

## Candidate Responses from Halifax

- FILLMORE, Andy (Liberal)
- HOLLAND, Bruce (Conservative)
- MCGENN, Duncan (People's Party)
- ROBERTS, Jo-Ann (Green Party)
- SAULNIER, Christine (NDP-New Democratic Party)
- WILSON, Bill (Animal Protection Party)

1. **Internet/Cellular Connectivity:** Communities need internet and cell service to attract residents and businesses. The federal government committed \$1.7 billion to internet funding in the 2019 budget. While a good start, this is not enough money, and municipal governments can't afford what is needed.

### ***What are you prepared to do to connect Nova Scotia's communities?***

**Andy Fillmore, Liberal:** Our Liberal government made significant funding available for improved internet services and we are committed to continuing this important work. A Conservative government is promising \$53 million dollars in cuts, including to infrastructure. It is clear that only the Liberal Party has a credible plan to improve internet and cell service, including through our commitment to reduce cell phone bills by 25%.

**Bruce Holland, Conservative:** Lobby for the amount needed to complete the project!

**Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party:** We will support the current plan to provide internet and cell service to rural Canada. A Green government will help expand services to rural areas by re-imagining Canada Post. We will support Canada Post in establishing internet and cell service, as well as banking services. With the rapid withdrawal of commercial banks from remote areas, Canada Post will step in to provide essential banking in these communities. Public high-speed internet access will be provided free of charge in post offices, particularly in under-served rural and remote communities without libraries. Where space is available community meetings will be held in post offices. Electric vehicle charging stations will be provided in post office parking lots.

2. **Program Design:** The Gas Tax Fund (GTF) is a great federal-municipal partnership. Other federal programs aren't as straightforward, requiring provincial matching funds or administrative approvals.

### **Do you support more programs designed like the GTF, to ensure that Nova Scotian municipalities with limited resources are able to partner directly with the federal government to respond to local needs?**

**Andy Fillmore, Liberal:** The Liberal government has been a strong and willing partner with municipalities on a range of priorities over the last four years. We will continue that partnership. Meanwhile, the Conservative platform promises \$53 billion in cuts which will hurt municipalities.

**Bruce Holland, Conservative:** Yes, most definitely.

**Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party:** The Green Party would institutionalize federal transfers to municipalities through the creation of a Municipal Fund, renaming the Gas Tax Fund, which were delinked from gas tax revenue years ago. Ensure a doubling of current funding to ensure predictable and reliable funding to municipalities.

3. **Infrastructure Funding:** Municipalities own close to 60% of public infrastructure but receive just ten cents of every tax dollar collected. Many federal infrastructure funding programs are available, but applying to them requires staff capacity that many small municipalities lack.

**Would you commit to funding staff and program resources at NSFM to support small and rural municipalities to access much-needed infrastructure funding?**

**Andy Fillmore, Liberal:** The Liberal government has made historic investments infrastructure, committing over \$120 billion for this purpose. We will continue to invest in communities, urban and rural. Meanwhile, the Conservative platform promises \$53 billion in cuts, including to infrastructure. The choice is clear.

**Bruce Holland, Conservative:** Yes. A great way to help smaller Municipalities.

**Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party:** Yes and the Green Party is proposing strong measures to make sure this happens. First of all, allocate one per cent of GST to housing and other municipal infrastructure on an ongoing basis to provide a consistent baseline of funding. Secondly, make changes to the Canada Infrastructure Bank to reduce interest rates to municipalities on loans for infrastructure projects.

4. **Cannabis:** The federal government promised a significant portion of cannabis tax revenues would be shared with municipalities. Despite multiple requests for revenue-sharing arrangements, no long-term commitment has been achieved here in Nova Scotia.

**What will you do to work with municipalities to ensure they are delivered a portion of cannabis-related excise tax?**

**Andy Fillmore, Liberal:** This is a question that falls under the purview of provincial jurisdiction.

**Bruce Holland, Conservative:** Lobby the Cabinet to share these profits with Municipalities.

**Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party:** There are several things Green MPs will champion to make the sale of cannabis more equitable. With regard to municipalities we would create a Council of Canadian Governments. All orders of government would be at the table, federal, provincial, municipal and Indigenous. This would allow us to deal with issues that involve several orders of government to negotiate agreements and formulas on several issues including the cannabis-related excise tax.

5. **Affordable Housing:** If elected, what would you and your party do to increase the supply of affordable housing in your communities?

**Would your government honour the commitments made under the \$40-billion National Housing Strategy?**

**Andy Fillmore, Liberal:** We introduced Canada's first-ever National Housing Strategy with a clear set of ambitious goals. We will honour the commitments we made under that strategy.

**Bruce Holland, Conservative:** I would lobby to have Municipalities deliver the affordable housing programs. They are in a much better position to know where these projects are needed and will be able to complete them more timely.

**Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party:** Yes we would honour the agreements made under the National Housing Strategy and we would go further. A Green government would Legislate housing as a legally protected fundamental human right for all Canadians and permanent residents. Appoint a Minister of Housing to strengthen the National Housing Strategy so that it meets the needs for affordable housing that are unique to each province and oversee its implementation in collaboration with provincial ministers. This recognizes that housing is provincial jurisdiction. The target would be 25,000 new and 15,000 rehabilitated units annually for the next 10 years. Increase the National Housing Co-investment Fund by \$750 million for new builds, and the Canada Housing Benefit by \$750 million for rent assistance for 125,000 households. Create a Canada Co-op Housing Strategy that would update the mechanisms for financing co-op housing, in partnership with CMHC, co-op societies, credit unions and other lenders.

6. **Immigration:** Immigration must play a key part in helping our communities remain viable, but numbers show that many immigrants to Nova Scotia forge westward in search of healthier economies.

**What will you and your party do to help Nova Scotian communities, especially rural communities, attract - and more importantly, retain - immigrants?**

**Andy Fillmore, Liberal:** Through the federal government's Atlantic Immigration Policy, we have helped grow Nova Scotia's population to its highest level ever. Immigration is at an all-time high. We will continue this work.

**Bruce Holland, Conservative:** It is important to recognize the reasons why Immigrants are not staying and address those issues so they will.

**Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party:** Support services for immigrants are often one of the areas smaller and rural communities need to retain newcomers. The Green Party is calling for much greater funding for language training and working with municipalities to improve services for the integration of new Canadians into the multicultural fabric of our country. We will assist communities by assisting cultural organizations obtain charitable status.

7. **Climate Change:** The aftermath of Hurricane Dorian has exposed Nova Scotians to the costs of new weather extremes. Federal representatives from all parties need to commit to long-term tools that will empower our municipal leaders to protect Canadians from these changing conditions.

**How will your government ensure municipalities are helped to make their communities more resilient and to green our economies?**

**Andy Fillmore, Liberal:** The Liberal government has invested historic amounts in green infrastructure to help us adapt to the reality of climate change. That will continue. In addition, our 2019 Liberal platform includes significant new funding programs for disaster relief. Meanwhile, Conservatives are promising \$53 billion in cuts that will hurt municipalities at their time of greatest need.

**Bruce Holland, Conservative:** Well, the list goes on here. We have committed to many, many initiatives to help make communities more resilient and to green our economies. I recommend you refer to our campaign platform to see these many initiatives.

**Jo-Ann Roberts, Green Party:** Greens assist municipalities in a number of ways with infrastructure funding.

In addition, we would:

- Direct the Canada Infrastructure Bank, revamped to exclude private profit in infrastructure, to invest in climate-proofing essential infrastructure, prioritizing upgrades to drinking water and wastewater systems to protect against flooding, droughts and contamination.

- Using the existing Green Infrastructure Fund, launch a national program to restore natural buffer zones along waterways, and carbon sinks through ecologically sound tree-planting and soil re-building.

- Invoke federal powers for peace, order and good government to develop non-commercial aspects of forest management, such as massive tree planting, creating fire breaks and fire suppression, for climate change adaptation.

- Renew the abandoned process of a National Forest Strategy, with the focus on restoring ecologically sound and climate resilient forests, and restoring forests as carbon sinks, in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. Orient federal forest science towards this goal. Increase forest fire preparedness, including buying water bombers and ensuring they can be deployed rapidly in high-risk zones.

- Create a national cycling and walking infrastructure fund to help support zero emissions active transportation.

- Enact the Via Rail Act to implement a passenger rail transportation policy. Invest \$500 million in 2020-21, rising to \$720 million by 2023 to develop regional rail networks and strengthen rail connections between regions. This will include building several sections of 10 km of track to avoid bottlenecks where heavy freight pushes passenger rail to the siding.

- Launch a massive energy efficiency retrofit of residential, commercial and institutional buildings. To make a renewable energy transition possible, we have to eliminate energy waste. According to trade union research, this will create over four million jobs.

- Finance building retrofits and installation of renewable energy technologies such as solar and heat pumps through direct grants, zero-interest loans and repayments based on energy/cost savings.

- Change the national building code to require new construction to meet net-zero emission standards by 2030 and work with the provinces to enact it.