



VitalConversations 2010 Listen – Learn – Talk – Connect
Let's talk about building a sustainable city

ROUND 1:

While there are already a lot of sustainability related initiatives happening in Calgary...

What possibilities have the power to transform our city and would most inspire you?

1. Focus on Sustainable Neighbourhoods
 - a. Decentralization and self-contained communities with food shops, arts and cultural hubs, community programs
 - b. Increase community newsletters to update on events (small scale SWERVE)
 - c. To reduce on long commutes, need multi-zoning in neighbourhoods, more transit, more self-sustaining, decentralization, improved infrastructure
 - d. Positive management of small communities (more innovative)
 - e. Innovative projects for multi-family housing to encourage social cohesion
 - f. Human scale communities vs. car scale communities
 - g. Planning/Zoning to introduce employment to declog roads/transit

2. More Public Space
 - a. Opportunity to connect through public space
 - b. Increase civic engagement
 - c. Self-organized events
 - d. Community programs
 - e. Community gardens/picnic areas
 - f. Encourage more public dialogue
 - g. More green spaces for social connections
 - h. More vibrancy in downtown – festivals etc.

3. More Public Dialogue with action/unified vision
 - a. Public Dialogue that involves all sectors
 - b. Need to form a vision/mission of our city
 - c. Who are 'we'
 - d. Need to integrate cultural, economic, environmental and social sustainability
 - e. Need to use momentum from discussion to create change



4. Embrace Multiculturalism
 - a. Encourage Cultural Events
 - b. Use parks for cultural events
 - c. Embrace mosaic
5. Sustainable Food
 - a. Food Policy Network
 - b. Community Gardens
 - c. More effective transit to Farmer's markets
 - d. Need more flexible policy/social expectations when it comes to personal gardens/livestock
6. Create environment for innovation
 - a. Calgary needs to increase change in City Council
 - b. Fear of change in leaders and communities
 - c. Need to take risks
7. On-Street bike paths
 - a. Make alternate transport easier
8. Transit
 - a. Focus on transit between communities, not just to core for business
 - b. Increase transit
9. Research and Learn from other sustainable company's/countries
 - a. Tours of sustainable communities
 - b. Tour organic gardens
 - c. Look at Denmark re; sidewalks, bike paths, car lanes
10. Social Enterprise
 - a. Social enterprise structure for community gardens
 - b. Social enterprise creates sustainability in all sectors

ROUND 2:

Among the many initiatives already underway that are working in favour of the possibility of a more sustainable Calgary, what opportunities or assets (e.g., organisations, people, projects, investments, etc.) are most interesting or exciting to you?

Assets:

1. The City of Calgary
 - a. LEED Buildings
 - b. Office of Sustainability – connecting the city to the community
 - c. Plan it – but where is the action?, need citizens behind the plan
 - d. 3-11 is like an online portent to advertise all categories of the city

- e. Mayor's environmental expo
 - i. Engaging youth
- f. City Links – support seniors in external maintenance of homes
- g. Centralized City website, links with other sites around town
- 2. Civic Camp
- 3. Calgary Public Libraries
 - a. Programs and classes offered to a broad section of the community
 - b. CPL is under-utilized
- 4. The Calgary Foundation, United Way
 - a. Bringing groups together for public dialogue
 - b. Community conversations
 - c. Centralized place for good initiatives
- 5. Great Parks and Pathways
- 6. Civic Camp, Calgary Arts Development Association, REAP business Association, Centre for Newcomers, Volunteer Calgary, Food Policy Council

Opportunities:

- 1. Improvement in transit
 - a. TOD (transit oriented development), but don't have hope that this will actually happen
- 2. More Community Gardens, Green Spaces, Bike Paths
- 3. Multi-use Neighbourhoods
- 4. City - New branding away from 'cowboy mentality'
- 5. Partnerships
 - i. Oil and gas industry motivated them to participate in sustainable activities

What in your view are the top three challenges standing in the way of a more sustainable Calgary?

TOP 3

- 1. Political Environment
 - a. Risk Adverse
 - b. lack of strong/progressive/effective decision making and leadership
 - c. Slow decision making
 - d. Lack of political will and knowledge
 - e. Voter apathy
 - f. Orphaned issues ie. food security

- g. mind-set on budget spending
2. Access to Public Space, no sense of connectivity, community isolation, social distance between people
3. Transportation – need to improve transit, car centred-culture

Other challenges:

4. Lack of motivation: sense of Comfort - see no reason to change, disconnect between action and consequences, excessive consumerism
5. Planning, managing urban sprawl, need multi-use neighbourhoods
6. Affordability of living accommodations in inner-city
7. Action – lots of opportunity for conversation, need opportunities for practical action
8. Negative media coverage, need more positive coverage to community successful developments

ROUND 3:

What are you already doing that is contributing toward Calgary becoming a more sustainable city?

- Participating in public dialogue
- choosing sustainable transit (walk, bike, transit, carpool)
- planting a garden
- participating in civic camp
- volunteering
- joining community kitchens, river clean-ups
- choosing to live in inner city
- participating in community gardens
- recycling
- food policy council
- altering consumer choices
- connection with neighbours
- organizing street parties
- buying local food
- build a green house
- support local business
- composting
- vegetarian diet
- water barrels
- Supporting local artists
- Healthy Yard initiative (no grass)
- conscious water consumption
- re-using, repairing, repurposing worn garments and household items
- getting a Green Calgary audit for home and lifestyle



What might you do in the future?

- Take part in community gardens
- become friends with my neighbours
- engaging people from different ethnic groups
- have a 0 emission house, electric car
- keep my thermostat lower than I did last year
- capitalize on potential
- stop complaining, start dreaming
- change political structure
- use public transit
- ride bike to work
- engaging in civic affairs – go to council and voice an opinion
- gardening with native plants
- grow fruit trees
- take care of my neighbours
- smile at people on the bus
- install solar panels
- plan community focused events
- think critically and act accordingly
- stop being a taxpayer and become a citizen
- join community organizations
- plant an orchid
- walk more
- celebrate success
- explore more issues
- use a travel mug