

## Candidate Responses from South Shore-St. Margarets

- FOSTER, Steven (Independent)
- HEPBURN, Jessika (NDP-New Democratic Party)
- JORDAN, Bernadette (Liberal)
- MATTHEWS, Jason (VCP)
- MCMAHON, Shawn (Independent)
- MONK, Robert (People's Party)
- PERKINS, Rick (Conservative)
- SCHULTHIES, Kevin (Christian Heritage Party)
- TRAPPENBERG, Thomas (Green 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?*

**Jessika Hepburn, NDP:** New Democrats believe that no matter where you live in Canada, you should be able to stay connected – without breaking the bank because of unfair gouging. That's why, until the industry becomes more competitive, we'll put in place a price cap to make sure that Canadians aren't paying more than the global average for their cell phone and internet bills. Expanding cell coverage and delivering reliable, affordable broadband internet to every community in Canada is vital to the economic future of rural Canada and remote communities. But it has been ignored by successive governments for far too long. A New Democrat government will change that by delivering high-speed rural broadband to all communities in Canada without delay and ensuring that reliable cell phone service is expanded to every area of Canada, while keeping rates affordable for families and businesses. Our family moved to this riding in 2012 and settled in Lunenburg because of access to high speed internet. I was a successful online entrepreneur running an online community for artists with a website getting over 2 million visits per month and was known as "Canada's top blogger" by digital giants like Etsy and Airbnb. I've consulted for and designed programs used worldwide by small businesses and billion-dollar companies, created an online guide to crafters across Atlantic Canada for Maritime Makers and marketed locally made products globally all from my home because of access to the internet. For many years I made my income globally and spent it locally including using my online success to buy a home in Lunenburg and The Biscuit Eater Cafe in Mahone Bay. I continue to use the internet to bring more visitors to our communities to shop from local producers at an annual Spring market. There are many other success stories of local young entrepreneurs building a business online and making a life in South Shore-St. Margarets because of the ability to reach a global market from locations with high speed internet. That means some of our areas are thriving and others that are still not connected don't have the same economic opportunities. For many women and young parents like myself access to the internet has opened up doors to good jobs and meaningful work that were previously closed. For many rural residents, access to high speed internet eases isolation and increases social connection. In order to have truly thriving local economies across Canada we need to invest in making sure all our communities are connected and have affordable high-speed internet. As our

MP I will be a loud, passionate advocate for connecting our communities with affordable high-speed internet and holding our leaders accountable to making it happen

**Bernadette Jordan, Liberal:** As the Minister for Rural Economic Development, we launched Canada's first connectivity strategy. We recognize that the \$1.7 billion in government grants isn't enough on its own, which is why we have an ambitious plan to mobilize up to \$6 billion in total investments from the Canadian Infrastructure Bank, the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, other orders of governments and private industry to get 100% of Canadians connected to high speed internet.

**Robert Monk, People's Party:** I would like to explore some innovative solutions including looking into new methods and technology to deliver the service rather than perhaps antiquated means.

**Thomas Trappenberg, Green Party:** I had a quick look and leave it to our central party to respond (see: Greenparty.ca) It is actually sad to see that these questions are mainly geared towards who makes the most promises. No wonder if we won't make progress. I am running to prevent climate change, and the Green Party has good plans to solve a lot of the issues you mentioned instead of promising a bit here and there. We are here to do politics differently, and this survey is in my opinion too limited.

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?**

**Jessika Hepburn, NDP:** New Democrats think that the one-time increase to municipalities from the Federal Gas Tax fund is not going to get our communities the modernized transit, climate resilient infrastructure, or affordable housing they need to succeed in the long run. A New Democrat government is committed to be a long-term, stable partner for our municipalities when it comes to infrastructure funding.

**Bernadette Jordan, Liberal:** The GTF is a great federal-municipal partnership, and I was proud that we doubled funding to municipalities this year. 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.

**Robert Monk, People's Party:** I support a stronger Nova Scotia rather than a Nova Scotia relying on subsidies for their existence. It would seem to me that the last thing struggling municipalities need is more taxation. They need growth and ability to use their various resources.

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?**

**Jessika Hepburn, NDP:** 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. 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.

**Bernadette Jordan, Liberal:** We are committed to working directly with municipalities, and also with stakeholder groups like NSFAM and FCM to make sure the needs of local governments are met, and that programs and services are easily accessible to communities of all sizes.

**Robert Monk, People's Party:** I have always believed that money is best placed as close to the problems as possible. For my part, I would lower federal taxation and leave it to the municipalities to decide what they want to do. This would allow municipalities to have a cash flow closer to the boots on the ground rather than suits in Ottawa deciding who is worthy.

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?**

**Jessika Hepburn, NDP:** Years of Conservative cuts and liberal underfunding have left cities struggling to keep up with more and more responsibility on a shorter and shorter budget. Now with cannabis, the Liberals have again downloaded their responsibility. Justin Trudeau has shifted the entire burden of legalization onto the provinces and municipalities, requiring them to assume more responsibility. Regrettably, he did so without resolving key issues like taxation, regulation, safety and investment in research and public education. The Liberals did not have a plan to legalize cannabis and they still do not have one. This shows a great lack of leadership on the part of Justin Trudeau and his Liberal government. Today municipalities have to deal with the consequences of legalization without the support they need. We'll work to reverse the effects that years of downloading have had on municipalities, and we'll work with the provinces and the cities to ensure that everyone has a seat at the table.

**Bernadette Jordan, Liberal:** We are delivering the majority of cannabis tax revenues to Provincial governments, who in turn are responsible for ensuring an adequate portion is provided to municipalities to assist with costs associated with legalization. All orders of

government must continue to work together to reach a fair agreement on how these funds are spent.

**Robert Monk, People's Party:** Taxes should be kept at the local level, not federal.

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?**

**Jessika Hepburn, NDP:** The housing situation in South Shore-St Margarets is critical. Too many residents are unable to find good, affordable housing or are paying more than 30% of their income in rent and only \$200 away from housing insecurity. We have the highest child poverty rates in Canada with more than 21% of children and families living below the poverty line. Seniors are struggling to afford housing on small pensions. Our local small business has hired people who want to move to our community with their families only to have them unable to take the job due to an inability to find housing. At the doors in our communities I'm hearing stories like: - A woman who worked hard in the service industry for over 30 years and owned her own house and car lost everything after being injured. She now lives on a disability cheque of \$810 and her 'low income' housing is \$800, leaving her \$10 a month to live on. - A single mom of two can't afford to eat, pay rent, and make sure her children have shoes or school clothes. Her last visit to a food bank gave her toilet paper, paper towel and a can of soup so she is going hungry this week. - The young couple working full time in the fast food industry but are barely covering their rent. - The widow paying almost \$1800 a month for housing on a pension for seniors housing. Our communities need good, affordable housing now and a government that makes our right to housing a priority. New Democrats are committed to a National Housing Strategy and to maintaining and enhancing the \$40 billion commitment to build affordable housing in communities across Canada. We have an ambitious plan that will make a difference in every community in our country – because finding a good, affordable place to live shouldn't be like winning the lottery. It's time to relieve the stress and worry that people feel by choosing to make it easier to rent and buy a home. A major part of the long-term solution to the problem is to ensure that more affordable rental units are built across the country. One in three Canadians is a renter. In many cities, the few affordable apartments available get snapped up quickly, and people end up living in either inadequate housing or forced to spend a huge chunk of their income on rent. A New Democrat government will also create 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. This ambitious plan will create thousands of jobs in communities all across the country, and help Canadians get the affordable housing they need. 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. And for Canadians who are open to innovative paths to home ownership, a New Democrat government 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.

Also, 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. New Democrats will also fight money laundering, which fuels organized crime and drives up housing prices.

**Bernadette Jordan, Liberal:** Absolutely our government will honour and build on the National Housing Strategy.

**Robert Monk, People's Party:** Our party does it have an official stance on this. My personal feeling is that of what I already stated. Make Canada stronger and remove the number of people needing assistance rather than taking money from an already over taxed people to give it to people.

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?**

**Jessika Hepburn, NDP:** New Democrats believe that immigration makes Canada stronger, welcoming new Canadians from around the world builds our communities and boosts our economy. Our immigration system should be accountable to Canadians and rooted in the values of fairness, respect, and dignity. 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.

**Bernadette Jordan, Liberal:** We launched the Atlantic Immigration pilot, which has been used as a template for a new Rura/Northl Immigration program as well. These approaches to immigration have at their heart job offers for highly skilled workers, and we have added more flexibility for new grads and health care professionals.

**Robert Monk, People's Party:** I am a supporter of the Atlantic pilot program aimed at keeping immigrants here in Nova Scotia. The reality is, however, they need to be in a position to make a life for themselves and given the state of some parts of the province may not be able to happen. We need a stronger economy.

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?**

**Jessika Hepburn, NDP:** As the impacts of climate change are felt across the country, New Democrats believe that all levels of government have to step-up to help communities cope with the impacts of extreme weather. That's why a New Democrat government will expand federal funding to respond to disasters and support communities in proactively adapting their

infrastructure to withstand floods, forest fires, and other extreme weather events. We will also partner with Canadians and communities to make serious investments in making buildings more energy efficient to help families save money and fight climate change. Canada has huge untapped renewable energy potential. With the right leadership, we can protect good, family-sustaining jobs across the country and broaden our economy while making the shift to electricity that meets our emissions targets. New Democrats will set a target to power Canada with net carbon-free electricity by 2030 and move to 100% non-emitting electricity by 2050. To drive this progress, we will establish a new Canadian Climate Bank. This bank will help boost investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and low carbon technology across the country. It will also provide support for interested provinces to inter-connect power grids and introduce smart grid technology to bolster Canada's energy security and distribute clean power across the country. The Climate Bank will also support made-in-Canada manufacturing of renewable energy components and technologies, and help scale up Canada's clean energy industry. Meeting this carbon-free electricity goal in a way that respects local communities and creates good jobs is essential. We'll support investments in innovative community-owned and operated clean energy projects to keep jobs and expertise local, work in partnership with Indigenous and northern communities to move off diesel, improve energy security, and cut emissions and air pollution. One thing we won't do is continue down the path that Liberal and Conservative governments have chosen when it comes to spending public money on oil and gas subsidies. Canada currently spends \$3.3 billion per year, more per capita than any other G7 country, on oil and gas subsidies. And on top of that, Justin Trudeau purchased the Kinder Morgan oil pipeline for a staggering \$4.5 billion and gave another \$1.6 billion in handouts to the oil patch. New Democrats know that public funds are best spent supporting the transition to renewable energy rather than on profitable oil and gas companies. We will fulfill Canada's G-20 commitment to eliminate these fossil fuel subsidies and redirect these funds to low carbon initiatives.

**Bernadette Jordan, Liberal:** A major component of our historic Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program is the Green Infrastructure Funding Stream, which provides funds for green projects and helping communities adapt to climate change. There is also the Disaster Adaptation and Mitigation fund, another component of the plan dedicated to helping communities cope with the effects of climate change. We will continue partnering with communities with programs like these.

**Robert Monk, People's Party:** I have a problem with this question. Hurricane Dorian was not undifferent from other storms we have had and isn't even the worst storm we have experienced in recent history. I'm not exactly sure which costs that have been incurred you are referring to. Personal property damage is covered under insurance. During and after the storm I drove around the south shore looking to help people with the cleanup. What I found was most people had already sorted their properties out and were fine. I do not believe that government programs are the savior of the world. It is the actions of individuals and communities that will make a difference. For example, I live in one of the most energy efficient homes in Nova Scotia, a decision that was not informed by government policy, but one informed by my desire to have a comfortable home that has less impact on my environment.

