



2011 FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN KIT

MAKE URBAN TRANSIT A PRIORITY!

COUNTDOWN TO THE FEDERAL ELECTION

Get Active – Get Involved!

A federal election is upon us once again. This is a great time to make your concerns known to candidates who may represent you in the House of Commons. It is important that you take an active role during an election because, if elected, these are the men and women who will shape public policy that affects you and other transit industry stakeholders across the country. CUTA encourages all of its members to get involved in their local ridings.

There are many ways to get involved in a federal election. This kit will outline some of the opportunities and provide you with the necessary tools to make urban transit issues a priority in this campaign.

The current political landscape

Prior to the dissolution of the 40th Parliament, the House of Commons was in a minority government situation. A minority government occurs when no political party succeeds in winning a majority (over fifty percent) of the seats in an election.

Below is a chart illustrating seat numbers by party at dissolution. For more information on current MPs, visit: www.parl.gc.ca

| Party | Number of Seats |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Conservative | 143 |
| Liberal | 77 |
| Bloc Québécois | 47 |
| NDP | 36 |
| Independent | 2 |
| Vacant | 3 |
| Total | 308 |

The role of the opposition in shaping public policy has been increasingly important in this minority situation. Election time is no different. Remember to engage more than one political candidate. Campaigns are an uncertain time and the incumbent MP in your riding may not be re-elected.

**Keep in mind:
Groups that are not proactive risk being marginalized!**

Tips to Increase your Involvement and Have an Impact on the 2011 Election:

1. **Obtain contact and background information** on your candidates by visiting the party websites:

www.conservative.ca
www.liberal.ca
www.blocquebecois.org

www.ndp.ca
www.greenparty.ca

2. **Write a letter** to the incumbent and/or candidate. CUTA is developing an online campaign tool that will allow you to easily find your local candidates and write to them. A fully customizable template letter will automatically be generated from the system. Since the nomination of party candidates is still underway, this tool will be ready to use shortly.

Feedback: Please send a copy of responses from candidates to: leclerc@cutaactu.ca. We will be keeping a tally of the responses in the CUTA Ottawa Office.

3. **Make an appointment** to meet with your candidates (usually no more than 15-30 minutes). Once you have met with a candidate, let us know how it went by filling out a questionnaire (page 7 of this kit).
4. **Engage the media.** Remember, the media can increase the exposure of transit issues, and even act as added pressure on local candidates – and candidates do pay close attention to the media during an election. Send out a press release and follow-up with a quick phone call to the editor or key reporters.
5. **Write an op-ed piece or letter to the editor** of your local newspaper. Invite the media to cover any political event you hold. Don't be shy – journalists are always looking for fresh angles and alternative viewpoints.
6. **Create your own event!** Invite candidates to meet local riders at a transit location; offer your assistance to all political candidates to host an event discussing issues that are important to transit users and the community (i.e.: a breakfast panel discussion on transit). Offer a garage, plant or office tour, as appropriate.

For more information and/or assistance with **Media Outreach**, please contact Alana Fontaine at 613.233.8906 or at alana@impactcanada.com

7. **Attend events at which the candidate will be appearing.** To find out about upcoming events, contact your candidate's campaign office or keep informed from the local newspaper.
8. **Attend events at which the Prime Minister or other opposition party leaders** will be appearing. To find out about upcoming events, contact the party office or keep informed from the local and national newspapers.
9. **Be ready** when candidates come knocking at your door. Ask pointed questions of the candidates. See key messages on page 5 of this kit.
10. **Vote** for the candidate that best represents your interests!

Party Positions on Transit

Over the course of the campaign, parties will unveil their policy platforms and make additional announcements on various issues. As parties make their platforms public, CUTA will analyse them and inform members about all transit-related issues. Here's a look at their positions on transit when the campaign was launched.

Conservative Party of Canada

- Not opposed to the concept of having an overarching Transit Policy Framework in Canada but made it clear that the federal government will not take the lead on this initiative. The provinces must come together and make it a priority.
- Committed in the most recent budget to develop a long-term plan for public infrastructure that extends beyond the expiry of the Building Canada Plan
- Proposed to enshrine the Gas Tax Fund in legislation (in the last budget)
- Showed openness to exempting from taxation transit benefits offered by employers to their employees - but did not materialize in a budget when they had the opportunity
- Focus on suburban and rural areas

Liberal Party of Canada

- Michael Ignatieff publicly said that Canada needs a national vision for public transit (FCM, June 2010)
- Showed openness to exempting from taxation transit benefits offered by employers to their employees – but never made any public commitments in that regard
- High Speed Rail not a focus for this election (leaves more room for urban transportation)
- Focus on urban areas

New Democratic Party of Canada

- Tabled legislation called “The National Public Transit Strategy Act” (2011) – the government was defeated before it could be debated in the House of Commons
- Tabled legislation to allow for employer provided tax exempt transit benefits (2010) – the government was defeated before it could be debated in the House of Commons
- Strong public transit champion

Bloc Québécois

- A Canadian framework for public transit would need to respect provincial jurisdictions
- Support the idea of making employer provided transit benefits tax-free benefits – a similar program exists in Québec
- Public transit champion

Green Party of Canada

- Canada needs a national and long-term transit strategy
- Propose to double existing funding to stimulate a massive re-investment in public transportation infrastructure
- Support the idea of making employer provided transit benefits tax-free benefits

Public Transit Key Messages

A Comprehensive Canadian Transit Policy Framework

- Transit capital requirements are growing faster than investments and critical infrastructure needs remain unfunded
- A long-term vision for public transit will be critical in helping to tackle national challenges including traffic congestion, commute times, rising gas prices, economic prosperity, climate change, public health, and safety and security
- A policy framework should be developed to clarify jurisdictional roles, responsibilities and priorities
- The policy framework should highlight goals for transit, and identify synergies amongst the objectives of different stakeholders

A Canadian Transit Policy Framework could include:

- New federal transit investment to maintain, renew and expand transit services across Canada
- Federal tax incentives for individuals to choose transit, such as an income tax exemption for employer-provided transit benefits
- Support for research to enable innovation and make transit operations more effective and efficient
- A requirement for integrated land use and transportation plans in recipient communities that make transit the primary means of serving future growth in travel demand
- Accountability measures to ensure all governments work in cooperation with each other.

Long-Term, Predictable, and Sustainable Public Transit Investments

- Capital transit investments are not keeping the pace with public transit infrastructure needs and ridership growth
- Long-term, sustainable, and predictable investment mechanisms are required to cover rehabilitating, replacing, and expanding transit systems
- Predictable and dedicated transit investments are necessary to boost the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian cities, and to accommodate population growth and a modal shift towards public transit
- Annual and dedicated permanent funding should be reviewed over time to see whether it is adequate, and the amount itself would be indexed to an escalator to keep pace with inflation.

Tax Exemption of Employer-Provided Transit Benefits

- This measure consists of non-taxable benefits offered by employers to employees to assist with the cost of commuting by transit
- Low cost initiative that focuses on the commute to work
- Similar programs in other countries (United States, England, France, etc.) and in Québec have proved successful and efficient
- Could be part of a broader strategy in tackling traffic congestion

Key Facts on the Urban Transit Industry

Transit as an Economic Driver

- The transit industry directly employs 45,300 Canadians and indirectly creates an additional 24,300 jobs.
- The economic benefit of Canada's existing transit systems is at least \$11.5 billion annually.
- The economic output of transit in Canada (increase in gross domestic product) is \$3.7 billion annually.
- Transit reduces vehicle operating costs for Canadian households by about \$5 billion annually.
- Transit reduces the economic costs of traffic collisions by almost \$2.5 billion annually.
- Transit reduces annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2.4 million tonnes, valued at \$110 million.
- Transit saves about \$115 million in annual health care costs related to respiratory illness.
- Taxes arising from capital transit investment: \$160 million.
- Traffic congestion costs the Canadian economy billions annually in lost productivity

The Scale of Transit in Canada

- In 2009, transit ridership in Canada exceeded 1.8 billion passenger trips, representing an average annual growth rate of over 3% since 2004 – nearly triple the rate of population growth.
- The availability of transit service has increased steadily across Canada in recent years, with the number of revenue vehicle hours growing at an annual average rate of 4.4% from 2004 to 2008.

Demographics and Transit Users

- 80% of Canadians live in urban areas
- 11% of all Canadian workers use transit for their commute to work
- 35% of Canadians who have access to transit in their communities use public transit in the course of their day-to-day activities
- Transportation represents the second most important household expenditure (shelter 20%, Transportation 14%, food 10%)
- The Canadian population is expected to reach 40 million in 2040

ELECTION FEEDBACK FORM

PLEASE PRINT

Your name _____

Organization _____

Name of candidate that you met with _____

Date of meeting _____

Name of Riding _____

Political Party

Liberal
 Conservative
 NDP
 Bloc
 Green

Duration of the Meeting

15 Minutes or Less
 15-30 Minutes
 30 Minutes or more

Was the candidate knowledgeable of the issues facing the transit industry?

Yes No

General comments and feedback from the meeting:

***Please print, complete and return by fax to Alana at (613) 230-2669 or by email at alana@impactcanada.com.**