

Candidate Responses from Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook

- COPLEY, Kevin (Conservative)
- EDMONDS, Anthony (Green Party)
- HOGG, Sybil (People's Party)
- SAMSON, Darrell (Liberal)
- STICKLAND, Matt (NDP-New Democratic 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?

Darrell Samson, Liberal: The liberal party is committed to ensuring that every person in Canada has access to reliable, high-speed internet – including the 1.5 million households that would otherwise be underserved – we will move forward with building a fully connected Canada, including our rural, remote and northern communities. We have set a national target to ensure that 95 per cent of Canadian homes and businesses will have high-speed internet by 2026, and 100 per cent by 2030, no matter where they are located in the country.

Matt Stickland, NDP: In today's connected world, having access to a phone and high-speed internet is a necessity for people. These services are essential for quality of life. whether for work, at home or in between. For small businesses and entrepreneurs, reliable access to broadband internet can be the difference between success and bankruptcy; for teachers and parents, these services impact the quality of our kids' education; for health care providers and social services, reliable connections can help save people's lives. Unfortunately, broadband access and wireless services in Canada are neither affordable nor reliable. In fact, among the developed world, Canadians now pay some of the highest prices for mobile wireless and broadband subscriptions. Canadian telecoms companies make more revenue, per gigabyte of data than almost any company, anywhere in the world. Despite these astounding profits, Bell, Rogers, and Telus received almost \$50 million in subsidies and more than \$700 million in contracts from Trudeau's Liberals. Liberals and Conservatives said we could rely on market forces – but instead of getting competitive rates, Canadian consumers are being forced to pay more than \$20 more than the average monthly prices of other OECD countries. It's time for a government that puts everyday people ahead of huge profits for giant corporations. The NDP will introduce a price cap to make sure every Canadian save money on their bill. For each service and plan, a price cap based on average OECD rates will be put in place. We will also implement measures to ensure the market finally become competitive. Every company will be required to have a basic plan for wireless and broadband that meets the needs of Canadians and is comparable with the lower-priced basic plans that are available in other OECD countries. New Democrats will put an end to the egregious and outrageous sales and services practices of the telecom companies by establishing a Telecoms Consumers' Bill of Rights to protect Canadians. In addition, Matt and the NDP are committed to investing in establishing more digital infrastructure within rural Canada to ensure that the gaps in coverage and access are filled. All Canadians deserve the same access to the same tools.

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?

Darrell Samson, Liberal: Absolutely, the flexibility of this is essential to help small and rural communities and fill gaps that would otherwise not fit under any other program. The liberal party recognizes this and doubled its contribution in Budget 2019. In addition, to make sure that the infrastructure that people and communities need is built, we will require that all provinces and territories identify and approve all of their long-term infrastructure priorities within the next two years. Funds that aren't designated for specific projects by the end of 2021 will be reinvested directly in communities through a top-up of the federal Gas Tax Fund.

Matt Stickland, NDP: Absolutely. The NDP supports establishing and continuing programming available for communities that will allow the communities and the people not only survive but thrive. Matt understands that people in Nova Scotia, and in Canada, are struggling. Matt considers it imperative that we work together to support our communities and municipalities in ensuring that the communities and people are thriving.

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 NSFAM to support small and rural municipalities to access much-needed infrastructure funding?

Darrell Samson, Liberal: I certainly understand that the needs and capacity of small municipalities are different than larger municipalities and would support strategies to ensure the smaller municipalities have equal access to the same funds as the others. These conversations are important and must be taken into account during the design and I would love to discuss this further with the councillors in my riding.

Matt Stickland, NDP: Investing in public infrastructure creates good jobs, makes our communities more livable and helps fight climate change. It's one of the most critical ways that governments can make people's lives easier. New Democrats believe that Canadians should be able to count on the federal government to invest in infrastructure to make a real difference in communities across the country – not to pad the bank accounts of investment firms. Our vision is one where communities can afford to build the infrastructure they need to thrive, from roads and bridges to community centres and childcare centres and everything in between. These investments will create good jobs in every part of the country; and to get there, we will partner with provinces, territories, First Nations, and municipalities to deliver reliable public infrastructure funding that puts people – not profit – first. By using Community Benefit Agreements, we will guarantee that good jobs, training, apprenticeships, and support for local businesses are part of every infrastructure project. Working with provinces and municipalities

that identify it as a priority, we will help build a path towards fare-free transit to ease commutes, help people make ends meet, and lower emissions. At the same time, Canadians living in rural areas need affordable, convenient transit options that they can rely on, too. We will establish and expand bus service in rural regions.

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?

Darrell Samson, Liberal: As a representative for Nova Scotia, my job is to articulate for Nova Scotians. I would be happy to learn more about the negotiations and work collaboratively towards an agreement.

Matt Stickland, NDP: Yes. Simple as that. Matt and the NDP believe that there are a number of unanswered questions regarding the taxation of Cannabis, and these unanswered questions are leaving provinces, municipalities, communities, and citizens in terrible positions. It's time for Canadians to not only receive the answers that they deserve but their fair share.

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?

Darrell Samson, Liberal: Absolutely, the liberal government created the first ever National Housing strategy with a \$ 55+million investments over 10 years. The strategy will spearhead innovative new housing research, data and demonstration projects. This plan will strengthen the middle class, cut chronic homelessness in half, build up to 125,000 new homes, fuel our economy and create a new generation of housing in Canada.

Matt Stickland, NDP: Everyone should have the right to a safe and affordable place to call home. Working people should be able to afford to live close to their workplaces, including in the heart of our biggest cities. Young people should be able to stay in the neighbourhoods they've grown up in. And seniors should never be forced out of the communities that they've spent their lives in. We are in the midst of a national housing crisis impacting every area of the country: Average rents rose in every single province last year, and today, 1.7 million Canadian households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. What this means is that families in our communities are facing constant stress and impossible choices between paying for rent or food; living in substandard housing or relocating out of their community; or worse, facing the real risk of homelessness.^[1] The Liberals have neglected the housing crisis in Canada for too long, turning their backs on families who are struggling to stay in the communities where they live and work. The Liberal government is telling Canadian families that they're just going to have to wait longer for help, struggle more every month, and settle for less. Matt and the NDP are committed to creating 500,000 units of quality, affordable housing in the next ten years, with half of that done within five years. This will be achieved with the right mix of effective measures that work in partnership with provinces and municipalities, build capacity for

social, community, and affordable housing providers and co-ops, and meet environmental energy efficiency goals. Our federal investment will begin with \$5 billion in additional funding in the first year and a half of a New Democrat government. In order to kick-start the construction of co-ops, social and non-profit housing, we will set up dedicated fast-start funds to streamline the application process and help communities get the expertise and assistance they need to get projects off the ground today, not years from now. We will also spur the construction of affordable homes by waiving the federal portion of the GST/HST on the construction of new affordable rental units. Families do not have years to wait when every day is a struggle and a constant worry. That's why we'll provide immediate relief for families that are struggling to afford rent in otherwise suitable housing, while we bring forward long-term solutions to the housing affordability crisis. While making affordable rental housing more available is critical, New Democrats believe that the dream of homeownership shouldn't be forever out of reach for Canadian families. That's why we will re-introduce 30-year terms to CMHC insured mortgages on entry-level homes for first time home buyers. This will allow for smaller monthly payments, freeing up funds to help make ends meet for young families. We'll also give people a hand with closing costs by doubling the Home Buyer's Tax Credit to \$1,500. For Canadians who are open to innovative paths to homeownership, we will provide resources to facilitate co-housing, such as model co-ownership agreements and connections to local resources, and ease access to financing by offering CMHC backed co-ownership mortgages. To help put an end to speculation that's fueling high housing prices, we'll put in place a Foreign Buyer's tax on the sale of homes to individuals who aren't Canadian citizens or permanent residents. We will also fight money laundering, which fuels organized crime and drives up housing prices. We will work with the provinces to create a public beneficial ownership registry to increase transparency about who owns properties and require reporting of suspicious transactions in order to help find and stop money laundering.

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?

Darrell Samson, Liberal: To make sure that communities of all sizes are better able to attract and support new Canadians, we will move forward with a Municipal Nominee Program. This program will allow local communities, chambers of commerce, and local labour councils to directly sponsor permanent immigrants. To continue to support greater immigration and economic growth across Atlantic Canada, we will move forward with making the Atlantic Immigration Pilot permanent. A minimum of 5,000 of the new spaces will be dedicated to each of the Municipal Nominee Program and the Atlantic immigration stream. In Nova Scotia the Atlantic Immigration Project has already successfully brought in 44 doctors.

Matt Stickland, NDP: Our immigration system should be accountable to Canadians and rooted in the values of fairness, respect, and dignity. We know that immigrants strengthen our country, and we will always stand against those who would use fear of our neighbours to divide us. We believe in a Canada where newcomers can rely on a fair process, and find success when they arrive – and where no one is separated from their loved ones for years because of backlogs. That's why a New Democrat government will make sure that our immigration policies and levels meet Canada's labour force needs and recognize people's experiences, contributions, and ties to Canada. We will work with the provinces to address gaps in settlement services and improve

foreign credentials recognition. We believe that family reunification should be a priority in Canada. But this year, thousands of families who hoped to apply to bring a parent or grandparent were let down when the available spots were filled in just eleven minutes. We will end the unfair cap on applications to sponsor parents and grandparents, and take on the backlogs that delay reunification for years. Finally, New Democrats will make the right choice to promote safety, security, and efficiency in Canada's border communities by suspending the Safe Third Country agreement with the United States, allowing people to make asylum claims at official border crossings.

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?

Darrell Samson, Liberal: Building on the \$2 billion we have already invested in helping communities prepare for and prevent weather related disasters like floods and fires, we will move forward with an additional \$1 billion investment over the next decade in the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, so communities have a proactive, permanent and sustainable way to address the emerging threats of climate change.

Matt Stickland, NDP: It's time for Canada to become leaders in the work to protect our environment. For far too long successive Liberal and Conservative governments have established a good mask, making Canada appear to be "green," but the science shows otherwise. Canada is not even on track to meet the modest targets we already have - let alone, the stronger ones required to prevent dangerous climate change. We as the NDP will declare a climate emergency and put in place ambitious, science-based greenhouse gas reductions targets that will help stabilize the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. We'll put these targets in legislation and ensure accountability by creating an independent Climate Accountability Office to do regular audits of progress towards our climate goals. We are absolutely committed to ending Fossil Fuel Subsidies on Day 1 of an NDP government. No compromise. The federal government can also model change by becoming a trailblazer in energy efficiency, clean technologies, and renewable energy use. We will lead by example and procure from Canadian companies producing clean technology, ensure that federal buildings use renewable energy, and move the vehicle fleets of the federal government to electric by 2025, choosing made-in-Canada wherever possible. When storms hit, roads are getting washed over, or washed out. Many of us have seen the video of entire roads crumbling away in Antigonish County and Cape Breton, but here in our riding roads like Lawrencetown Beach Rd, Shore Rd, and many more are facing imminent threat of this happening as well. With the current projections, we expect these storms to continue to grow as well as the impact. The NDP and Matt have committed to establishing better infrastructure that not only addresses accessibility but the changes to our environment as well. So that means that we would invest in sustainable materials, as well as investing in adapting infrastructure to withstand flooding (or storm surges), fires, or other major catastrophic weather events.

