



November 17, 2017

Gordon Barnhart, C.M., S.O.M., Ph.D
Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
200-2222 13th Avenue
REGINA SK S4P 3M7

Dear Dr. Barnhart:

Thank you for your letter outlining the policy priorities for SUMA. I've had the pleasure over the last ten years as an MLA – including time as Critic for Municipal Affairs – to get to know many of your members and gain an understanding of the issues facing cities, towns, and villages in our province.

My vision for our province is one of hope, opportunity, and reconciliation for all. As you said in your letter, municipalities are an important partner for the provincial government in providing the services required to build a province that works for everyone.

Below are my responses to the questions posed in your letter:

1. I support the dedication of one point of PST revenues to municipal revenue sharing. If given the honour to serve as premier, I would work with SUMA and SARM to determine how to best ensure this important dedicated funding remains in place and would be open to the idea of enshrining the PST revenue sharing formula into legislation. It is so important for municipalities to be able to plan with confidence and have a reasonable estimation of what revenues they can expect from the provincial government when sitting down to draft their budgets. Municipal revenue sharing is an important part of that process and I would work with municipalities to ensure it would remain a permanent funding program for municipalities.
2. It's clear to me that there needs to be infrastructure funding for municipalities that goes beyond what is available under the current federal cost sharing structure. For many years, I have advocated for the establishment of a made-in-Saskatchewan infrastructure program that addresses the needs of our towns, cities, and villages.
3. I would be very supportive of a formalized consultation protocol so that municipalities are treated with respect and as partners by the provincial government. This consultation will ensure better policy decisions with municipalities directly engaged in responding to the challenges and opportunities that exist. Unilateral decisions made by the provincial government, like the cuts to

grants in lieu in the 2016-17 budget, were a slap in the face to urban municipalities and demonstrated the serious need for a more formalized consultation process as well as respect. I would work with SUMA and SARM as premier to create a consultation protocol to ensure municipalities will be treated as valued partners and won't be blindsided by government again.

4. I am not committing to expanding the taxing authority of municipalities, but the provincial government needs to be a full partner with municipalities that is open to dialogue and certainly needs to provide more funding and support for municipalities to build infrastructure and provide the services we all count on.
5. My plan to address climate change includes an ambitious energy efficiency retrofit program to invest in homes, businesses, and public buildings. I would work with municipal governments to invest in better windows, insulation, furnaces, and boilers to reduce our energy consumption, save money, and cut our emissions. I would also work with SaskPower and municipalities to act on opportunities for renewable power generation to decrease emissions in our province.
6. I would be very open to sitting down with SUMA to work out a solution to ensure municipalities are properly funded and able to service all types of businesses - including Crown Corporations. Leading a government that worked as a full partner for municipalities, I would restore the grants-in-lieu that were cut by the Sask. Party.
7. I believe there is a need for the province to contribute 1/3 funding to each project eligible for each pool of funding in Phase II of the Investing in Canada Plan. I would work to ensure funding for public transit in Saskatchewan, including working to negotiate a formula that places a greater emphasis on population, rather than current ridership, as well as pushing the federal government to allow for the use of federal public transit dollars to rebuild a province wide public transportation system.

Thank you for everything you do on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Saskatchewan people who call our cities, towns, and villages home and thank you for engaging in the leadership process at this critical time for our party and for our province.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Trent Wotherspoon
Saskatchewan NDP Leadership Candidate