds are not diverted away from arts and culture to fund other areas;
- The City has set aside \$40 million for the construction of a new Central Library. I will make it a priority to engage the private sector and both the Provincial and Federal Governments to commit to their share of funding so we can start construction of a fabulous new facility of community learning;

- Almost all of our amateur sports and recreational facilities are at or over capacity. I am committed to working with our amateur sports community to expand these facilities, in particular for minor hockey and minor soccer.





CONCLUSION

This is where I stand.

These policies, both the broad seven categories I have identified, and the individual issues that you have told me are of importance to you, represent my agenda as your Mayor.

Calgary is on the way to becoming one of the world's great cities - an enlightened, cultured, caring, daring, sustainable and affordable city. It is a city where a great quality of life is possible for everyone.

But to get there, we are going to require new fresh thinking; a fresh new approach.

That is what I offer you, and that is the choice you have in this election.

I will achieve these many policy objectives with an optimistic, forward-looking and collaborative style of leadership, and represent you proudly on the national and international stage.

I ask you to join me
on this journey.
Please make your
voice count on
Monday, October 18th.

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Sunday..... Noon - 4:00pm

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