

Vision. Change. Progress.

McFADYEN 2011

September 27, 2011

Doug Dobrowolski
President
Association of Manitoba Municipalities
1910 Saskatchewan Avenue W.
Portage la Prairie, MB
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Dear Mr. Dobrowolski:

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba I am pleased to respond to your survey. Our party's responses to your questions are shown in italics.

1. There is no debating Manitoba municipalities are facing a massive infrastructure deficit. What is your party's plan to help address this deficit?

Manitoba's Progressive Conservatives agree that additional investments in infrastructure are required across the province. If elected, a McFadyen government has committed to do the following:

- *follow through on Manitoba's Highway Renewal Plan, 2011-2015, and its approximately \$2 billion planned funding for transportation infrastructure revitalization;*
- *create a new five-year, \$375 million Manitoba Strategic Investment Fund that all local governments in Manitoba, including Winnipeg, can access to support infrastructure projects of their choice;*
- *provide the City of Winnipeg with \$40 million over four years to pave 384 gravel back lanes;*
- *maintain the current level of annual funding support for the City of Winnipeg over a four-year period to ensure continued support for important municipal services;*
- *complete the development of CentrePort and ensure that CentrePort has the infrastructure support it needs in order to succeed. A McFadyen government would also focus additional infrastructure resources to support international trading opportunities.*
- *remove the PST from the professional services that municipalities use that were exempt prior to 2004. This should free up additional monies for local governments to use for priority projects.*

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- *develop a commission to assess Manitoba's transportation infrastructure and its limitations on northern development.*

2. One of the biggest challenges for municipalities is the downloading of responsibilities and the cost of meeting increasing regulation. What will your party do about these escalating costs for municipalities?

Manitoba's Progressive Conservatives agree that affected stakeholders should have input into the development of policies that will affect them. Without proper stakeholder input, it could result in policies that aren't as effective as they could be or which have unintended consequences for local governments, like added costs. Moreover, we believe the provincial government's regulatory climate must be more efficient. We support more government accountability and less red tape. Regulations and policies should be results driven as opposed to mandate driven.

We believe that if the provincial government introduces regulations that have a financial impact on local governments, the province should also provide resources to support the regulatory changes.

3. Recently the AMM undertook a tour of the province to hear first-hand the issues facing our communities. Near the top of the list was the need for affordable entry-level housing in our communities. What will your party do to address the housing shortfall across Manitoba?

Progressive Conservatives are committed to getting our economy moving so that all Manitobans have more money for housing, and so the provincial government has more revenue to provide programs for the province's most vulnerable citizens.

We will properly fund the department of housing, and have already outlined two proposals that will help address the availability of rental units, and the overall quality of the province's housing stock.

- *We will exempt first time homebuyers from the land transfer tax to buying a first home possible for Manitobans to buy their first home and free up badly needed rental units.*
- *We will also encourage investment in housing. We will provide a permanent home renovation tax credit which will help to address the need to invest in our housing stock. Winnipeg has some of the oldest housing stock in Canada, and homeowners need some help renovating their properties.*

4. Overall municipal government revenues have not kept pace with municipal responsibilities. We are expected to take on more and more with access to the same revenue sources. Municipalities need access to new revenue sources. Is your party willing to give municipalities access to new revenue sources?

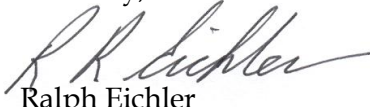
By eliminating wasteful spending, a Progressive Conservative government would help ensure more resources are available to support local governments. We would work with Manitoba's local governments to develop a new, long-term funding model to address the infrastructure funding challenge together. There is only one taxpayer, and those taxpayers expect all levels of government to work together constructively to tackle the infrastructure challenges that Manitoba faces. We have to find ways to provide this support without increasing taxes.

5. Connectivity is increasingly important to municipalities both in terms of having access to the global marketplace and in growing their communities, yet cellular service and high speed internet continue to be unavailable in many parts of the province. How would your party work to address this?

Manitoba's Progressive Conservatives recognize that access to high speed internet and cellular service remains a challenge in some regions of the province. We are committed to working with the federal and local governments, service providers and community stakeholders to find innovative ways to address the service challenges and to ensure more Manitobans can access these important services.

The Progressive Conservative Party looks forward to working with your organization if elected to government on October 4th. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Ralph Eichler

PC Critic for Infrastructure & Transportation