

Honourable Mayor McCallion,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to these very important issues. I strongly believe that the Green Party stance is progressive and can have a very important impact on all residents of Mississauga.

Eliminating the National Municipal Infrastructure Deficit

Q. Will your party commit to providing additional sustainable, permanent infrastructure funding to cities in order to address the national municipal infrastructure deficit which affects the competitiveness of our country?*

A. The short answer is yes.

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 50% of Canadian tax revenue is spent on federal programs, 42% goes to the provinces and only 8% goes to municipal governments. Simply put, Canada's biggest fiscal imbalance is the imbalance between municipal governments and everyone else. The Green Party of Canada is committed to restoring this balance and working to rebuild a sense of community for all of us.

The Green Party of will first raise the GST back to 6% and dedicate 1% of that funding directly to municipalities in order for them to address critical infrastructure needs. We feel that Canadians will understand this knowing that this money will go directly to improving their communities rather than stagnating in Federal coffers. In addition to this, we will create several Municipal Super funds of \$500 million/fund/year (an average of \$100 for every citizen per year) to which municipalities can apply for grant funding. Some of the proposed funds include:

- a) Community Brownfield Remediation (CBR) Fund to provide assistance in cleaning up toxic and brownfield sites.
- b) Sports, Cultural and Recreational Facilities (SCRF) Fund to support the development of recreational and cultural facilities and refurbish existing facilities.
- c) Water and Waste Treatment Facilities (WWTF) Fund to upgrade water treatment, sewage treatment and recycling facilities to make them efficient, safe and sustainable;
- d) Mass Transit Promotion (MTP) Fund to improve and expand urban mass transit infrastructure and inter-modal connections, as well as car-sharing initiatives.
- e) Cycling and Pedestrian Promotion (CAPP) Fund to support pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and smart-growth developments that transform urban areas and towns into walkable communities linked by transit to reduce the need for owning and using cars.
- f) Community Housing Options Promotion (CHOP) Fund supporting a national housing program to build energy efficient co-ops and affordable housing units where there is a shortage of such housing options.

Creating a National Transit Strategy

Q. Will your party commit to the creation of a National Transit Strategy that will provide cities with a framework for sustained public transit expansion which will meet our needs for the 21st century?

A. The Green Party of Canada strongly believes in the creation of a National Transit Strategy. We understand that investing in a National Transit Strategy is not only good for commerce but it will, in fact, create thousands of jobs.

The Green Party of Canada will:

- a) Increase the Gas Tax Transfer to municipalities to 5 cents/litre to be used in funding the above sustainable transportation initiatives such as public transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and rural roads.
- b) Make transit passes tax-deductible to encourage workers and businesses to use public transport and make employee parking a taxable benefit.
- c) Ensure federal infrastructure funding does not go to expanding highways and roads.
- d) Re-invest in our national rail systems, building more train cars in Canada, and create green transportation and energy infrastructure corridors in key regions.
- e) Improve rail infrastructure and intermodal connections, increasing joint federal-municipal light rail investments, as well as improving VIA rail service nationwide.
- f) Create a national clean freight initiative, using both regulation and financial incentives to improve fleet efficiency and safety.

Creating a National Housing Strategy

Q. Will your party commit to creating a National Housing Strategy that will provide sustainable, predictable funding for affordable and supportive housing, including the renewal of funding for all federal housing programs before March 2009?

A. The Green Party believes it is the right of every Canadian to have affordable, safe and secure housing. It enhances people's health, dignity and life opportunities. It is an essential prerequisite to an equitable society. That said, it is a government's responsibility to lead by example.

We will create a National Affordable Housing Program that provides sufficient funds annually through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to community-based agencies across Canada to:

- a) Build new subsidized affordable homes: 20,000 new and 10,000 rehabilitated affordable units per year for the next ten years using capital grants and changes in tax and mortgage insurance regulations;
- b) Provide rent supplements or shelter assistance for an additional 40,000 low income households per year, for ten years;

c) Provide credit and loan guarantees to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives for the building and restoration of quality, energy-efficient housing for seniors, people with special needs, and low-income families;

d) Subsidize private developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their housing projects;

e) Extend provisions in the Income Tax Act to offer tax incentives to build affordable, healthy, energy-efficient, multi-unit rental housing and to include tax credits for gifts of lands, or of land and buildings, to community land trusts to provide affordable housing; and,

f) Dedicate funding to the co-operative housing sector to enable more new affordable housing projects to proceed.

I hope that these answers are satisfactory, and if you need anything else, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Jaymini Bhikha

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