

**2008 Federal Election Campaign
Questionnaire on Municipal Issues**

Riding:
Kitchener Centre

Candidate's Name:
Karen Redman

Candidate's Political Party:
Liberal Party of Canada

1. How will you and your political party involve municipalities – from rural communities to large urban centres – as partners on federal issues that have a direct impact on local governments and their citizens?

A new Liberal government will work in partnership with Canadian municipalities to address economic, environmental and social challenges. At the FCM Sustainable Communities Conference in February, Liberal leader Stephane Dion committed to investing in municipal infrastructure any future unanticipated surpluses that exceed the \$3-billion contingency reserve. The priority for this funding would be sustainable infrastructure: public transit, water systems, green energy, landfills and cleaning up contaminated sites. The Liberal party created the Urban Communities Caucus to foster partnership between the Liberal Caucus and Canada's municipal leaders. Canada's cities and communities need a federal partner who will lead our communities and our country in the right direction, for a richer, fairer and greener Canada for ourselves, our children, and the generations to come.

2. Will you and your political party commit to providing municipalities with a source of additional, sustainable and permanent infrastructure funding that grows with the economy? If so, how do you propose to provide that funding and when will such a plan be implemented?

The Liberal Party has a 10-year \$70-billion plan to directly address the \$123 billion municipal infrastructure deficit. As part of this commitment, we will honour all existing framework agreements that the Conservative government has signed with the provinces. We believe that when the Government of Canada puts its name on an agreement, future governments should respect it.

A Liberal government will be upfront and transparent about the priorities we will pursue in our discussions with the provinces and municipalities under the framework agreements. To that end, over the next 10 years, a Liberal government will allocate:

- at least \$10 billion for Strategic Infrastructure, particularly green infrastructure such as clean water and sewage treatment, and clean energy grids;
- at least \$8 billion for a National Transit Strategy that will enable our cities to expand their systems and green their transit fleets;
- at least \$3 billion for a dedicated Small Communities Fund, to ensure that all Canadians are able to see strengthened, more resilient infrastructure;
- at least \$4.5 billion for our country's Gateways, Corridors and Borders to ensure that Canada's infrastructure facilitates, rather than hinders, our trade and tourism industries while keeping Canada safe and secure; and,

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- at least \$3 billion for Sports and Recreational Facilities because an active society is a healthier society and Canada must renew and expand its arenas and other leisure facilities.

Second, a new Liberal government will invest any future unanticipated surplus that exceeds our \$3-billion contingency reserve into Canada's infrastructure. Third, a Liberal government will develop an Infrastructure Bank as an additional tool to finance infrastructure investment. This bank will provide low-cost financing for all levels of government that choose to borrow from it and will help finance long-term green infrastructure projects such as regional energy grids and high speed rail links in Canada's busiest commuter corridors.

- 3. Will you and your political party commit to the creation of a National Transit Strategy that will provide municipalities with the necessary resources to build, expand and operate their transit systems? If so, what role will municipalities play in the creation of that strategy and what additional funding will be made available for municipalities looking to improve their transit systems?**

The Liberal infrastructure plan includes at least \$8 billion over 10 years specifically allocated for transit.

- 4. Will you and your political party commit to formally involving municipalities in the creation of a national housing strategy that will provide sustainable and predictable funding to municipalities for affordable and supportive housing – including the renewal of funding for all federal housing programs before March 2009? If so, what specific role will municipalities play in the creation of such a strategy?**

A Liberal government will tackle the housing crisis by helping to provide for 30,000 new social housing units, and refurbishing another 30,000 existing units to make them more liveable. As part of this commitment, we will look to expand subsidies for dedicated units for low-income Canadians in federally funded co-operative housing. We will renew the Residential Rehabilitation Program and the Homelessness Partnering Initiative. And a Liberal government will help low-income families pay less on their energy bills: we will support the building and upgrading of affordable housing for low-income Canadians, to help them reduce their energy costs through high environmental standards – because every Canadian deserves to share the benefits of a greener economy.

- 5. How will you and your political party engage municipal governments in meeting our national climate change and clean air objectives?**

A new Liberal government will introduce the Green Shift, an approach to fighting climate change that has been praised by economists as the best way to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and boost the economy. Sadly, the Conservative plan not only fails to improve the environment, it will actually mire our businesses in a quagmire of red tape, loopholes and confusion.

Further, a new Liberal government will invest in renewable power to move Canada away from fossil fuels. We will invest in wind, solar, geothermal, hydro, wave and tidal, and biomass. A new Liberal government will respect our commitments and international obligations under the United Nations Framework on Climate Change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least 20 percent under 1990 levels by 2020.

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6. What will you and your political party commit to doing to enhance early learning and child care, so that they are more affordable and accessible, in communities across Canada?

A new Liberal government will partner with the provinces and territories to create new quality early education and child care spaces. Parents know – and studies show – that early education and child care helps their child grow physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally. Early education and child care is part of how many parents are able to achieve a work-life balance and provide exciting educational opportunities for their children. Conservatives cancelled the Liberal early education and child care agreements. They also broke their election promise to create 165,000 new child care spaces. The provinces and territories will find a new partner in a new Liberal government as we work with them to rebuild what was torn down by the Conservatives.

The long-term goal of a new Liberal government will be coast to coast to coast high-quality, early education and child care that respond to the needs of communities. In pursuit of this objective, we will allocate substantial new federal funds. At full implementation, the federal investment will climb to \$1.25 billion annually.

7. As our local economy continues to transform, what concrete measures will you and your political party commit to taking to help to strengthen our regional economy?

Liberal government would create a \$1-billion Advanced Manufacturing Prosperity Fund to support the Ontario manufacturing sector. This investment will:

- leverage significant private investment, and in so doing create jobs;
- attract significant secondary industries: suppliers, services, and other support businesses; and
- help position Canada as a leader in the manufacture of greener technologies and products.

A Liberal government would help to strengthen the Ontario economy by:

- cutting income taxes and business taxes;
- implement an Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance for companies that invest in green technologies;
- improve the Science, Research & Experimental Development tax credit;
- investing in education by supporting universities and students; and
- making significant long-term investments in infrastructure.

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Riding:
Kitchener Centre

Candidate's Name:
Martin Suter

Candidate's Political Party:
Communist Party of Canada

- 1. How will you and your political party involve municipalities – from rural communities to large urban centres - as partners on federal issues that have a direct impact on local governments and their citizens?**

We think that municipalities need to have status in the Canadian Constitution, and taxing powers to match that will end their current status as creatures of provincial governments. With more than 50% of Canadians now living in cities, it is impossible for cities to continue to function at the whim of senior governments, and without stable funding, status and appropriate wealth- taxing powers. The campaign for a new financial deal for municipalities has my full support. It must include adequate and stable funding for large and small cities across Canada, either through vastly increased unconditional statutory grants that cover all the costs of a 21st century city, or else wealth taxing powers so that municipalities can raise the funds they need through taxing the wealth of industry and big business. Property taxes should be levied solely for the purpose of providing services to property; other services should be uploaded onto the broad shoulders of provincial and federal governments which have wealth taxing powers now.

It's time homeowners and tenants received some needed tax relief

- 2. Will you and your political party commit to providing municipalities with a source of additional, sustainable and permanent infrastructure funding that grows with the economy? If so, how do you propose to provide that funding and when will such a plan be implemented?**

Yes, cities must have immediate, permanent, and adequate funding for infrastructure. This is urgent as municipal infrastructure is aging, and any further delay could result in catastrophes like collapsing bridges, as has already happened in Quebec and in the US. Senior levels of government should pay for infrastructure, and one way to do it would be to return 50% of road user taxes to municipalities, including gas and licence taxes. We are absolutely opposed to any plan to sell off or privatize public assets in order to pay for infrastructure renewal. This is akin to cannibalizing assets that have built up by homeowners and tenants over generations.

We are also opposed to toll roads, and any kind of P3 schemes, whether provincially, federally or municipally generated.

- 3. Will you and your political party commit to the creation of a National Transit Strategy that will provide municipalities with the necessary resources to build, expand and operate their transit systems? If so, what role will municipalities play in the creation of that strategy and what additional funding will be made available for municipalities looking to improve their transit systems?**

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Yes, we support the creation of a National Transit Strategy, and are fighting for mass rapid transit to be a feature of every medium and large city in Canada, to be fully funded by federal and provincial governments, through unconditional statutory grants. In addition, we believe that transit should not be funded through the fare-box, since lower fares, or free fares, lead to increased ridership and thus to fewer cars on the roads and to reduced automobile use and pollution. Capital and operating costs, including subway construction in the big cities, should be fully funded by federal and provincial governments.

4. **Will you and your political party commit to formally involving municipalities in the creation of a national housing strategy that will provide sustainable and predictable funding to municipalities for affordable and supportive housing - including the renewal of funding for all federal housing programs before March 2009? If so, what specific role will municipalities play in the creation of such a strategy?**

There is a crisis of affordable housing stock across Canada, most of it centred in Canada's cities. The federal government must take the lead with a national housing strategy that includes immediate and massive public investment in an emergency social housing construction program that would see hundreds of thousands of new units of affordable housing built in the next 4 years; these low-cost units to be for rent and for sale. This will bring down rents and prices, by easing the supply. Social housing should include transitional housing and emergency housing, to address homelessness, but must also address the fundamental issue of providing affordable housing to all. No-one should pay more than 24% of income for shelter. The federal government should be land-banking with municipalities to reduce the cost of land, and municipalities should be involved in every phase of planning and administering the projects.

5. **How will you and your political party engage municipal governments in meeting our national climate change and clean air objectives?**

We need to nationalize the oil and gas industries, and maintain public ownership and control over municipal utilities and provincial utilities. We need to build an east-west power grid that focuses on generating new clean power such as solar and wind. We should phase out nuclear power and work with provinces to phase out coal generated power. Public ownership and democratic control over gas and oil would allow for a 2 price system, higher for export and lower for domestic use. To do this, we'll need to get out of NAFTA, and adopt multi-lateral trade policies based on mutual benefit. We need to block the sale of Great Lakes water, and ensure that industries that pollute are forced to clean up, and to pay for the clean up.

6. **What will you and your political party commit to doing to enhance early learning and child care, so that they are more affordable and accessible, in communities across Canada?**

Canada urgently needs a universally accessible, affordable system of quality, regulated, public care. Currently in Quebec, such a system exists at a cost of \$7 per day per child. Child care workers should be adequately paid, and should all be ECE qualifications. Child care should be integrated with the public school system for seamless early learning for children from age 3.

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Big box, private child care corporations should not receive any public funding or support, nor should any private, for-profit child care provider.

7. As our local economy continues to transform, what concrete measures will you and your political party commit to taking to help to strengthen our regional economy?

We need emergency action to protect Canada from the credit and economic crisis in the US. This means immediate action to protect workers' pensions and savings, jobs, and homes. Canada should immediately end negotiations with the US on deep integration through the Security and Prosperity Partnership, get out of NAFTA, and adopt plant closure legislation with teeth to prevent further plant closures and layoffs. We need an industrial strategy to rebuild our industrial and automotive base: a Crown corporation to produce a Canadian car that is small, fuel-efficient, and environmentally sustainable; an appliance industry; machine tool industry; agricultural implements industry; ship-building and a Merchant Marine. This means a new trade policy based on fair trade, not free trade. We also need to expand social programs and build affordable housing to create thousands of new jobs in construction, and in the public sector. Public investment in a much needed infrastructure program will also create thousands of new jobs, as will needed new public investment in the arts, in democratic Canadian culture, and in amateur sports.