

CANDIDATE  
QUESTIONNAIRE

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

My name is Kourtney Branagan and I'm running for council in the 2021 election for Ward 11 (October 18, 2021). I have lived, gone to school, and worked in the ward for the past 25 years. I've been an active volunteer, business owner, and have been a team-member of multiple community-driven organizations. I currently live in Garrison Green with my partner and our children, who are going into grades 3, 6, and 11 in the public school system.

I am committed to a resilient, inclusive, and thriving city. This means investment into public services like transit, emergency services, and recreation programming. It means supporting vulnerable and marginalized Calgarians through housing and predictable funding for the social service sector. It means valuing the work of public sector employees and finding a way to catalyze change through empowerment.

I'm running to have the bold conversation about rebuilding our city in a sustainable way. We need to address our built form, our climate resilience strategies, and how we gather together in community. I have worked with the city on a number of projects and have been part of organizations who receive funding from the city. I see when the city comes as a willing partner, great things happen – we are innovative, solutions focused, and create meaningful change. I have also experienced banging my head against the wall to get action on issues that we have knowledge about as working (ie crosswalk safety). I think many people feel frustrated at the small instances leading to overall distaste in our operations. I see our opportunities and creative thinkers in our city staff and citizens who need someone to champion their visions, knowledge, and creativity.

**2. Why should Calgarians vote for you?**

I bring experience as a trusted leader. Rooted in values and vision, I want people to vote for me because they respect my openness to conversation, my commitment to action and working with others, and my ability to both be fiercely determined but know when to compromise. I am also focused on data while understanding it only tells one side of the story so we need to ensure we are asking the right questions about the information we are given.

**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?**

With recent announcements of the go-ahead for Stage 1, my priorities are two fold around the Green Line. First is ensuring any stations that are in or adjacent to my ward communities are well integrated into the community through sidewalks, bike paths, and other accessible means of accessing them. We need to ensure that people feel safe and comfortable getting to and from our stations.

Second, I want to see the Green Line extended North and will work with council colleagues and the other orders of government to continue to secure funding for this part of the build to happen.

**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 youth and young adults don't see their values reflected in our current provincial leadership, and to some degree our civic leadership as well. We need to nurture companies in their willingness to hire and train youth.

I believe our youth are also looking to gain experiences elsewhere - I want to make sure Calgary becomes that 'elsewhere' other youth want to experience. And I want to be a place youth return to or stay.

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

I believe that Calgary can show leadership on issues that are important to young Calgarians. Climate action, investment into transit and active mobility networks, and reviewing our housing structures to ensure youth can live across our city with good access to green spaces and amenities. I believe the city can do more work in their youth employment policies and actions, partnering with local companies and youth entrepreneurs, and adding youth voices to committees and working groups.

**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 exist to serve citizens across our city needing a variety of levels of care and involvement from libraries to transit.

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

I cannot think of any at this time.

**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?**

Disagree.

I've yet to see a case study where this has worked. Cuts impact today's budget but we are often left with gaps to make up in the future resulting in increased need for spending.

**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 has started work on the established areas and talking about programs, incentives, and solutions to bring much needed investment back into communities, undeveloped inner city areas, or underdeveloped parcels of land in established neighborhoods. This work needs to continue and become the priority of our spending both from our capital and operating budgets.

I believe we have a more than generous amount of land stock and we should revisit how much reserve land we hold, reducing the number of years of stock in our holdings.

The city also sits on reserve land within established communities which can be looked at for development opportunities. We should be turning this land over sooner (eg old YMCA site on Heritage Drive). I also want to explore levies on underdeveloped lands which leads to decline in neighbourhood vibrancy.

**B. Do you support the policies laid out in the Guidebook for Great Communities?**

As a working group member of the Guidebook, I support the policies laid out.

**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?**

The downtown revitalization plan is a great guiding document. My priority would be for the city to focus their financial investment into the public realm over using funds to incent private businesses. It will always be a balance but I think the city can show leadership in the public realm to help realize the goal of making the core a neighbourhood.

I think we also need to redefine our standard of 'thriving'. We cannot simply measure economic growth and output. We need to look at a wholistic approach of what makes a neighbourhood and city great. We could have the best economy but still have high crime rates or substance use crises. We can have a good economy but poor sense of belonging and community spirit. The city can and should focus on areas of mental health, sense of community, and culture as a part of the vision for a thriving city.

**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 find it tricky to comment on a deal that I haven't fully seen but I am leary of the cost overruns and the exclusion of CMLC. My stance has always been that I need to trust the council colleagues who approved the project but my go-forward approach will be to realize the public facing component to ensure this is not lost from the project and that it provides true public benefits. I don't want to see the outdoor public space behind a real or perceived

pay wall/fencing/gates etc. The integration to the rest of Vic Park is critical in creating a true 'entertainment zone' in which people feel welcome and have ownership over.

My biggest concern is always that we can find capital dollars for large projects but never community projects. And that any economic benefit to the city still doesn't return to communities who have lagging infrastructure upgrade needs.

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

I believe that the answers to advancing the actions are in the report itself and we need to be holding ourselves, administration, and community partners accountable to the calls to action. We need to be working with business units to ensure the calls are part of their decision making. We need to be asking civic partners how they are using the calls to action in their work.

I think the number one way we advance the recommendations is by constantly talking about them, asking about them, and asking for reporting on them.

**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 will have 1.5 years left with the provincial government. With this particular government, I believe we need to talk to them in their language that helps them realize their objectives, sad as this may be.

We need to have bold conversations about how their policy decisions affect who and why people live in our cities, and how policy decisions affect the economic health of Calgary, the major economic driver for Alberta.

We need to talk about having a health care and education system that attracts and retains people. We know when nurses, doctors, and teachers leave, they take their families with them and that could include other economic units in the house. I don't want to minimize people to being economic units but unfortunately that is all this government seems to know. Similarly we need to talk about affordable childcare in this way.

I dislike the idea of reducing people to dollar signs whether it being substance users, recipients of AISH, or unionized workers. Unfortunately, I don't see any other way with this government.

I think Calgary also needs to fly in the face of this government, hard as it may be, and step up to support affected Calgarians. With this will come an honest conversation with Calgarians that we aren't in the business of leaving people behind and that our decisions to fund organizations which support Calgarians will come at the expense of not having a provincial government who does.

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

I am campaigning like I will lead. Bringing people together, sharing information from community groups about their events, volunteering for community events, talking about issues I value, being accessible for conversations, and being open to listening about the concerns Calgarians have.

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

Website: [www.kourtneybranagan.ca](http://www.kourtneybranagan.ca)

Facebook, twitter, instagram  
@kourtbranagan

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqR8Twysy8rDNbFfhfOas0w>