

Tahir Merali responses

Candidate for Calgary City Council Ward 5

1. Will you oppose privatization of municipal services and infrastructure, including Public-Private-Partnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?
 - a. I support P3s that are win-win-wins. I don't support P3s that will take away quality jobs from public sector workers - that is not a win in my books. There needs to be fair, equitable and shared success amongst each party, building in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to define project success on multiple levels. I've worked on several mega-projects and seen how effective collaboration (regionally and internationally) can lead to quality opportunities for each party involved. I commit to understanding more deeply what decisions past Council has already taken to ensure that any future decisions are driven both by data-driven focus and human-factor consideration.
2. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the municipality employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?
 - a. Yes. As a public servant, I understand the value of quality, talented, dedicated employees who want to make a difference in their community, city and country - and who chose to join the Public Sector to do exactly that!
3. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against municipal staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right-to-strike?
 - a. Yes, I will oppose it.
4. How do you propose your municipality deal with funding shortfalls, cuts, and downloading of responsibilities from federal and provincial governments? Do you favour spending cuts over tax increases?
 - a. This past budget has left the upcoming Council with a small surplus. However, there is something to be said for building more solid relationships with other levels of government, to ensure Calgary and municipalities get the right responsibilities through the Municipal Government Act and investment and support required. I would propose to take a cold-eyes look (especially given the large turnover at the Council table with this generational election) on how we can more effectively administer municipal services collaborating with other levels of government.
 - b. I do not support shifting the tax burden to residents. Council has challenging decisions ahead on finding key solutions there-in!
5. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, vaccine "passports", and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your municipality?
 - a. Yes. Public Health is always important. Organizations also have a duty to accommodate requests for special arrangements. Together, we will get past this!
6. Do you support measures to reduce municipal reliance on services fees and fares, such as eliminating transit fares?
 - a. I support moving our City towards positive action and activity on climate change. Calgary knows how to get things done, and we've got incredible talent to find solutions to support emissions reduction, novel technological challenges and the financial acumen to do so. I would encourage that Council revisit low-income passes for transit use to better understand how we can support our most vulnerable. A thriving community needs to be connected and mobile. That starts with reliable, accessible transit. Having lived in many other cities in the world,

especially in Canada, our transit fees are at the same levels, yet their networks and population are much larger.