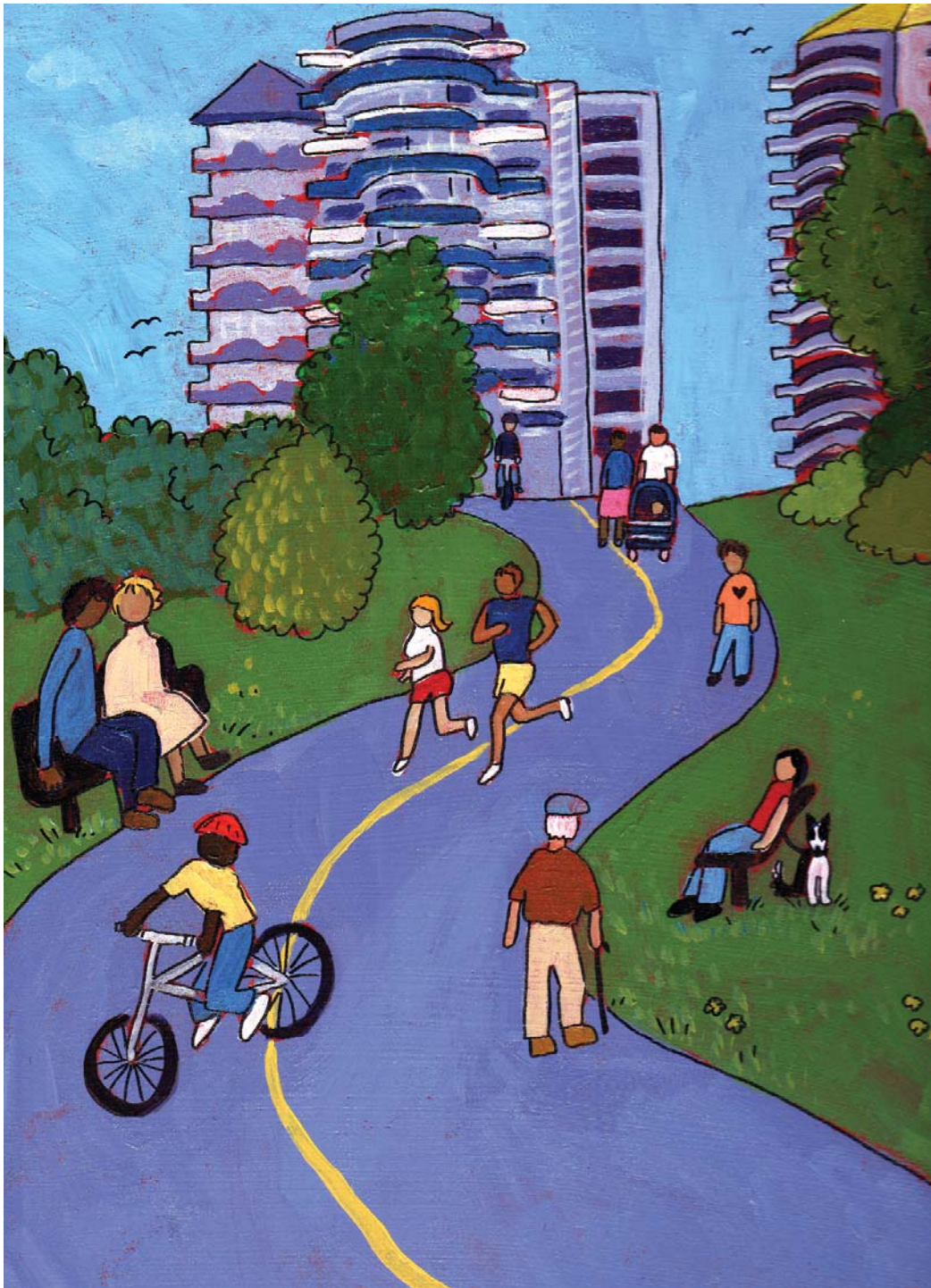


A Citizens' Agenda



For a More Healthy, Caring and Vibrant Calgary

A project of Sustainable Calgary Society

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Another Milestone on the Path to a Sustainable Calgary

Our city is in the midst of an unprecedented period of economic growth. However, it is becoming more evident by the day that economic growth alone does not generate greater opportunity or improved quality of life for our city or for all its citizens. In fact, the opposite has been the experience of many Calgarians.

In September 2005, Sustainable Calgary extended an open invitation to Calgarians to come together to discuss, debate and offer solutions to the most pressing social, ecological and economic issues we face. Over 1,000 Calgarians answered our call. Our starting point was a decade of *State of Our City* sustainability indicator reporting. Together we examined the trends evident in the 36 indicators that make up the *State of Our City* reports. From that analysis, we concluded that two overarching trends need immediate attention. First, in the midst of an economic boom, more and more Calgarians are falling between the cracks - our community is becoming more divided and inequitable. Second, we continue to build our city in a very resource intensive manner. As a result of sprawl - segregated, automobile dependent, low-density development - our city is becoming fiscally, economically and socially unsustainable. In fact, the way we build our city is increasing the difficulties faced by those already marginalized.

In the Citizens' Agenda project we asked ourselves this question: What needs to happen to reverse these disturbing trends? The task we set for ourselves was to identify the priority actions and policies that we need to focus on in the next five years to make our city a more healthy, caring, vibrant and sustainable community.

Between September 2005 and February 2006 we hosted 66 gatherings with a total participation of 1,000 Calgarians. Over 150 policies and actions were generated through that process. In the final analysis, we selected 12 of the most promising policies and actions and committed to research, refine and promote them.

In this report we document each of these priorities. We examine the current situation with respect to each priority and describe where we can find examples of best practices in our own city or in other cities. We discuss why these priorities are important for the long-term health and vitality of our city, and we examine the potential barriers to their successful implementation. Our report also presents the personal reflections of several Calgarians to whom we posed this question: What difference would these policies make to your life and to our city?

When you read this agenda, we hope you will see the potential for the whole of these Priorities to become more than the sum of the parts. Tackled in an integrated fashion, rather than piecemeal, these 12 priorities have the potential to transform the vicious cycle of inequality and sprawl into a virtuous cycle of a healthy, caring, vibrant and sustainable Calgary.

The sustainability indicators reported in the *State of Our City* reports were just a first step of a greater community-building journey. These indicators inform us about how we are doing. The Citizens' Agenda was the next step, moving from indicators to action. The agenda's 12 priority actions and policies are the basis for the next phase. Over the next five years through our *A City Built for Everyone* project, we will convene Calgarians - decision-makers, experts and passionate citizens - in order to make these policy and action priorities a reality. We invite you to be a part of that journey!

Priority Policies and Actions

By 2012:

1. Ensure all Calgarians receive the equivalent of a living wage.
2. The City of Calgary should require that all new communities and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs) meet a standard of Community-Oriented Development.
3. A minimum of 65% of transportation spending should be allocated to transit and non-motorized transportation.
4. The City of Calgary should require that in every community 15% of new residential construction be designated affordable housing.
5. The City of Calgary should create a 100% renewable energy strategy.
6. The provincial government should mandate that sustainability be integrated into the curriculum at all grade levels.
7. The City of Calgary should mandate transit-oriented development, including minimum density requirements, throughout Calgary.
8. The City of Calgary should mandate state-of-the-art commercial and residential green building standards.
9. The City of Calgary, in partnership with Calgary Economic Development, should create a comprehensive sustainable economic diversification strategy.
10. The City of Calgary should implement a program to hasten the accreditation of foreign-trained professionals.
11. All levels of government should work together to ensure that alternative or complementary health care is treated on an equal basis with conventional health care, that primary health care is the priority of our health care system and that health care remain public and free of financial barriers to access.
12. The City of Calgary should implement a zero-waste policy and program.

Making our Voices Heard through Deliberative Policy-Making

The idea of deliberative policy-making inspired the Citizens' Agenda project. Conventional wisdom assumes that policy-making should be left to the experts. At best, a citizen's role in policy-making is to cast a ballot once every three or four years or submit to periodic telephone surveys and polling. Yet these are merely minimal and individualistic manifestations of citizenship. Many of us find the minimum unimaginative, marginalizing and ineffective. Many of us are searching for a more meaningful way to contribute.

What has become known as deliberative policy-making offers something more. Deliberative policy-making invites citizens to be lifelong learners. It invites us into a social process with our fellow citizens, where we learn about, discuss, debate and resolve issues of importance to our families, communities and our city. In deliberative policy-making, citizens enter into a respectful dialogue with other citizens. We listen and make an effort to understand the points of view of others, and we expect to be given the opportunity to express our own points of view - and have them challenged. Deliberative policy-making recognizes and celebrates the knowledge, experience and wisdom of engaged citizens. It invites us to think in terms of the good of the community rather than simply exercise our power as consumers, or to defer to the market to shape our city. Deliberative policy-making presumes that more just and effective decisions are arrived at when the knowledge of all affected citizens is given voice and considered.

Principles of Deliberative Dialogue

Find common ground through understanding and learning from one another.
(You can not "win" a dialogue.)

Speak only for yourself, not as a representative of the interests of others.

Everyone is treated as an equal: leave roles, status and stereotypes at the door.

Be open and listen to others, even when (especially when) you disagree, and suspend judgment.

Identify and test assumptions, (especially your own).

Listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others: and acknowledge you have heard the other, *especially* when you disagree.

Express disagreement with ideas, not with personalities or motives.
(Disagree without being disagreeable.)

Dialogue and decision making are separate activities.
(Dialogue should always come before decision making.)

The Citizens' Agenda Process

The Citizens Agenda began in the spring of 2005 with a series of presentations, and brainstorming and strategy sessions with a variety of potential collaborating organizations. In August 2005, an invitation was extended to the community to join the project and a steering committee of about 25 individuals signed on. The steering committee worked over the next two months to more clearly define the project, design the process in detail, and assign responsibilities and tasks.

The project proceeded through six stages.

Policy Mapping. To avoid re-inventing the wheel, our first task was to collect as much information as possible about policy design work that had already been done.

Municipal Policy-Making 101. Policy-making is new territory for many citizens. Municipal Policy-Making 101, held in October 2005, in collaboration with the Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations, was a workshop designed to introduce citizens to policy-making at a municipal level. Policy experts provided an overview of the conventional municipal policy-making process and the provincial and federal context of municipal policy-making. Participants were then introduced to the concept of deliberative policy-making and discussed its adaptation to the Citizens' Agenda project.

Sector-Based Working Groups. An open invitation to Calgarians resulted in the coming together of about 100 individuals for three workshops in October and November 2005. The participants self-selected into one of six sector working groups. The goal of these working groups was to assess the implications of the *State of Our City* reports and to generate a preliminary list of priority policies and actions to address the issues raised by the reports.

City Quadrant-Based Workshops. Experience had shown that for a variety of reasons the majority of participants in Sustainable Calgary processes tended to come from inner city and established communities. In order to engage a wider spectrum of citizens, and to ensure that we had a perspective from new communities, at least one quadrant-based workshop was held in each quadrant of the city and in the city centre.

Special-Sector Workshops. Experience in public processes has demonstrated that despite good intentions, structural inequalities in our society mean that marginalized, specially challenged, or under-engaged groups and individuals often do not have their voices heard. To be as inclusive as possible, the Citizens' Agenda project hosted several special-sector workshops. Through these workshops, aboriginal youth, people with disabilities, people living on low incomes, newcomers to Calgary and businesses were included in the process.

Citizens' Agenda Plenary Workshop. An all-day plenary workshop was held in February 2006. The goal of the plenary was to make the final selection of policy and action priorities to be included in the Citizens Agenda Report. All those who had participated in previous workshops were invited to the plenary. A diverse group of about 70 people took part in the event. Participants were led through an energizing process involving a review of the policy and action priorities that had been generated in all the previous workshops. They discussed the proposed priorities in small groups, voted on their preferences and reconsidered the first-round voting results. The final selection process simulated a budget exercise. Each participant allocated 100,000 citizens bucks to what they considered to be the most important priorities.

Results of the Citizens' Agenda Plenary Workshop Budget Simulation

Minimum Wage Is a Living Wage	550,000
Accessible, Publicly Funded, Primary Care-focused Health Care	410,000
Community-Oriented Development	400,000
65% + of Transport Budget to Transit, Bikes and Walking	380,000
15% of Housing Stock in Every Community be Affordable	330,000
Sustainability Integrated into all Curriculum	310,000
100% Renewable Energy Strategy for Calgary	310,000
Transit-Oriented Development Requirements in Calgary	290,000
Green Building Standards (Residential and Commercial)	240,000
Sustainable Economic Diversification Strategy	220,000
Accreditation of Foreign-Trained Professionals	210,000
Zero-Waste Policy and Program	200,000



Living Wage

The Current Situation

A living wage is the amount of income that a person requires to meet his or her basic needs in order to ensure a safe and adequate standard of living and to enable participation in community life. A living wage is different than minimum wage. A single individual working 40 hours a week at \$7.00/h (minimum wage in Alberta, and the third lowest in the country), would earn \$14,560 a year. Statistic Canada's Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), the most widely used measure of poverty in Canada, is \$20,778/year¹ for a single individual; anything less qualifies as living below the poverty line. Therefore, a single individual would have to work a minimum of 57 hours a week in order to scrape out of poverty. A living wage would ensure that those who work for a living do not live in poverty.

Despite Calgary's booming economy, in 2005, 13% (64,800) of full-time employed individuals over the age of 15 years were living below the LICO poverty line. This includes a third of persons with disabilities, over half of the Aboriginal population, half of all recent immigrants to Calgary, over half of all single-parent families, a quarter of the city's senior citizens, and one third of all visible minorities.²

Ensure All Calgarians - Wage Earners, the Disabled, Seniors - Receive the Equivalent of a Living Wage.

Relevance to Sustainability

With a living wage, individuals and families benefit from increased economic stability and reduced stress, generating long-term impacts in the community. There is an increase in housing affordability, community participation and leisure activity and a decrease in crime rates and social isolation. Other benefits include reduced food bank use and more disposable income to invest in the local economy. In addition to the many long-term benefits to society, research sponsored by United Way of Calgary and Area has estimated that reducing poverty in Calgary could result in a savings of \$8.25 million per year.³

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC), is leading Calgary's living wage campaign for low-income earners. VCC, in collaboration with its partners has set \$10/hour as the starting point for a living wage in Calgary. VCC is collaborating with employers in several sectors, including the City of Calgary, private sector, businesses and non-profit organizations to develop and sustain living wage policies and initiatives. United Way of Calgary and Area, Momentum, the Calgary Urban Project Society, Public Interest Alberta, the National Anti-Poverty Organization and the Calgary Homeless Foundation are a few of the key allies in Calgary's living wage campaign.

There are over 100 living wage ordinances in communities across North America.⁴ For example the City of Chicago recently mandated that all large retail employers in the city pay a living wage of ten dollars per hour and benefits of three dollars per hour. In Santa Cruz, California local government has set a living wage of \$12 per hour. According to the Economic Policy Institute, there is no evidence of job loss as a result of the introduction of a living wage.

The Virtuous Cycle

A living wage for all Calgarians would arguably be the most important action we could take to improve the lives of vulnerable and marginalized citizens. People living in poverty would have time freed up to devote to family, to recreation and to exercise. They would be able to make a greater contribution to their community. We would see an increase in the overall sense of community in Calgary. The burden of supplying affordable housing would decrease if all citizens received at least a living wage. We would potentially see a diversification of small and local businesses as people chose to buy quality local products rather than the cheapest mass-produced products.

A modest increase in wages does not appear to cause any significant harm to employment and, in some cases, a rise in minimum wage at the local level results in a slight increase in employment.⁵ Studies have also demonstrated that businesses offering a living wage benefit from increased worker productivity, reduced staff turnover, reduced absenteeism and increased loyalty to the business.⁶

Potential Barriers

Barriers to living wage campaigns include opposition from the business community that argues that providing a higher income to low-income earners results in increased unemployment, especially for workers with minimum skills. Another barrier is the reluctance of local and provincial government to be seen as interventionist or anti-business. Calgary Economic Development and the provincial government tout low wages as part of the Alberta Advantage.

2005 Before-Tax Low Income Cutoffs for Canadian Cities for 500,00+ persons							
Family size	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7+ Persons
LICO	\$20,778	\$25,867	\$31,801	\$38,601	\$43,791	49,389	\$54,987

Source: Statistics Canada; 2006

Relevant Resources:

- Vibrant Communities Calgary <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s21.html>
- Victoria Quality of Life Challenge - www.qolchallenge.ca
- Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) Living Wage Campaign Information - www.livingwagecampaign.org
- Economic Policy Institute (EPI) - www.epi.org
- Los Angeles Living Wage Study - www.losangeleslivingwagestudy.org



Community-Oriented Development

Current Situation

The majority of new communities in Calgary exemplify low-density, car-oriented development. It is quite rare that a Calgarian living in a newer community has the opportunity to walk to a corner store or take public transit to work faster than they could drive or cycle with their children to school. Segregated commercial and residential land use in most Calgary communities forces Calgarians to rely on a car to meet their daily transportation needs.

A focused commitment to community-oriented development would ensure that every community gives priority to public transit, walkability, mixed land uses and integrated community services, such as schools, community centres, social services and local commercial opportunities.

Calgary is making progress in establishing community-oriented development in the inner city, with successful redevelopment projects such as Garrison Woods and The Bridges, but the need for more compact, walkable and transit-supportive developments in new communities remains critical.

Relevance to Sustainability

Calgary's current pattern of development has considerable environmental, social and economic costs. Car-dependent communities typically produce more greenhouse gas emissions that reduce air quality and contribute to climate change. In 2003, Albertans traveled 34 billion vehicle kilometers

The City of Calgary Should Require that All New and Established Communities Meet a Standard of Community-Oriented Development.

consuming 4.1 billion litres of fuel, which is considerably more than any other province on a per capita basis.⁷ The sprawling nature of low-density communities also impacts the natural environment by reducing wildlife habitat and productive agricultural land.

The economic cost of car-dependent communities includes lost productivity. Long commutes on clogged roads and increased time to transport goods have a direct economic cost.⁸ A report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development predicted that the most economically competitive cities in the future will be those that emphasize improved public transit and compact, pedestrian-friendly development rather than road construction.

Social sustainability is also significantly impacted by our current development pattern. According to a report by United Way of Calgary and Area, the concentration of poverty, as well as segregation of social classes, is becoming more severe in Calgary. This spatial inequality has implications for access to employment opportunities, health care, education and social services. Car-oriented development is also associated with increased health problems. Research by the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation connects the sedentary lifestyle promoted by the poor design of Canadian suburbs with increased rates of obesity, heart disease and diabetes.⁹

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

Sustainable development has occurred in many cities around the world. Portland, Oregon is often heralded for its Urban Growth Boundary, provision of affordable housing and emphasis on downtown and inner-city redevelopment. Curitiba, Brazil tripled in population between 1970 and 1995, but an emphasis on integrated land use and public transportation has reduced air pollution and vehicle miles traveled. In Canada, Vancouver is a prime example of a sustainable city. Over 80,000 people live in its vibrant and walkable downtown core.

In Calgary, the best example of a community-oriented development is Garrison Woods. Canada Lands Company developed Garrison Woods as a "new-urbanist" community with mixed uses, a mix of densities, customized road standards and extensive use of rear lanes. The development on a former Canadian Forces Base and within an established community provides residents with good access to schools, shopping, recreation facilities and employment opportunities without having to rely on an automobile.

The Virtuous Cycle

Time is of the essence to shift our emphasis from car-dependent to community-oriented development. Given the tremendous population increase currently occurring in Calgary, it should be a priority to manage this growth in a more sustainable manner. An emphasis on developing more compact, transit-supportive communities with increased housing options and attention to quality public spaces will produce more socially inclusive communities that allow all Calgarians greater access to our city's economic opportunities.

Potential Barriers

The current model of development has become so entrenched in Calgary - in terms of infrastructure investment, municipal regulations and policies - that it discourages any alternative forms of development. This path-dependency is largely responsible for the continued development of low-density, car-oriented communities. Calgary, like most North American cities, based its post-1945 community planning policies and standards on the car as the dominant focus of transportation. New and innovative forms of development require alternative standards, which seem to evolve at a glacial pace. In the case of the new urbanist community of Garrison Woods, City transportation and engineering administrators resisted adapting to customized standards because of their decades of experience building classic suburbs.¹⁰

Another significant barrier to creating community-oriented development is public resistance to more compact housing options. Despite considerable evidence to the contrary, perceptions persist that multi-family housing results in higher crime rates and lower property values. Calgarians will need to accept more compact development in the established areas, and demand more diverse housing options and better-designed new communities.

Relevant Resources

Smart Growth - www.smartgrowth.org

Pembina Institute - www.pembina.org

Congress for New Urbanism - www.cnu.org

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation - www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Garrison Woods - www.garrisonwoods.com



Transportation Spending

Current Situation

Since the 1995 Go-Plan, the City of Calgary has had a 50/50 policy for transportation spending meaning that 50% of the transportation budget should be directed to roads and 50% to public transit. Actual spending during the period 1995 to 2003 was 60% on roads and 40% on transit. In 2004, actual spending was 67% on roads and 33% on transit. These figures do not include provincial transportation spending in Calgary - spending that is overwhelmingly for roads including Deerfoot Trail, Stoney Trail and the Ring Road. LRT capital spending over 25 years has been one billion dollars while the Ring Road alone is estimated to cost in the neighbourhood of three billion dollars.

Calgary Transit's 2006 budget plans for spending of approximately \$226 million. Revenues recover approximately \$114 million of this spending resulting in net expenditures of \$112 million, representing 50% of overall transportation spending. If 65% of spending were allocated to transit alone, net expenditures could increase by \$66 million or 29% per year, from \$226 million to \$292 million.

Additional spending in public transportation could have a significant positive impact in Calgary. Calgary Transit currently delivers more than two million hours of transit service. Given the current budget cost of \$226 million for 2006, the total cost per hour of transit service is approximately \$113. Additional spending of \$66 million¹¹ would have the potential to add nearly 600,000 transit service hours. This represents an additional 29% over the number of hours currently delivered.

At Least 65% of Transportation Spending Should Be Allocated to Transit and Non-Motorized Transportation.

Relevance to Sustainability

Increased budget support for public transit would reduce vehicle kilometres travelled - representing a significant reduction in the consumption of fossil fuels and in the release of gases that contribute to global climate change. Given that half of the greenhouse gases produced by an average Canadian family come from driving a car¹² more support for transit would be a significant contribution to meeting Canada's Kyoto greenhouse gas reduction commitments.

Fossil fuels also produce air pollutants that cause or contribute to high levels of cardiovascular and pulmonary disease. More support for wind-powered LRT would provide an opportunity to expand renewable energy development. Increased transit use would also promote more active lifestyles and contribute to a strategy to address soaring obesity and obesity-related health problems.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

In 1995, the City of Vancouver approved a transportation plan for "the reallocation of funds to programs that facilitate walking, cycling, transit and the movement of goods."¹³ As a result, since 1995 vehicle counts have not increased, vehicle kilometres travelled are down, bicycle trips are up over 150%, walking trips are up 50%, transit ridership growth is the fastest in the country and most targets for 2021 have already been exceeded.

Research done in the Greater Toronto area estimated that a shift from conventional sprawling auto-dependent development to more compact land use and emphasis on transit could save the region up to one billion dollars annually over a 25-year period.

Montreal consistently has the smallest automobile mode share for trips into the city – about 40%.

The Virtuous Cycle

Transit would provide better transportation options for the many Calgarians who, because of age or disability, cannot drive or because of economic circumstances do not own a car. It would significantly enhance their freedom to choose where to live and where to work.

Over 100,000 Calgarians survive on low incomes; 55% of these individuals use transit on a regular basis. Affordable transportation will assist low-income Calgarians to access education and employment, buy groceries and other essentials, volunteer, attend medical appointments and take their children to recreational activities - things that are often beyond their reach in a car-oriented society.

Increased public spending on transit would result in significant savings for individuals who would not have to purchase a car or households that could forego the purchase of a second or even third car. Studies demonstrate that the investment in public transportation reduces overall traffic congestion costs per capita and that rail transit investment can result in savings to individual consumers of up to five times the tax increases required to fund the rail system. It has been estimated that over a period of 40 years foregoing the purchase of an automobile can result in a net saving of one million dollars.¹⁴

Potential Barriers

This action requires only that the City of Calgary change its priorities regarding transportation funding. The total net expenditures for transportation would not change, only the allocation between roads, transit and non-motorized transportation would change. A significant barrier is the short-term political response to traffic congestion that dictates the construction of more and more roads, overpasses and interchanges. We are caught in a vicious cycle whereby our dependence on private automobiles and roads constrains attempts to implement more compact land use and transit improvements that would alleviate the dependence. Community planning is still dictated by road planning.



Affordable Housing

Current Situation

Affordable housing and homelessness are very different, but not unrelated, issues. The City of Calgary defines housing as affordable when it meets the needs of households earning less than 65% of Calgary's median income (\$37,600 based on 2001 census), and housing costs do not exceed more than 30% of before-tax income for rental accommodation. Over 58,000 Calgary households find themselves in this category. From 2000 to 2006, Calgary's housing affordability decreased at the fastest rate in Canada. There are currently about 2,000 people on the City's affordable housing waiting list. There were 3,436 homeless people counted in 2006 - a 32% increase since 2004.

Several city policies support the creation of affordable housing. For example the Sustainable Suburbs policy recommends that 10% of units be accessible to median household income, and the Municipal Development Plan calls for social housing throughout the city. However, these policies rely strongly on voluntary compliance.

The 2003 *Calgary Community Plan - Building Paths Out of Homelessness* envisions that "all Calgarians have the means to access and maintain safe, suitable and affordable housing," that the ratio of non-market to market housing should increase as the city grows and that "new affordable housing . . . will be constructed utilizing industry best practices." At the time of the plan, there were 1,464 emergency shelter spaces, 1,085 transitional housing spaces and 13,875 non-market housing units in Calgary. As of 2002, Calgary Housing Company had 7,500 non-market housing units.¹⁵ Plan targets for

The City of Calgary Should Require That in Every Community 15% of Housing Be Affordable.

the period 2004-2008 are for 1,000 transitional spaces and 2,000 non-market units (400 units from each of the public and private sectors annually).

Since 2004, the Community Plan targets have not been met while the need continues to grow. Between 2002 and 2005 approximately 350 non-market units had been completed or were in development, and approximately 390 transitional and support units had been completed or were in development.

The key organizations addressing this issue are the Calgary Homeless Foundation; the Calgary Community Land Trust, HomeCo; Calgary Housing Action Initiative and The United Way of Calgary and Area.

Relevance to Sustainability

Affordable shelter is an internationally recognized basic human right. If lower-income families spend more than 30% of their income on shelter, they are less able to afford other basic goods and services. When health suffers as a result of these circumstances, citizens' ability to support themselves may be compromised at further economic, physical and social cost to themselves, their families and the community.

Lack of affordable housing is linked to a decrease in sense of community. People who have insecure access to housing and/or who may have to move frequently are less able to integrate into, and contribute to, their communities.

Lack of affordable housing throughout the city makes it difficult for individuals to secure work and live close to potential jobs or along transit routes that facilitate a timely commute to work. Affordable housing for all Calgarians is essential for economic prosperity and is an important part of our social and economic infrastructure.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

In Vancouver, 20% of every new development must be affordable housing (half of the units for families), housing demolitions and conversions from rental to condo are regulated, and there are private sector incentives to spur affordable housing construction. Vancouver's initiatives are enabled by the BC Municipal Act's inclusionary zoning regulations. Ottawa's Official Plan also contains an inclusionary principle, and affordable housing is monitored and reported regularly.

Surrey, British Columbia has an exemplary policy for legalizing secondary suites that stipulates zones for secondary suites, suite size and parking requirements. In Surrey, the homeowner must live in the main suite, and only one suite is allowed per detached house. Toronto and North Vancouver also have secondary suite policies.

The Virtuous Cycle

A strong affordable housing policy including LEED-certified, multi-family-unit residential buildings and *Green Built* low-rise residential affordable housing would create a valuable asset for the community, reduce monthly costs through energy conservation, and contribute to both waste and greenhouse gas reductions. Provision of affordable housing for all Calgarians would enhance the quality of life of all Calgarians - a key aspect of a sustainable economic development strategy.

Affordable housing policies help create the conditions for successful transit-oriented development and community-oriented development through the location of affordable housing on transit routes and of more jobs and basic services within walking distance of people's place of residence.

Potential Barriers

Canada has the most private-sector-dominated housing sector of any western nation. Substantial decreases in funding to affordable housing since 1993 has exacerbated the current housing crisis in Calgary. The rapid conversion of rental units to condos during Calgary's economic boom has resulted in a reduction in rental housing availability. The rapid increase in the cost of living in Calgary combined with the falling purchasing power of the minimum wage is yet another factor contributing to the lack of affordable housing.

The conservative economic environment in Calgary and Alberta and the lack of political will for public sector intervention are impediments to the provision of affordable housing. Alberta's Municipal Government Act does not enable inclusive zoning.

NIMBYism on the part of many communities and householders, along with the lack of a pro-active education campaign demonstrating the need for and benefits of affordable housing, constrains the City's ability to locate affordable housing in many parts of the city.

Relevant Resources

Calgary Housing Action Initiative - www.housingaction.ca

Calgary Community Land Trust - www.versalt.com/cclt/affordable.htm

Calgary Homeless Foundation - www.calgaryhomeless.com



100% Renewable Energy City Strategy

Current Situation

Canada consumes more non-renewable energy than almost any other country on earth. Alberta is the biggest provincial consumer, and Calgary is the biggest city consumer in Canada. The average Calgarian consumes the equivalent of about 40 barrels of oil annually to heat and light her home, prepare his food, run her commercial and industrial infrastructure and fuel his cars.¹⁶

Only about 2.5% of that energy is from low-impact renewable sources, and another 9.5% is from large-scale hydro. However, recent estimates suggest that, in general, low-impact renewable energy capacity (i.e., wind, micro-hydro and solar) could be increased to 30% of current total energy production, and if we include biomass and large-scale hydro sources, it could be increased to 100%.¹⁷

Calgary is already recognized as a leader with its Ride the Wind Program, powering our LRT. Enmax continues to build wind generation capacity in southern Alberta. According to *Green Power Programs - 2003* produced by the Pembina Institute: "Alberta's portion of electricity production attributable to Green Power Programs in 2003 was leading the country at a total of 296.7 megawatt hours. This represents a meager 1.85% of the total electricity used within our province."¹⁸

Unfortunately "The current Alberta government policy is to encourage further reliance on coal through the proposed installation of 1,700 megawatt

The City of Calgary Should Create a 100% Renewable Energy Use Strategy for Calgary.

hours of new coal capacity in a jurisdiction that already has the highest percentage of coal-generated electricity in Canada."¹⁹

Relevance to Sustainability

From a health perspective, elimination of fossil fuels from our energy system would reduce the presence of heavy metals, smog-creating substances and toxic waste buildup. Respiratory and cardiovascular problems associated with fossil fuel burning cause thousands of premature deaths in Canadian cities and contribute to historically high rates of asthma in children.²⁰

A primary environmental benefit of a 100% renewable energy strategy is a significant reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Canada has committed to greenhouse gas reduction targets, but our actual emissions continue to rise.

A broad range of studies of the employment impacts of conventional versus alternative energy investment show that low-impact renewable energy supply provides over twice as many jobs per dollar invested as conventional energy supply.²¹ A renewable energy strategy that included biofuels would be a significant boost to the farm economy of our neighbours in southern Alberta, which could provide the bulk of the biofuel supply.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

According to the Pembina Institute, Germany, the country with the largest renewable energy installed capacity has about 30 times the installed capacity of Canada.²² Germany's installed capacity as of 2003 was 13,407 MW. This would be enough energy to supply almost half of the households in Canada with electricity!

Our best example of a 100% renewable energy policy in action comes from Sweden where a national strategy is in place to achieve zero fossil fuel reliance by 2020.

Quebec has plans to install more wind capacity (almost 5000 megawatts) than all the rest of the country combined - enough to power more than one million Canadian homes.

The Virtuous Cycle

We use our automobiles more than anyone else in the country. Land use planning and transportation planning are key to changing that

reality. We can create livable, vibrant communities with more compact, mixed-use, pedestrian, bicycle and transit-oriented land use and transportation planning. With more sustainable land use planning, we could also enhance the opportunities for energy co-generation and district heating. With aggressive public policy supporting green buildings, we can reduce energy demand significantly. A strong conservation program would close the gap between supply and demand for renewable energy by significantly reducing the total energy required by our city. For example, The Zero Net Energy Home Coalition is already building houses in Alberta that will provide more energy to the grid than they will extract from it.

Potential Barriers

To achieve the goal of 100% renewable energy will require strong public policy, not always easy in a conservative political environment where energy programs carry negative connotations. For example, the Alberta Electric System Operator has imposed a cap on the amount of wind energy that can be developed in the province.

Renewable energy still suffers from diseconomies of scale in Canada. Strong public sector support for renewable energy will be needed to get them up to scale. This means an aggressive focus on the part of Enmax to develop and market renewable energy and a supportive role for the City of Calgary to buy renewable energy and provide incentives for its use. Both the provincial and federal governments could be significant impediments to or facilitators of a 100% renewable energy strategy.

In terms of subsidization and low royalty rates, the oil and gas industry continues to enjoy unfair advantages over renewables.

Relevant Resources

The Zero Net Energy Home Coalition - www.netzeroenergyhome.ca

The Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development - www.pembina.org



Sustainability Curriculum

Current Situation

Sustainability education is not mandatory in the Alberta K-12 curriculum. Furthermore, there are no courses or programs of study for sustainability. Environmental and Outdoor education is offered at many grade levels as optional courses. A scan of the Canadian Environmental Curriculum Assessment Program website shows that the Alberta K-12 curriculum, both in sciences and social science, has many course offerings that deal with sustainability as a discrete theme with most of the focus on "lifestyle and sustainability" with only minor attention to issues like resource extraction.

The Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, which includes Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Yukon calls on provincial curricula "to develop a consciousness for the limits of nature and a sense of stewardship for the land, as well as an understanding of the principles of sustainability." Sustainability is identified in the Social Studies theme of *Land: People and Places*. Curiously, the protocol's 2006 *Common Curriculum Framework for K-9 Mathematics* makes mention of sustainability but only in relation to special approaches to teaching mathematics to aboriginal kids.

A coalition of Alberta environmental educators recently completed *A Draft Comprehensive Plan to Advance Environmental Education in Alberta* (see "Alberta Summit" below). The document defines the role of environmental education "to foster clear awareness of, and concern about, economic,

The Provincial Government Should Mandate That Sustainability Be Integrated Into the Curriculum at All Grade Levels

social, political, and ecological interdependence of human communities with the natural world." Organizations such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the SEEDS Foundation, the Pembina Institute and the Global Environmental and Outdoor Education Council of Alberta are among the leading environmental education advocates in Alberta.

Relevance to Sustainability

To effectively address the critical issues of sustainability confronting us today will require a sustainability-literate population. Research indicates that environmentally conscious education significantly affects ecological attitudes of grade school children from K-12.²³ The same can likely be said of sustainability education.

The *Draft Comprehensive Plan's* prescription for environmental education is in many respects consistent with that of sustainability education. The plan highlights concepts of lifelong learning, an informed and involved citizenry, creative problem solving, and commitment to engage in responsible individual and cooperative actions. However, there are subtle differences. Environmental education advocates seek a strong mandate for environmental education as a core mandated element of the curriculum - but one that is discrete. Sustainability literacy would require that the concept of sustainability be infused in the entire K-12 curriculum - in sciences, social science, art, mathematics - and in fact that the entire curriculum be constructed in a much more integrated manner.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

Australia's environmental education initiative is recognized as a world leader in environmental education. Its primary goals are to provide a higher profile for environmental education, integrate it into the mainstream education process and provide additional professional development for teachers.

The Grade 8 Eco-Quest school program in Saskatoon is an innovative form of sustainability-based education. Instructional field studies integrate required academic subjects within Eco-Quest's three major themes of a Sense of Place, a Sense of Time and a Sense of Quality.

The Virtuous Cycle

A sustainability education would be the cornerstone of a more sustainability-literate society and in turn the creation of sustainable societies. In theory, sustainability-literate students and graduates from such a school system would have the attitudes, knowledge and skills to think and act sustainably. The policies and actions proposed in this Citizens' Agenda would come very naturally to such a group of people, and they would be equipped with the kinds of integrative and holistically informed skills that would allow them to make these priorities a reality.

Potential Barriers

Underfunding of our educational system means that school boards are preoccupied with actually getting schools built and keeping existing schools open and maintained. Teachers find that often getting through the existing curriculum is all they can manage.

The departmentalized nature of education means that interdisciplinarity or integration of curriculum is marginalized in the face of antagonisms across disciplines, and pressures to cover the curriculum and to graduate "productive workers."

Making the case that sustainability is uniquely important is a challenge in the face of ever-growing demands to introduce new curricular themes into K-12 education. Sustainability education has to be imagined not as an add-on but as a profound reorganization of the way we educate our children.

Relevant Resources

Alberta Summit for Environmental Education - www.abcee.org/
Canadian Environmental Education Curriculum Assessment Program - www.ceecap.com/main.php
Eco-Quest - www.ecoquest.ca
Australian Association of Environmental Educators - www.aeee.org.au/
Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education - www.wncp.ca



Transit-Oriented Development

Current Situation

In December 2004, the City of Calgary adopted Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policy Guidelines directed toward development at existing or planned LRT and bus rapid transit stations only. The city cites several examples of evolving TOD in the city, for example, the Renaissance Towers at North Hill Mall. The Kensington Station will be the first attempt at renewal of an Area Redevelopment Plan in light of TOD policy.

The most recent Regional Area Structure Plans for new communities are being developed on the basis of only 6-8 Units Per Acre (UPA), in line with density guidelines adopted in the Sustainable Suburbs study. Council recently changed the density guidelines to require a minimum density of 7 UPA but no ceiling on potential densities.

Relevance to Sustainability

TOD will make it possible to reduce our dependence on the private automobile - a huge household saving. Fewer automobiles driving fewer kilometers will reduce health damaging air pollutants such as particulate matter, and nitrogen oxides. It will reduce the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. It will allow us to conserve agricultural lands and natural areas by reducing the amount of space we consume for roads and parking lots. Public health benefits will come from getting more people walking and bicycling. More people on the street and congregating in public

The City of Calgary Should Mandate Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), Including Minimum Community Density Requirements of 14-20 Units Per Acre, Throughout Calgary.

spaces surrounding transit stations will promote a stronger sense of community and create a safer city. More compact residential and commercial districts will promote the growth of local and small business.

TOD also provides important opportunities for affordable housing for those who cannot own and operate a private vehicle. The investment in transit will be more than offset by the savings in other capital and maintenance infrastructure costs - roads and sewer, water and energy utilities. Transit-oriented development is generally considered to require minimum average community densities of 14-20 units per acre with densities increasing with proximity to the transit station.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

Some of the most successful TOD initiatives are outside of North America. Curitiba, Brazil has tripled in size since the early 1970s but thanks to aggressive transit-oriented development, it has reduced air pollution, vehicle kilometres travelled, expanded green space and made the city centre a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented district. Copenhagen, Denmark has pioneered transit-oriented development along five corridors radiating out from the city resulting in increased transit ridership and the provision of substantial green space in close proximity to all communities. In Freiburg, Germany an aggressive policy giving priority to transit provision has meant that almost all residents are within 500 metres of a tramline. In Portland, Oregon studies show that in transit oriented neighborhoods car ownership can be as much as 40% less than the city-wide average. In Vancouver, similar studies show a decrease in car ownership around SkyTrain stations of over 30%. The city of Gresham, Oregon has adopted a 12-24 UPA policy. The City of Austin's 2005 TOD ordinance requires 25-75 UPA. A five-kilometre Arlington County, Virginia TOD corridor has concentrated more than 70,000 jobs within 500 metres of transit stations. As a result, 10% of homeowners and 20% of renters in the region do not own a car.

The Virtuous Cycle

TOD is a physical planning model that supports the provision of affordable housing city-wide. TOD has the promise of contributing to more physically active citizens and a healthier city. The more compact TOD designs open up possibilities for energy conservation and district

heating. TOD projects can promote the evolution of green building design and expertise in Calgary and the growth of local small business, and in doing so, it can contribute to a sustainable economic development strategy.

Potential Barriers

Road planning and construction still take precedence for the municipal and provincial governments of Calgary and Alberta respectively. For the past 10 years, the City has allocated at least 65% of its transportation budget to roads, not including the significant investments by the province in Calgary's major roadways. The lack of reliable long-term federal funding for transit in cities across Canada and the lack of intergovernmental cooperation have also been significant barriers.

The City's timid support of and investment in transit education and promotion have resulted in resistance to both higher densities and establishment of LRT stations.

Myths about consumer preference and market response as the dominant shapers of current development patterns obscure the important role and potential of public policy.

The lack of a robust mechanism for public participation in the planning of new communities and the current ward system for electing City aldermen are also felt to be significant barriers to change.

Relevant Resources

Victoria Transportation Policy Institute - vtpi.org

City of Calgary, Transit-Oriented Development -

www.calgarytransit.com/html/transit_oriented_development_guidelines.pdf



Green Buildings

Current Situation

LEED is a voluntary, performance-oriented system where credits are earned for satisfying criteria in six categories: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, innovation and design process. Four levels of building certification are awarded based on the total credits earned: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. LEED is the accepted green building standard in North America and since 2002 has been adapted and administered in Canada by the Canadian Green Building Council. It applies to medium- and high-density residential, mixed use, commercial and industrial developments.

Building standards in Calgary are controlled by provincial building regulations under The Alberta Safety Codes Act that, in turn, are modelled on the National Building Code. The Safety Codes Act sets out minimum standards for building construction, renovation or alteration designed to ensure that buildings are structurally sound, safe from fire, free of health hazards and accessible. It does not address environmental sustainability.

The City of Calgary was the first city in Canada to adopt the LEED Silver minimum for municipal buildings. Currently there are four LEED certified buildings in Calgary: Country Hills Community Centre (LEED silver); Nose Creek Recreation and Library Facility; Crowfoot Library - (LEED-NC) and North Hill Home Depot (certified). There are at least another 11 projects including schools, residential, municipal and hospital projects that have been registered for LEED certification.

City Council Should Establish Sustainable Building Standards of a Minimum LEED Silver for all Commercial Buildings, LEED Gold for Public Buildings and Built Green for Residential Construction.

Relevance to Sustainability

The purchase of a house is the biggest and most important purchase most Calgarians will make in their lifetimes. The environmental, social and economic impacts of today's building choices will directly affect our children and grandchildren. Buildings consume energy, use water, generate waste, and appropriate land from other uses such as natural habitats. Thirty to forty percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions are produced by buildings.

Sustainable building standards can reduce negative environmental impacts, increase worker productivity and student performance, enhance the quality of work life and social well-being and reduce operating expenses. The 1:5:200 rule of thumb - over the life of a typical building, for every dollar in design and construction costs there is a five-dollar expenditure for operations and maintenance, and a two hundred dollar output from the activity housed in the building – underscores the importance of green building design.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

The City of Vancouver is recognized as demonstrating best practice in green building legislation in Canada. The City's 2004 Green Buildings Strategy includes the requirement for LEED Gold certification for all civic buildings and that all mid- and high-density residential, mixed use, commercial and industrial development in Vancouver will reach at least the equivalent of LEED Silver.

Victoria offers some of the most impressive private sector green building initiatives. The Parkside Victoria Resort has ambitions to become the first LEED Platinum building in Canada. Even more ambitious is Victoria's Dockside Green - a 10-year plan to develop 1.3-million square feet of mixed residential, commercial, industrial and retail space to the LEED Platinum standard.

Alberta is recognized as a leader in Built Green home construction. There are over 2,800 Built Green registered homes in Alberta. The Alberta Ecotrust EcoHome was constructed to meet Built Green and R2000 standards. The University of Calgary has committed to build three new campus buildings, including the new Child Care Centre, to LEED Platinum standard.

The Virtuous Cycle

Green buildings will require less maintenance and will reduce energy costs over the life of a building. They will also reduce the amount of resources required to build a home and will manage materials to minimize harmful or toxic waste and the need for landfills. Green buildings will be healthier buildings. Green building construction will promote the skills upgrading of the building trades. More skilled workers and efficient buildings translate into a more productive economy.

Potential Barriers

Mandatory green building standards for the private sector will require legislative and regulatory change. A successful strategy will require consultation with the building and development industry and other affected stakeholders. These barriers can be overcome with strong champions in the private, non-governmental organizations and municipal government sectors.

While monthly and annual energy, water and maintenance bills will be lower in green buildings, initial costs may be higher, at least until green building becomes the norm. Therefore, an affordable housing strategy, including innovative mortgage programs, has to be incorporated into the green buildings policy and strategy.

Relevant Resources

Canada Green Building Council - www.cagbc.org

Built Green Canada - www.builtgreencanada.ca

US Green Building Council - www.usgbc.org

The 2030 Challenge - www.architecture2030.org



Sustainable Economic Diversification Strategy

Current Situation

Calgary Economic Development (CED) is the key vehicle for the promotion of economic development in Calgary. CED's mandate is to "sustain economic growth" in the Calgary Region and to market "the Calgary Region's competitive advantages, pro-business climate and superior lifestyle across Canada and around the world." CED identifies Calgary's key economic drivers as information and communication technology, transportation and logistics, energy, manufacturing, financial and business services, and film and creative industries. CED's C-Prosperity initiative supports the development of key economic clusters for Calgary including geomatics, wireless communications, wellness, and information technology. To date, the CED does not have a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable economic development.

In the summer of 2006 Calgary Economic Development embarked on the creation of an economic development strategy. In September 2006 the Calgary Community Economic Development Network, a project of MOMENTUM, was launched with support of the United Way of Calgary and Area.

Relevance to Sustainability

Sustainable economic development is concerned not with growth for growth's sake but with the quality of economic development. A narrow focus on economic growth could undermine ecological integrity and quality of life. Sustainable economic development focuses on the synergies between

The City of Calgary, in Partnership With Calgary Economic Development, Should Create a Comprehensive Sustainable Economic Diversification Strategy.

the economy, and a healthy environment, communities and citizens. Two key concepts in sustainability - resilience and self-reliance - suggest the need to focus on 1) diversification and 2) local and small business development from a community economic development or social economy perspective. Sustainability also implies global citizenship. Of particular relevance to Calgary is the global warming impact of the fossil fuel industry - fossil fuel production and consumption accounts for 80% of Canada's GHG emissions.

Successes

Two initiatives associated with CED demonstrate the potential for a sustainable economic development strategy. First, the Green Roof initiative of the Alistair Ross Technology Centre demonstrates the opportunities for synergies between sustainability and technological innovation. Second, the recruitment to the city of major tenants for the proposed 1.7-million-square-foot office complex in south east Calgary's Quarry Park. In this case, the business and investment recruitment activities of the CED align with principles of sustainable urban development and take advantage of a Brownfield site to create a transit-oriented mixed residential, office and retail development.

London, England and Santa Monica are examples of cities that have explicitly incorporated sustainability into their economic development strategies. The London strategy identifies areas of economic policy intervention where the market does not perform well, including poverty alleviation. The Santa Monica economic development plan focuses on support for the greening of business and links to environmental initiatives such as Santa Monica's solar energy policy.

The Virtuous Cycle

A sustainable economic development strategy could focus the activities of CED's economic drivers and clusters on key sustainability challenges facing Calgary as identified in the Citizens' Agenda. Such a strategy might focus on economic development opportunities in affordable housing, energy conservation and renewables, waste management, human-powered transportation, immigrant workforce expansion, green building design, and transit- and community-oriented design expertise. Each of these foci is a potential growth area for the economy of the 21st century.

Potential Barriers

Perhaps the overarching barrier to a sustainable economic development strategy is the conventional belief in growth for growth's sake and the implicit assumption that any economic growth will improve community well-being - for example that high tech development of weapons systems is of equal value to the development of software tools to assist improved literacy. Particularly in Alberta, an associated conventional belief is the strongly-held notion of non-intervention in the market. Another conventional notion is that economic development is the purview of the business community. A final barrier, and at the same time a great opportunity, is that there are very few examples of how sustainability can be incorporated into economic development strategies.

There is evidence that the Calgary business community is ready for a sustainable economic development strategy. In a survey undertaken for CED in 2004, Calgary business people cited Quality of Life as one of six key factors of importance to business in Calgary. When asked what needs to be done to improve the business climate, four of the top five responses were transportation and transit, a triple-bottom-line (social, environmental and economic) approach to business, diversification away from oil and gas and labour force development and training.

Relevant Resources

Calgary Economic Development -

www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com

MOMENTUM - www.mcca-ed.org

Social Economy -

www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/sd/social_economy.html



Foreign-Trained Professional Accreditation

Current Situation

Over 45,000 foreign-trained professionals immigrate to Canada every year, earning an estimated \$2.4 billion less than native-born Canadians with formally comparable skills.²⁴ Requiring newcomers to have Canadian work experience as well as licensing from provincial and territorial bodies has resulted in a vicious cycle whereby the non-recognition of immigrants' foreign professional credentials and work experience disqualifies their entry into professional jobs, leaving them little opportunity to acquire Canadian work experience. Yet the emphasis on Canadian work experience as a requirement for professional accreditation and employment makes it difficult for new Canadians to become qualified for professional jobs.²⁵ This essentially "traps" many immigrants at different stages of the accreditation cycle and effectively bars them from gaining fitting employment.

To deal with some of the immediate labour shortages in Canada, provincial governments have implemented the Provincial Nominees program, allowing provinces and territories to identify specific regional shortages in skilled occupations in order to accelerate the process of legalizing employment for potential employees and, in some cases, granting temporary work visas. These programs, however, do not constitute lasting solutions to the systemic challenges and barriers that prevent highly skilled immigrants from successfully integrating into the Canadian labour market and society.

The City of Calgary Should Implement an Accelerated Program to Support the Accreditation of Foreign-Trained Professionals.

Relevance to Sustainability

Because of the bureaucratic gymnastics of accreditation, many foreign-trained professionals are leaving Canada. According to Statistics Canada, young male immigrants admitted under the business and skilled worker classes are the most likely to leave Canada within the first year of arrival.²⁶ For Canada, the out-migration of recently arrived immigrants to their home country or to other countries has substantial implications, from the low return to settlement and integration services, to the lost contribution of immigrants' valuable skills in the knowledge-based economy. By not fully utilizing the skills and experience of immigrants, the Canadian economy loses as much as \$5-billion annually.²⁷

In Calgary's booming labour market, many businesses are not able to meet their labour force needs. Canada's extremely selective immigration points system, which selects for highly skilled and technical workers, can play a vital role in Calgary's economy by increasing the supply of skilled workers. Immigrants also provide a solution to our aging population and shrinking birth rate, bolster global linkages, improve the health of our economy, contribute to our social fabric and replenish emigrants lost in the brain drain to the United States and other countries.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

Capacity Canada,²⁸ a national group that builds the capacity of foreign-trained professionals to promote advocacy and change in public policy is urging professional immigrants to form associations and networks across the country to act on self-identified goals. The Alberta wing, Capacity Alberta, has been doing this for the past year. In Toronto, where the highest percentage of foreign-trained professionals reside, The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, a multi-stakeholder council, is working to improve access to employment for immigrants in the Toronto region.²⁹ In Calgary, people are working with the University of Calgary on an accelerated program for foreign-trained physicians and MOMENTUM has just launched a program offering loans for those pursuing training to allow them to practice in Canada.

Internationally, Australia has moved toward language skills testing and occupational skills testing prior to landing. In collaboration with academic institutions in the country and overseas, Australia has developed course modules (e.g., in professions such as nursing) for prospective immigrants that allows them to complete courses that lead

to an Australian degree or Australian accreditation prior to immigration.³⁰

The Virtuous Cycle

The successful resettlement and integration of newcomers is contingent on viable solutions to the integration of the increasing population of foreign-trained immigrants. Legislation could require companies to implement hiring programs to allow newcomers to participate in the labour force in their professional field, as is currently offered by the City of Calgary. Most importantly, however, is the need for all stakeholders to ensure that consistent, industry-specific information regarding the accreditation process and labour market opportunities is delivered to foreign-trained immigrants in Calgary.

Non-recognition of foreign credentials effectively prevents highly trained and educated immigrants from accessing professional labour markets, which, in turn, decreases social and economic benefits to both immigrants and Canada's knowledge-based economy. This is particularly a lost opportunity in Calgary, which is currently the fourth largest immigrant-receiving centre in the country, after Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. The accreditation and proper labour-force integration of foreign-trained professionals is a cost-effective way to meet labour shortages, further economic growth and encourage social cohesion.

Potential Barriers

Unfortunately, many Canadians maintain the attitude that foreign-trained professionals have not received a rigorous enough education to practice in Canada. Our immigration processes are inconsistent in terms of the information we provide new immigrants with respect to their ability to practice in Canada and in terms of the necessary upgrading or preparations they should undertake before arriving in Canada.

Relevant Resources

Capacity Canada - www.capacitycanada.ca

Capacity Alberta - www.capacityalberta.ca

Alberta Network of Immigrant Women - www.aniw.ca

Immigration Access Fund -

<http://www.momentum.org/departments/set/programs/immigrantaccess.html>



Primary Health Care

Current Situation

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR), public health is that provided by governments and governmental agencies and includes expenditures for items such as food and drug safety, health inspections, health promotion, community mental health programs, public health nursing, measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and other related activities. The CIHR reports that Alberta, at 7.9%, is second only to Saskatchewan in the percent of health expenditures devoted to public health.

The Calgary Health Region allocates funds to "promotion, prevention and protection services" and to "research and education." Since 1997, health spending in these categories represents between 3.5% and 4% of the total CHR budget. In 2005/2006, 3.6% was allocated to these categories.

The *Romanow Report* calls for a shift in Canada's health care system toward primary health care. The report states that "Primary Health Care is about...fundamental change across the entire health care system...Taking away the almost overwhelming emphasis on hospitals and medical treatments...Putting the emphasis on consistent efforts to reduce illness and injury and improve health."

Increase the Percentage of the Calgary Health Region Budget for Preventative and Primary Health Care From the Current 3.6% to 10%.

Relevance to Sustainability

Increasingly, preventive and alternative health strategies are gaining acceptance as reliable complements to conventional health practices. While conventional health care will always play an important role in treating disease and injury, a sustainable community should also adopt practices that promote wellness and reduce the need for more intrusive health interventions. Alternative health care practices can be a strong component of a preventive health care strategy, given their focus on overall lifestyle and well-being.

The alarming statistics on the health implications of environmental and lifestyle factors demonstrate the relevance of preventative and primary health care to the long-term health and vitality of Calgarians. The CIHR reports that 9.1% of Albertans 12 years of age and older suffer from asthma - a disease related to poor indoor and outdoor air quality. The Calgary Health Region's *Health of the Region Report* asserts that 5,800 Canadian deaths annually can be attributed to air quality - mostly due to automobiles. It also reports on what it calls an obesity epidemic. One of seven 7-to-13-year-old Canadians is obese. This is a dramatic five-fold increase since 1981.

According to the *Health of the Region Report*, there is a 6.5-year difference in life expectancy among CHR communities. Where we live and our socio-economic status have a profound effect on how long we live.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

Alberta is in some ways at the forefront of change. In response to the *Romanow Report's* assertion that across Canada "concerns exist . . . about limited progress on advancing primary health care," Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) has been accelerating its Primary Care Initiative. AHW defines primary care as "the first point of contact a person has with the health system . . . it includes the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of various health conditions. It also includes referral to specialists and diagnostic services . . ." ³¹ The PCI focuses on health promotion and injury and disease prevention through a team approach and better coordination of services. Alberta Health and Wellness has allocated 100 million dollars from 2003-2006 to the development of Primary Care Networks.

The Virtuous Cycle

Determinants-of-health research is unequivocal on the benefits to individual, community and population health of the priority actions proposed in this report. Better city planning to produce walkable communities, greener buildings, living incomes and affordable housing all translate into healthier citizens, and a more sustainable and less costly health care system. According to Brent Freisen, Medical Officer of Health for the Calgary Health Region, "Action must be taken at a community and public policy level to minimize the impacts of social and economic factors on health."

All levels of government should work together to ensure that alternative or complementary health care is treated on an equal basis with conventional health care, that primary health care is the priority of our health care system, and that health care remain public and free of financial barriers to access.

Potential Barriers

As was recognized in the *Romanow Report*, the continuing focus on the medical model of intervention is a significant barrier to change. In the absence of a primary and preventative health care focus, we find ourselves with an infrastructure (e.g., hospitals) and medical interventions (e.g., rapidly increasing drug costs), human resource challenges (e.g., overreliance on doctors) and an unnecessarily unhealthy population that continues to place demands on our health care budget. In addition, the provincial government's obsession with privatization has diverted attention, focus and resources away from the transition to a sustainable publicly funded primary care focused health system.

Relevant Resources

The Romanow Report - www.hcsc.gc.ca/english/care/romanow/hcc0086.html.
Health of the Region Reports - www.calgaryhealthregion.ca
Canadian Institute for Health Research - www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca



A Zero-Waste City

Current Situation

Calgarians produce about 800 kilograms of residential waste per capita annually. Only 20% of this waste is diverted from landfills. The City of Calgary has a goal of 80% diversion by 2020. City Council voted to bring residential city-wide curbside recycling to Calgary by 2009. At current disposal rates, Calgary's three landfills have an estimated remaining life of 30 years.

Though industrial, commercial, institutional waste (ICI) makes up 44% of the city's waste stream, there are few programs aimed at diverting waste from ICI sources. Construction, renovation, and demolition waste (CRD) consists mainly of common materials for which reuse opportunities abound and recycling markets already exist. Calgary's 1997 Rocky Ridge Pilot Project demonstrated the viability of CRD waste diversion by recycling 73% of construction waste at a cost comparable to sending it to the landfill.

Provincial government programs support waste management of everything from beverage containers to electronics to hazardous wastes. The Recycling Council of Alberta advocates a zero-waste policy and recently, the Provincial Minister of the Environment called for a zero landfill goal for Alberta.

Relevance to Sustainability

Zero-waste strategies are one of many applications of the concept known as industrial ecology - an approach to the design of industrial systems as living systems fully integrated with natural processes. Designing a nature-inspired circular economy, where the byproduct of one process is a valuable resource for the next, will save money and support innovative business development in a sector of the economy with enormous growth potential for the future.

The methane released from landfills represents about half of the City of Calgary's greenhouse gas emissions. By eliminating landfills we also reduce the physical footprint of our city and preserve land for agriculture and natural habitat.

Where Has It Been Done Successfully?

Although no city in the world has yet achieved zero waste, many cities have zero-waste policies and are making significantly more progress toward the goal than Calgary. Cities with zero-waste targets include Toronto, San Francisco and Canberra, Australia. The City of Toronto is working to reach its goal of achieving 100% waste diversion by 2010. Cities that have achieved the highest rates of waste minimization include Edmonton (60% diversion), Guelph (62% diversion) and Halifax (57% diversion). The Edmonton Waste Management Centre of Excellence (EWMCE) contains a variety of state-of-the-art waste facilities, including a landfill gas recovery plant, a material recovery facility and co-composter, and a new research facility.

Kalundborg, Denmark supports the world's most renowned industrial ecology process. The Kalundborg complex includes an oil refinery, an electrical energy generation plant, heat for local homes, a wallboard manufacturer, aquaculture ponds and more. Waste from one or more facilities provides a valuable input for others.

The Virtuous Cycle

While businesses will incur costs for waste management under a zero-waste policy, they will also experience savings due to decreased material input, availability of local and lower-cost recycled materials, and elimination of disposal costs. In Germany, tough waste management policies have spurred technological innovation helping to put German companies at the leading edge of this emerging industry. A zero-waste policy in Calgary would give local businesses a competitive advantage in the environmental business sector. The material and energy savings of zero waste could be redirected into job creation. LEED building standards already promote strong waste management practices. In a zero-waste economy, we could realize health benefits because of the likely reduction of toxic and non-biodegradable materials.

Potential Barriers

Achieving a zero-waste city would require significant lifestyle changes for Calgarians. An important component of a zero-waste strategy would be reduced overall consumption and would require a cultural shift from viewing byproducts of our economic activity as unwanted waste to recognizing that all currently unused and discarded materials are actually a valuable resource.

Moving from a waste management model to an industrial ecology model will require a stronger public sector initiative. The City would have to find innovative methods of working with private sector firms that generate or handle waste. Viable markets for byproducts would have to be identified. Proven technologies for materials recovery and reuse would have to be identified and in some cases developed. The artificial economic advantages of virgin resources would have to be eliminated through the adoption of full-cost accounting. To overcome many of these barriers, collaboration with the provincial and federal governments would be essential.

Waste management professionals have identified other barriers - the perception that products containing recycled materials are of lower quality; conventional regulatory and product standards that inhibit resource recovery and the use of new processes; and concern that recovery or recycling may impose legal liabilities on organizations.

Relevant Resources

Zero Waste Canada - www.grrn.org/zerowaste/
International Society of Industrial Ecology - www.is4ie.org

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Citizen Profiles:

Fabien Clement

Shortly after his English class at Bow Valley College, Fabien Clement took the train to the west end of downtown where we were meeting for a coffee to chat about his views on the ups and downs of the accreditation process of foreign-trained professionals.

As a political refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Fabien, with his wife, Beatrice, and their six children, came to Canada in 2001. It was not long after settling in small town in Quebec that Fabien realized there was little opportunity for him to make use of his Masters degree in Education and 20-plus years of experience as a school teacher. Astute and motivated, Fabien began to explore how to make use of his experience. While doing so, he also learned about the limitations of the system. He laughs as he tells me about the various degrees and programs he tried his hand at in Quebec, including graduating with a diploma in Trade and International Transit Management and, when unable to find employment, enrolling in a nursing program. He is particularly careful with his choice of words as he diplomatically tells me that he left Quebec because of the lack of jobs, because he was unable to practice his profession, and because he had heard through the immigrant grapevine that in Alberta there would be more opportunities for him.

Since coming to Calgary just over a year ago, Fabien has been taking advanced English as a second language classes at Bow Valley College, working as a substitute French teacher in the public school system and continually dealing with the bureaucratic gymnastics of the accreditation process. To receive his Alberta teaching certificate, he must produce a letter from the Ministry of Education in the Congo; he exclaims, with great frustration, that given the political situation in the country and his status as a political refugee, this task would be "near impossible!" He is beside himself with the difficulties and asks thoughtful questions such as why the provincial government does not institute a recertification centre for foreign-trained professionals and why foreign-trained professionals are working at menial jobs when there is such a shortage of professionals in their field. He is particularly puzzled with the number of qualified professionals who have had the cost of their education covered elsewhere but find that the government refuses to "take advantage of this." The economy, as a result, continues to be strained.

He pauses and shares: "This is the first time I can express my frustrations, feelings, hopes and worries." Fabien's case, unlike many other foreign-trained professionals, is different in that he doesn't have to invest thousands of dollars into a Canadian education as do his medically counterparts. Despite there being one less hurdle to jump through, his economic and social burdens are similar to the thousands of other immigrants in his position.. I ask Fabien how life would be different for him and his family if he were able to practice as a full-time teacher in Canada. Quite simply put: "I would have enough income for a good quality of life . . . I can work at any job, but the psychological impacts would be different." Feeling hopeful that the situation will change, "because we are talking about it in Calgary - this is a fantastic thing!" he smiles.



Citizen Profiles: Lindsay Postill

"I would be contributing more to society; what I would make would go back into society for things I struggle with right now, and I would not be dependent on the system." This is how Lindsay Postill opened the discussion on how her life would be affected if she were guaranteed a living wage. The bubbly 43 year-old Aboriginal woman was not shy about sharing the difficult realities she faces. In fact, she wants people to better understand how she, as many others like her, are affected by poverty.

Diagnosed with a mental illness five years ago, Lindsay has a low tolerance for stress and is unable to work for extended periods of time. Coupled with a hearing disability from birth, there are few work opportunities for her. As she says, with frustration in her voice, "It really affects how you get a job." Despite having completed a program in computer programming at the Devry Institute, for the past several years, she has held several part-time jobs. Here most recent job is at Staples Office Supplies where she gets paid \$8.00/hour. So, you may ask, how does one live on such a salary?

Lindsay receives a modest income through Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and subsidized housing for people living with a mental illness, where she pays \$350/month. She comments on how she is one of the lucky ones as there is simply not enough housing for people with mental illnesses. She, like many others, has had to move around and take any housing she's given. For a short period of time, she lived at the Drop-In Centre until permanent housing became available.

Housing issues aside, Lindsay feels strongly about the changes that would affect her life if she received a living wage. She speaks about her goals of coming off AISH, going back to school and pursuing her dream career "to lead people and to contribute to humanity on social issues and to give back and hopefully cause change." Lindsay is well on her way to doing this, despite her income, which is well below a living wage. She is volunteering with the Living Wage Action Team at Vibrant Communities Calgary. She also contributes 15 hours a week at Potential Place Club House, a mental illness organization, and has recently completed a community development course at the university. Receiving a living wage, however, would minimize obvious financial stresses in her life.

She goes on to share her experiences and strong analysis of why living wage is a human rights issue that needs to be taken up by the provincial government. " , , , It's about humans having the dignity to live without worrying if they have food in the cupboard . . . it affects everyone, not just a bunch of poor people. It affected the generations behind us and how communities interact; it's as basic as food." Throughout our discussion, it became increasingly apparent that for Lindsay, living wage is about the government and communities working together. It's not just an issue of equity but one of equality.



Citizen Profiles:

Rob Campbell

Downtown professional, suburban dweller and soccer dad, Rob Campbell and his wife Cindy, packed up their belongings in Edmonton over 20 years ago and made their way to Calgary for job opportunities and to find a place they could call home. They set up home in the up-and-coming affluent Deer River, deep in the south end of Calgary where they found a true sense of community and raised their two sons Jason, 21 and Alan, 18.

The Campbell Family, as their email address reads, are the type of folks we all feel safe having next door. Rob and stay-at-home-mom Cindy coach basketball and soccer; they help organize the annual Stampede block-party; they recycle and compost and volunteer at various community events. Rob has participated in a number of workshops hosted by Sustainable Calgary in his search for a community of like-minded people to further the dialogue on environmental realities, his long-standing interest in solar energy, and most poignantly to deepen his growing awareness about the socio-economic divide, and as he says "society's short-sightedness and focus on short-term profitability."

We spent the better part of our conversation talking about poverty and the role that a living wage plays in that. Rob candidly shared that before the first Sustainable Calgary Citizens' Agenda workshop, where he chose to go into the poverty discussion group, he knew little about the economic challenges faced by a growing number of Calgarians, and the extent to which circumstance played a role in poverty. Rob is certainly not alone in this. He shared that although there was little exposure to these issues within his circle of friends, he believes there would be support for living wage policies. He goes on further to say that although his colleagues would be interested in hearing about the realities of poverty in Calgary and the extent to which a living wage would create change, he's not sure how much their interest would translate into action in support of living wage policies.

Ironically enough, Rob is, perhaps, in the minority of people living in privilege in our city who take action on poverty issues. He shares that with a living wage, people would begin to have more choices, there would be reduced crime and an increased quality of life for individuals. It is, as he astutely puts it, "an end state of where we'd like to be." He talks about the necessity of creating awareness and education so that larger companies would pay a living wage and how this would create a snowball effect. Rob is certainly on his way to further educating himself. He recently learned more about the actions that Calgarians are taking, through Vibrant Communities Calgary. It is certainly inspiring to see folks like Rob and Cindy, who don't appear to have a direct vested interest in these issues, finding meaningful outlets to be part of the solution.



Citizen Profiles: Tom Wiledy

Tom Wiledy would certainly feel a lot more control over where he chooses to work and what activities he partakes in if it were not so dependent on a transit system that is not particularly conducive to his lifestyle. Born with a developmental disability, Tom is limited by where he can work, what extracurricular activities he can engage in and the extent to which he can do these things independently. Being able to take the bus and train by himself is a significant feat he's managed to master over the years.

Happy-go-lucky Tom and long-time girlfriend Debbie live in Acadia because that's where housing was available for them. Because of his disability, Tom is limited as to where he can work. One of the few places where there are opportunities for him is within a restaurant setting. However, this entails late hours and forces him to use intermittent public transportation. This, coupled with the cost of transit and limited service, leaves him with few options but to work within walking distance from his home.

With the help of his community resource worker, Tom spent a significant period of time pounding the pavement to find work close to his home; this proved to be a lengthy and arduous task. When a position became available at the Santa Fe Grill, where he currently works as a dishwasher, Tom was quick to take it. Only a ten-minute walk from his home, he is pleased that he doesn't have to spend hours on transit as he did before at his previous jobs.

However, as Tom began to share more details about his life, it became increasingly clear that although he was pleased to work close to home, he was more impacted by the infrequency of transit service than he willingly admitted. For example, he has had to forfeit the few extracurricular activities that he can engage in, such as a workshop on personal safety and a weekly men's group, as juggling work and the sporadic transit schedule has proven to be difficult. In addition, a 20-minute drive from his home to the Southland Leisure Centre, where he exercises, takes a drawn-out hour and a half on the bus!

So how would Tom's life change if there were more bus routes and more frequent service? For starters, he would have more choice over where he worked, he would be able to participate more in the already limited activities that he currently participates in, and he would have a richer quality of life than his existing one of work and one visit per week to the Leisure Centre. The transportation spending framework is not inclusive of those who can only take transit. More roads are built daily to accommodate drivers; however, those individuals who work late nights and have limited choices with the type of transportation they can take are unable to reap the benefits of the hundreds of thousands of dollars put into the existing transportation spending framework.



Citizen Profiles: Yisha Pang

At the age of 16, Yisha Pang is certainly full of excellent ideas. We met for a coffee to talk about the idea of sustainability education in schools at all grade levels. Understanding the need to create awareness about the social, economic, and ecological dimensions of sustainability, the lively Grade 11 student at Western Canada high school was quick to share her thoughts on the possibilities and limitations of such an initiative.

As a co-chair of the CitySpeak wing of the Mayor's Youth Council (MYC), an initiative that works to bridge the gap between community, youth, and aldermen in the city, Yisha is familiar with the realities of shifting existing structures and getting people on board with new and unfamiliar initiatives, particularly around health and wellness. She shares in the same breath that it's exciting and that there are heated discussions because "you realize that there are other youth with the same opinions... it's good collaboration."

In addition to her involvement with the MYC, Yisha has a full International Baccalaureate timetable, is actively involved with her school's badminton and French Clubs as well as the Model UN Club. She spends her weekends at YuFeng Chinese School and, as if this were not enough, she also works part time at the Calgary Winter Club. An advocate of volunteering and influencing change, she believes that the best way to get sustainability education into the schools is to "integrate it into something that schools can do as a whole." She goes on to share that "if you implement that type of learning early on, it becomes a part of your routine." "Recycling is a good issue to start with. For example, educating students that it takes 100 years for a glass bottle to decompose often amazes young kids."

Yisha's involvement with the MYC has taught her that influencing policy is, in fact, a time-consuming and, at times, tedious, process. Integrating sustainability into the curriculum is not necessarily the best route, but it would be something that students would take on. She comments that "in school you learn a lot of things that are not applicable to daily life... but I would like to learn things that are tangible and applicable."

So how would Yisha be affected if there were ongoing sustainability education within her non-formal schooling? She shares in an indirect way that although there is a shared understanding amongst her peers at the MYC, the same awareness and action on social issues doesn't exist amongst her broader range of peers. Shifting policies as a youth would be more fruitful if there were more young people on board and the "older adults would listen more" to our input.

Next Steps: A City Built for Everyone

So where do we go from here? After almost 5,000 hours of work by over 1,000 Calgarians, we have identified and documented 12 priority actions and policies we believe will significantly improve the lives of all Calgarians and contribute to transforming Calgary into a more healthy, caring and vibrant city.

Citizens' Agenda *Phase II - A City Built for Everyone* will again invite Calgarians to put their heads and hearts and hands together to make these priorities a reality. Deliberative policy-making inspires our approach to this task. We want the dialogue to continue and deepen. Over the next five years, we will be convening action teams to take on this task. Decision makers, thematic experts and citizens working together will create action plans – the roadmaps of how we will achieve these priorities. Outreach and education teams will be ambassadors for the process reaching out into communities and organizations throughout Calgary to promote *A City Built for Everyone*. The approach we propose has four distinct elements.

A Sustainability Lens. We recognize that in a complex world the social, ecological and economic health of our community is interwoven and that durable solutions will have to be holistic ones.

Participatory Learning Process. Citizen participation that employs participatory action research, popular education methods and deliberative processes leads to better decisions and more effective solutions.

Inclusion of the Marginalized and Vulnerable. The welcoming and inclusion of the unique perspectives of our community's vulnerable and marginalized citizens will ultimately lead to better decisions, more effective solutions and a city that is built for everyone thereby enriching all our lives.

Collaboration. There are many individuals and organizations working toward the vision of a healthy, caring and vibrant Calgary. Collaboration can reduce redundant effort, enhance our ability to create the right roadmap, and build the political will and critical mass that will be necessary for success.

The first objective of *A City Built for Everyone* is educational. We want to engage as many citizens as possible in the ongoing dialogue about the future of our city. It is important that as a community we become more sustainability literate. Awareness and understanding are prerequisites for effective action.

A second objective of *A City Built for Everyone* is to have the 12 priorities endorsed by imagineCalgary. ImagineCalgary is a City-led process that over the past two years has engaged thousands of Calgarians in the creation of a 100-year vision for the city and the establishment of 30-year targets and goals. The Citizens' Agenda is an independent but complementary citizens process. With the 100-year vision and 30-year targets and goals in hand, the Citizens' Agenda offers a five-year workplan to kick-start the vision of a sustainable city.

A third objective of *A City Built for Everyone* is for the City Council Priorities document to endorse and allocate resources to each of the 12 Citizens' Agenda priorities. Ultimately these priorities are only achievable if local government champions them and is prepared to allocate resources to make them happen.

The long-term impact of *A City Built for Everyone* will be that 1) citizens understand the importance and impact of the priority actions and policies and support the efforts of decision makers to implement them; 2) decision makers support citizen-derived policies and actions to improve the quality of life in our city; and 3) the lives of all Calgarians, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable citizens, are improved.

More Great Ideas for a Sustainable Calgary

These 18 Priority Policy and Action proposals were also generated in the Citizens' Agenda process. Although they were not among the top twelve priorities, they did receive significant support from Citizens' Agenda participants.

1. The City of Calgary should adopt a green tax policy.
2. The City of Calgary should require water meters in all buildings by 2007.
3. The City of Calgary should implement a no smoking bylaw immediately.
4. The City of Calgary should ban the cosmetic use of pesticides within city boundaries.
5. The City of Calgary should integrate community associations formally into municipal government.
6. Municipal election campaign reform should be undertaken to make campaign financing more transparent and set limits on campaign spending.
7. The City of Calgary should support the creation of a "Festival of Culture" on the scale of the Calgary Stampede.
8. The City of Calgary should create a buy-local program.
9. Improve access for people with disabilities through the provision of supported employment and "community housing."
10. Equitable support for stay-at-home parents.
11. Improve funding and flexibility of English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.
12. Improve daycare salaries and professionalization standards.
13. Identify, monitor and ensure maximum hospital wait times.
14. City of Calgary recreation facilities should eliminate economic barriers to their use.
15. The City of Calgary should provide and fund more recreational programs and facilities for children and youth in high needs communities.
16. Undertake a full-cost accounting audit for big-box retail developments.
17. Transit fare increases should be capped for five years.
18. The City of Calgary should work with community partners to institute a car-free day(s) in Calgary and an expanded pedestrian zone in the downtown core.

