
2019 FEDERAL ELECTION

WHAT THE CANDIDATES HAVE TO SAY

In a July edition of Urban Update, we asked what municipal issues were most important to our hometowns. The top answers were **municipal taxation, public safety, cannabis business infrastructure, and climate change**. We asked Saskatchewan candidates, “**How do you plan to work with municipalities to address concerns around these topics?**” and this was their answers:

Conservative Party:

Andrew Sheer: Regina- Qu’Appelle

I am writing to you today regarding the Conservative Party of Canada’s recently announced platform – My Plan For You To Get Ahead.

Our platform contained a number of exciting measures for municipalities, including;

- Empowering municipalities to increase housing supply through the Build More Homes Competition which will reward municipalities who have proven to reduce red tape in the sector;
- Supporting anti-gang task forces and better funding police infrastructure for local municipal forces;
- Working with provinces and municipalities to end the practice of dumping raw sewage into our rivers, lakes and streams;
- Partnering with municipalities to clean up used needles in public spaces;
- Maintaining the Gas Tax Fund and Goods and Services Tax rebate to municipalities; and
- Prioritizing infrastructure projects, like transit, that reduce congestion and gridlock and get people moving.

The last time I wrote to you was to reaffirm that a Conservative government would honour and maintain all existing projects committed to by the current government. It was a commitment I made to you in writing, a commitment I have made in speeches across this country, and a commitment I have made to many of you personally. That commitment still stands. It is also my intention to continue these projects on their original timelines, not to delay them.

As you very well know, we need to rethink how infrastructure dollars get spent. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO), 40 per cent of Justin Trudeau’s infrastructure spending lapsed in both 2016 and 2017. This is promised money that never flowed out the door.

When the PBO asked to see the Trudeau Government’s infrastructure plan, they found that “it does not exist,” and Statistics Canada’s own Infrastructure Economic Accounts show there has been almost no increase in infrastructure spending under the current Trudeau government.

While Justin Trudeau has been quick to point the finger and blame other politicians for his own failures, the reality is this has been a problem in every single province with governments of every different political stripe. I cannot even begin to imagine the level of frustration your municipalities must feel as press releases come across the wire with large numbers but with no money flowing into your communities.

A new Conservative government will spend the same amount on infrastructure as the current federal government. What we will do is spread this money out over a more reasonable and responsible timeframe by spending it over 15 years rather than 12.

When costing these changes, the Conservative Party of Canada specifically asked that all existing infrastructure commitments be reflected in estimates. On top of that, we also asked that the PBO to provide a level of uncommitted funding that could be spent on emerging infrastructure priorities. As you can see, that is all reflected in the independent costing of our proposal:
https://www.pbodpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/ElectionProposalCosting/Results/33020559_EN.pdf?timestamp=1570932482376

If you have any questions or concerns about our plans for infrastructure, I would strongly encourage you to reach out to my team who will always be available to take your calls and return your e-mails.

I would like to leave you with one final thought: Conservative volunteers across this country are energized. Our candidates are energized. We are working hard to earn the trust of voters across this country. We are very confident that on October 21st voters will elect a strong Conservative majority government.

If elected, I look forward to working with each and every one of you as partners.

Rosemarie Falk: Battlefords- Lloydminster Candidate:

Helping Canadians not just get by but get ahead is a Conservative Party priority and will be foundational to our platform as we move into the federal election. Municipalities are closely connected with local issues and by working together we can best serve Canadians.

As Member of Parliament for Battlefords-Lloydminster, I always appreciate the opportunity to engage with my municipal counterparts. This viewpoint is also held by my Conservative colleagues including Conservative leader Andrew Scheer. Indeed, Scheer has committed to working collaboratively with every level of government. He has said that “provinces and municipalities will be treated as partners” – as they should.

The Liberal's ineffective carbon tax has been a perfect example of Ottawa knows best. The Trudeau government has rejected the province's made-in-Saskatchewan plan to address climate change and instead imposed their punishing carbon tax. A tax that unfairly punishes rural communities like ours while doing nothing for the environment.

Instead of taxing Canadians while giving large emitters a pass, our Conservative plan invests in green technology. Our plan commits to working with all levels of government, indigenous peoples, farmers, hunters and anglers to help protect the environment. And, we will take the climate change fight global.

Tackling rural crime is another Trudeau government failure. The Liberal-controlled Public Safety Committee dragged its feet on a Conservative study on rural crime and when it did finally release a report it was void of any recommendations for action. Conservatives take rural crime seriously and will work to ensure that those who live in rural areas can feel safe in their own homes, by putting the rights of law-abiding Canadians ahead of the rights of criminals.

Whether it's the Liberal's disregard to rural crime issues, their punishing carbon tax, their failed infrastructure plan or their Ottawa knows best attitude, the fact is they are not delivering on the priorities of Canadians. Conservatives have a different approach, we want to work together to build better lives for the people we represent.

Green Party

Naomi Hunter: Regina-Lewvan Candidate:

Our key points on our plan to help municipalities to deal with the challenges with climate change and taxation are:

Increase the Gas Tax Transfer to municipalities to five cents/litre to be used in funding sustainable transportation initiatives such as public transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, and rural roads;

Change tax policy to create a new pool of long-term municipal infrastructure funding by allowing municipalities to issue new Municipal Registered Retirement Savings Plans Bonds which can be held in RRSPs and self-directed RRSPs;

Fund 'Green Cities' initiatives, ensuring (through contractual agreements) that the funding is not used in ways that encourage urban sprawl, but instead to reduce sprawl and GHG emissions, conserve electricity and water, increase densification, expand convenient, safe, reliable and affordable public transit, and build cycling and walking paths.

This funding will be transferred through six Municipal Superfunds of \$500 million/fund/year to which municipalities can apply for grant funding. These would go into specific funds targeted toward improving water and waste treatment, cycling/pedestrian infrastructure and community housing.

When it comes to public safety and justice our focus would be to:

Ensure meaningful and appropriate resources are available for communities that wish to use restorative justice and community healing programs in which wrongdoers make reparation to victims and their communities;

Focus on education and meaningful work for offenders while they are incarcerated in order that they might pay at least part of the costs of their crime and housing in jail, as well as become better prepared for reintegration into society upon their release.

The Green Party of Canada would work on the regulatory framework for the safe production of marijuana by small, independent growers and work with municipalities on the challenges of education and enforcement of cannabis.

Liberal Party

Winter Fedyk: Candidate for Regina-Lewvan

Cannabis:

As you know, the Liberal Government successfully legalized and strictly regulated cannabis to keep it out of the hands of youth and keep its profits away from organized crime. With the old approach to cannabis, billions of dollars of profit went to gangs and drug dealers. With the new approach, new cannabis-based businesses are resulting in economic development in various communities throughout the province. The federal government worked to ensure that taxation revenues would be shared between provinces/territories and municipalities. Unfortunately, the province of Saskatchewan has refused to flow the municipal share of cannabis revenues, so we continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that municipalities are adequately equipped.

Climate change:

In our pursuit to protect the environment, it is important that we grow the economy at the same time. We are doing that by putting a price on pollution across Canada. The majority of provinces and territories are showing real leadership. Where provincial governments fail to show leadership – like in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and New Brunswick – our government will step up and take action. Through our Climate Action Incentive, we are sending money directly back to Saskatchewan families, and a family of four will receive \$609 when filing their taxes, which means that 80 per cent of Saskatchewan families will get more back through the climate action incentive.

Infrastructure:

The Liberal Government's priority is investing in the economy, supporting families, growing communities, and to create jobs that strengthen the middle class. From roads to public swimming pools and hockey rinks, infrastructure keeps communities connected, helps grow businesses, and allows people to live healthier lives. That's why, through Budget 2019, the Liberal Government doubled the Gas Tax Fund, with a transfer of \$2.2 billion directly to municipalities this year for critical infrastructure projects and created the small communities fund. We will continue to invest in long-overdue investments in transit, roads and bridges that will help deliver economic prosperity today and well into the future.

Estelle Hjertaas: Candidate for Prince Albert

Public Safety:

Our government has been a strong partner with municipalities with regard to public safety. For example, in April 2019, Minister Goodale announced \$100 million in public safety funding for northern Saskatchewan, including wildfire and flood mitigation and the National Crime Prevention Strategy. This is the kind of investments in Saskatchewan municipalities that our government will continue to make.

Cannabis business infrastructure:

Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Team have legalized and strictly regulated cannabis to keep it out of the hands of youth and keep its profits away from organized crime. With the old approach to cannabis, billions of dollars of profit went to gangs and drug dealers. This government also took action to ensure that taxation revenues were shared between provinces/territories and municipalities. Though the province of Saskatchewan has refused to flow the municipal share of cannabis revenues, we continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that municipalities are adequately equipped.

Climate change:

We've been clear that we need to protect the environment and grow the economy at the same time, and by putting a price on pollution across Canada that's exactly what we're doing. Under the federal plan, 90 per cent of the proceeds from the fuel charge will be returned directly to individuals in that province through the Climate Action Incentive Payment. The average household in Saskatchewan will pay \$403 in extra costs due to the carbon price in 2019 and will receive \$609 through the Climate Action Incentive.

The other 10 per cent of the revenue from the fuel charge will be used to support the province's schools, hospitals, small and medium-sized businesses, colleges and universities, municipalities, not for profit organizations and Indigenous communities. I expect to work with municipalities to assist them in identifying priority projects for this funding.

Infrastructure & Taxation:

The Liberal Government's priority is investing in the economy, supporting families, growing communities, and to create jobs that strengthen the middle class - that's why the Liberal Government is investing in infrastructure projects across the country. Because when we invest in infrastructure, we build neighbourhoods. Infrastructure keeps communities connected, helps grow businesses, and allows people to live healthier lives. That's why, through Budget 2019, we doubled the Gas Tax Fund, with a transfer of \$2.2 billion directly to municipalities this year for critical infrastructure projects and created the small communities fund. We will continue to invest in long-overdue investments in transit, roads and bridges that will help deliver economic prosperity today and well into the future.

We are looking forward to being in touch ahead of the October election.

New Democratic Party

Talon Regent: Moose Jaw- Lake Centre- Lanigan Candidate:

I am an internationally recognized lawyer, business owner, and tech entrepreneur living in Moose Jaw. I have represented municipalities in both Queen's Bench and the Court of Appeal for matters of municipal taxation; I have practiced criminal law both in prosecutions and defence; I have provided legal advice to cannabis businesses and purchasers; and I have publicly listed climate change as one of my top 3 priorities. Suffice to say I have a strong understanding of municipalities' needs. As a lawyer and politician, I understand the Acts which govern municipalities and how they can be improved for municipalities to more easily carry out their vision.

Recent polls show an overwhelming number of Canadians feel municipalities do a better job of meeting people's needs and should have greater control over their processes. The NDP has always sought to enable municipalities, and I support that cause. Leaving the major powers of taxation in the hands of provincial and federal governments puts municipalities in a constant state of uncertainty. It has often resulted in larger governments crippling municipal budgets in order to balance their own. Greater control and certainty should be granted to municipalities.

Public safety is most improved when the citizens are well educated, healthy, and receiving a liveable wage. In order to curb the growing drug problems, all levels of government must coordinate in order to address the social determinants of crime. This type of upstream strategy is essential for a long-term solution.

Municipalities are on the front lines in dealing with cannabis businesses, incurring costs associated with zoning, bylaw enforcement, policing, and more. There are significant costs to municipalities associated with this major change in our society. The federal government left it up to the provinces to decide what share of the Cannabis Excise Tax would be distributed to municipalities. The Saskatchewan government has failed to make a responsible re-allocation of tax funds. As a Member of Parliament, I would be working to legislate a redistribution of taxes with a greater share guaranteed to go to municipalities.

Climate change is an issue close to my heart and it is one of my top priorities to take the climate crisis seriously. In addition to the many ambitious climate plans already released by the NDP, I want to see the creation of a decentralized renewable power grid that brings work, infrastructure and sustainable energy to rural and remote areas in our province.

WHAT THE PARTIES HAVE TO SAY:

Green:

In 2019, it is time to address the anachronism created by the 1867 designation of the municipal order of government as virtual “children of the provinces,” implement predictable stable funding to address the infrastructure deficit, and recognize the key role municipalities have to play in tackling climate change.

Successive governments have skirted the issue of ensuring municipalities are properly consulted and funded to fulfill their responsibilities. No one wants to reopen the Constitution. But, it is time to give the municipal order of government the tools and support required to provide the fundamental services relied on by the vast majority of Canadians who live within urban boundaries or in smaller and rural townships. With only 10 cents out of every tax dollar flowing to the municipal order of government, vast inequities in our governance structures and financial stability have been created. If responsibilities are downloaded to municipalities then revenue sharing agreements need to be reviewed to ensure that they have the funds to successfully fulfill those responsibilities.

It is time to create a mechanism with a seat at the table for municipal governments. Greens will create a Council of Canadian Governments, based on the one in use on Australia. The Council of Canadian Governments will work to set higher order policy priorities, with the goal of all orders of government using tax dollars wisely, through policy coherence, to tackle the issues that Canadians find most pressing, such as climate change and public safety. At the table will be federal government, provincial governments, representatives of Big City Mayors and smaller and rural municipalities as well as Indigenous – First Nations Métis and Inuit governments. We look forward to engaging you as partners in this endeavour.

Liberal:

Cannabis:

The old status quo failed - under 10 years of the Conservatives and for long before, it was too easy for our kids to access marijuana, and the profits were kept in the hands of criminals. We've changed that. Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Team have legalized and strictly regulated cannabis to keep it out of the hands of youth and keep its profits away from organized crime. With the old approach to cannabis, billions of dollars of profit went to gangs and drug dealers. This government also took action to ensure that taxation revenues were shared between provinces/territories and municipalities. Though the province of Saskatchewan has refused to flow the municipal share of cannabis revenues, we continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that municipalities are adequately equipped.

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