

Candidate Responses from Sydney-Victoria

- BATTISTE, Jaime (Liberal)
- FOSTER, Lois (Green Party)
- JOY, Randy (VCP)
- MACKINNON, Archie (Independent)
- MACNEIL, Kenzie (Independent)
- MCDAVID, Jodi (NDP-New Democratic Party)
- ORRELL, Eddie (Conservative)

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?

Jodi McDavid, NDP: 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. In addition, we'll make sure that providers offer a basic plan for wireless and broadband that is comparable with the affordable plans that are available in other countries. To put an end to surprise bills, we'll require companies to offer unlimited wireless data options at affordable rates, as exist elsewhere in the world, and abolish data caps for broadband internet. To protect Canadians from unfair wireless and internet sales and services practices, we'll introduce a Telecom Consumers' Bill of Rights and put an end to gouging for good. New Democrats will make sure that high-speed broadband and cell phone infrastructure is available to connect our communities to the services and tools they need, no matter where in the country they are.

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?

Jodi McDavid, NDP: In general principle, I see no problem with this, but of course, it would need to be approached on a case-by-case basis.

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

Jodi McDavid, NDP: While I understand the constraints, it would be irresponsible for me to make a commitment like this at this time, as it is not in our platform. There may also be other approaches, like reducing the barriers to application, that could be introduced. I am open to discussion and exploration of this issue. I don't think applying for funds should be burdensome for the municipalities.

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?

Jodi McDavid, NDP: My constituents have already spoken to me about concerns with all of our transfer taxes (health, equalization and cannabis). This is high on my radar. On the federal side, I can personally argue for more transparency and clearer timelines as well as more specific language in these tax revenue allocations.

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?

Jodi McDavid, NDP: The NDP platform commits to 500,000 affordable homes. I grew up modestly and members of my family lived in social housing. I have attended affordable housing information sessions for many years, as a feminist and member of several nonprofits. While we will still support rental subsidies, I personally do not believe they provide the longterm solutions that are needed. NDP have proposed intergenerational housing, co-ops, and other options within their proposal which I believe will help us address the housing shortage. I do believe in a housing first model which is a huge part of the reason I am happy to be on the NDP ballot.

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?

Jodi McDavid, NDP: We will increase rural transit, one of the initial barriers people face is acquiring a car and a license. Reducing this barrier can have a positive impact. We will also introduce a mode of postal banking for those living in communities that can access a post office but not a bank. We also will institute incentives for recent graduates to work in rural areas.

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?

Jodi McDavid, NDP: In 2016 Sydney had a flood on Thanksgiving in which many of my friends and family were greatly impacted. I have grown up seeing ice cease to form in a river near my parent's home. I did a project in Malagawatch First Nation where coastal erosion has caused significant damage. I am not oblivious to the changes ahead of us as a society and I recognize that this will most likely be the greatest challenge of our generation. Specifically, the NDP will increase the amount of help the federal government provides to communities to adapt to climate change and rebuild when disasters happen. As well, we have committed to creating 300,000 environmental jobs across Canada, reforestation, and protecting 30% of Canada's wilderness. We have also planned to take steps to reduce GHG so that global warming stabilizes to recommended scientific levels. We have also committed to banning single-use plastics. Personally, I can say that this issue is of utmost importance to me, and I look forward to working with the municipalities to ensure that they have support they need for the challenges ahead.