CICBA Mayoral Candidate Q&A on Calgary's Established Areas

This year, the Calgary Inner City Builders Association (CICBA) engaged with five mayoral candidates: Brian Thiessen, Jyoti Gondek, Sonya Sharp, Jeff Davison, and Jeromy Farkas in a focused Q&A about the future of Calgary's established communities.

CICBA asked each candidate to share their views on three critical questions:

1. Do you believe established areas benefit from infill and redevelopment activity? Why or why not?
2. What do you see as the most pressing issues currently facing established areas, and how would you prioritize and address these if elected?
3. In your view, is the existing infrastructure and service delivery in established areas sufficient? If yes, please explain. If not, what improvements are needed to address the deficiencies?

These questions go to the heart of how Calgary will grow, adapt, and thrive in the years ahead. The candidates' responses provide Calgarians with valuable insight into the vision for redevelopment, infrastructure, and livability in established communities.

Why It Matters
Established areas are central to Calgary's identity. The decision made about redevelopment and investment will directly affect housing, sustainability, and the long-term vitality of our inner city. CICBA believes that ensuring these voices are heard is a critical step in advancing a thoughtful conversation about Calgary's future.

What's Next
The full set of candidate responses is available through the document below. We encourage Calgarians to explore their perspectives, compare approaches, and reflect on how each vision aligns with their priorities for a strong and vibrant city.

CICBA Mayoral Candidate Q&A: Brian Thiessen, The Calgary Party

The Calgary Inner Builders Association (CICBA) invited mayoral candidates to respond to three key questions about Calgary's established areas. Brian Thiessen, representing The Calgary Party, offered the following perspectives:

1. **Do you believe established areas benefit from infill and redevelopment activity? Why of why not?**

Thiessen supports infill and redevelopment, emphasizing that many established neighbourhoods have seen population declines of up to 30%. He argues redevelopment is essential to restore vibrancy, sustain local schools and businesses, and strengthen Calgary's urban core.

2. **What do you see as the most pressing issues currently facing established areas, and how would you prioritize and address these if elected?**

Housing is identified as the top priority. Thiessen points to the need for increased supply across all price ranges, tied to density that can fund stronger community services. He stresses that many neighbourhoods lack adequate services today and that revitalization requires a stronger tax base to support them.

3. **In your view, is the existing infrastructure and service delivery in established areas sufficient? If yes, please explain. If not, what improvements are needed to address the deficiencies?**

Thiessen believes infrastructure in established areas requires reinvestment. His approach includes;

- Strategic density and transit-oriented development
- Innovative financing (such as exploring a water utility to fund infrastructure)
- Tackling Calgary's tax base gap through office-to-residential conversions and economic diversification
- Ensuring fiscal discipline in city spending

Closing

Thiessen argues that combining redevelopment, innovative financing, and fiscal responsibility will revitalize Calgary's established communities and position the city for long-term success.

CICBA Mayoral Candidate Q&A: Jyoti Gondek, 2025 Calgary Mayoral Candidate

The Calgary Inner Builders Association (CIBCA) invited mayoral candidates to respond to three key questions about Calgary's established areas. Jyoti Gondek offered the following perspectives:

1. **Do you believe established areas benefit from infill and redevelopment activity? Why or why not?**

Gondek supports redevelopment in established areas, highlighting that it creates more diverse housing options and revitalizes neighbourhoods with new residents, retail, and commercial activity. She stresses, however, that redevelopment must be paired with infrastructure investments such as sidewalks, roads, parks, transit, and utilities. She points to her past work as Ward 3 Councilor, where she established a $30 million seed fund to support such improvements.

2. **What do you see as the most pressing issues currently facing established areas, and how would you prioritize and address these if elected?**

For residents, Gondek emphasizes the need for clear communication around redevelopment timelines, construction impacts, and planned infrastructure or amenity investments. She advocates for regular, transparent updates to both residents and businesses.

For developers, she identifies uncertainty and unpredictability in city processes as a key barrier. She calls for more consistent, solution-focused regulatory decisions and depoliticized Council decision-making to create stability for investment.

3. **In your view, is the existing infrastructure and service delivery in established areas sufficient? If yes, please explain. If not, what improvements are needed to address the deficiencies?**

Gondek believes existing infrastructure requires city co-investment alongside developer contributions. She stresses that city budgets must reflect the needs of established areas, ensuring accessible mobility, resilient underground infrastructure, and strong public amenities.

To fund these improvements, she underscores the importance of strengthening Calgary's tax base through downtown revitalization and industrial growth, ensuring the city has sustainable revenue for the future.

Closing

Gondek argues that pairing redevelopment with infrastructure investment, clear communication, and a stronger tax base will ensure Calgary's established areas remain livable, vibrant, and resilient.

CICBA Mayoral Candidate Q&A: Sonya Sharp, 2025 Mayoral Candidate

The Calgary Inner City Builders Association (CICBA) invited mayoral candidates to respond to three key questions about Calgary's established areas. Sonya Sharp shared the following perspectives:

1. **Do you believe established areas benefit from infill and redevelopment activity? Why or why not?**

Sharp supports infill and redevelopment as a way to revitalize neighbourhoods, attract younger residents, and bring new amenities. However, she stresses redevelopment must be sensitive to community character and avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach. She opposes blanket rezoning and emphasizes the need to rebuild trust between City Hall, builders, and residents so redevelopment can be welcomed rather than resisted.

2. **What do you see as the most pressing issues currently facing established areas, and how would you prioritize and address these if elected?**

Sharp highlights inefficiencies in City Administration and planning processes, calling for clearer timelines, consistency in decision-making, and better collaboration with builders and communities. She points to upcoming initiatives like The Calgary Plan (new zoning bylaw, MDP/CTP updates, and small-scale housing policy) as critical. Reducing costly resident appeals, improving infill development processes, and rebuilding trust with communities are top priorities for her.

3. **In your view, is the existing infrastructure and service delivery in established areas sufficient? If yes, please explain. If not, what improvements are needed to address the deficiencies?**

Sharp believes infrastructure in established areas requires significant reinvestment. She advocates using reserves and levies to upgrade utilities and services in alignment with redevelopment, rather than placing the burden solely on builders. She calls for fairer cost-sharing on infrastructure replacement, expanded bus routes, and faster approval timelines. As mayor, Sharp pledges to focus budgets on core responsibilities and prioritize modern, safe, and accessible community infrastructure.

Closing

Sharp emphasizes that a balanced, collaborative approach, respecting community concerns, supporting builders, and prioritizing infrastructure, will ensure established areas remain strong, vibrant, and welcoming.

CICBA Mayoral Candidate Q&A: Jeff Davison, 2025 Mayoral Candidate

The Calgary Inner City Builders Association (CICBA) invited mayoral candidates to respond to three key questions about Calgary's established areas. Jeff Davison shared the following perspectives:

1. **Do you believe established areas benefit from infill and redevelopment activity? Why or why not?**

Davison supports infill and redevelopment as an important means of renewing aging communities and making more efficient use of existing land and infrastructure. He believes redevelopment can bring new amenities, housing options, and vitality to neighbourhoods, provided it balances growth with community character. Division emphasizes that Calgary's strength lies in the diversity of its communities and that residents should have the final say in how redevelopment unfolds where they live

2. **What do you see as the most pressing issues currently facing established areas, and how would you prioritize and address these if elected?**

Davison identifies aging infrastructure, housing affordability, and community safety as the most pressing challenges. His priorities include reinvesting in infrastructure while supporting housing choices that reflect each neighbourhood's identity and ensuring that public services are responsive to community needs. He emphasizes the importance of collaboration with residents so that redevelopment decisions align with local expectations and values.

3. **In your view, is the existing infrastructure and service delivery in established areas sufficient? If yes, please explain. If not, what improvements are needed to address the deficiencies?**

Davison believes much of the infrastructure and service delivery in established areas is aging and in need of reinvestment. He notes that roads, water systems, and transit infrastructure often fail to meet modern demands, with more than 40 % of Calgary's roads in disrepair. His plan focuses on upgrading critical infrastructure and ensuring reliable, accessible services for residents. He maintains that the City Council should prioritize these essential improvements over "ideological pet projects."

Closing

Davison argues that pragmatic leadership focused on reinvestment, community input, and responsible priorities will ensure Calgary's established areas remain strong, safe, and sustainable for future generations.

CICBA Mayoral Candidate Q&A: Jeromy Farkas, 2025 Mayoral Candidate

The Calgary Inner City Builders Association (CICBA) invited mayoral candidates to respond to three key questions about Calgary's established areas. Jeromy Farkas shared the following perspectives:

1. **Do you believe established areas benefit from infill and redevelopment activity? Why or why not?**

Farkas believes established areas benefit from well-planned infill and redevelopment. Thoughtful redevelopment revitalizes communities, supports local businesses, provides diverse housing options, and allows Calgarians to live closer to jobs, school, and transit.

These benefits, however, depend on a clear and consistent process that communities can support. His housing platform calls for replacing blanket rezoning with a targeted, transparent, and infrastructure-informed approach, supported by a coordinated Housing Delivery Team and City Hall to accelerate approvals and align departments effectively.

2. **What do you see as the most pressing issues currently facing established areas, and how would you prioritize and address these if elected?**

Farkas identifies planning uncertainty, aging infrastructure, limited housing options, and declining trust as key challenges in established areas. His priorities include focusing redevelopment near transit, employment, and education hubs, while linking growth to infrastructure readiness through long-term servicing forecasts

He also emphasizes faster approvals for family-friendly housing and renewed collaboration between City Hall, builders, and residents. Rebuilding trust is central to his platform. Ensuring growth strengthens neighbourhoods rather than divides them.

3. **In your view, is the existing infrastructure and service delivery in established areas sufficient? If yes, please explain. If not, what improvements are needed to address the deficiencies?**

Farkas notes that infrastructure in many established areas is aging and insufficient to support future growth. To address this, he proposes clear infrastructure alignment requirements for major rezonings, rolling neighbourhood forecasts, and a City-led site readiness program to service underused parcels near transit and job hubs.

He supports stronger collaboration with other levels of government to fund renewals and creating a predictable, transparent infrastructure fee structure to give builders greater confidence in reinvestment.

Closing

Farkas envisions a Calgary that grows with purpose, transparency, and collaboration. His leadership focuses on restoring certainty to the planning process, encouraging investment, and building strong, sustainable neighbourhoods that support Calgary's long-term success.