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NEWS RELEASE

MANITOBA MUNICIPALITIES PROVIDE STATUS UPDATE ON PROVINCIAL ELECTION PRIORITIES

September 20, 2023 – The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) today provided an update on how Manitoba’s provincial parties are faring in response to the policy priorities outlined by Manitoba’s municipalities for the 2023 provincial election.

Speaking in Brandon, AMM President **Kam Blight** was joined by Brandon Mayor **Jeff Fawcett**, Winnipeg Mayor **Scott Gillingham**, and Portage la Prairie Mayor **Sharilyn Knox** to give a status update on the Manitoba Municipalities’ [Let’s Grow Manitoba Together](#) campaign, which articulated four key policy priority areas for the election advocacy campaign in advance of the 2023 provincial election: *predictable municipal funding, infrastructure investment, talent attraction, and tackling rising crime.*

Key Assessments:

- ✓ All provincial parties have made commitments that municipal transfers will increase from year-to-year. There have been different levels of articulation and detail thus far, but all parties are on record with the commitment. This is a win for Manitoba’s municipalities.
- ✓ With some exceptions, Manitoba’s municipalities are displeased with the degree of attention to core infrastructure funding during the provincial election campaign. Core physical infrastructure funding and maintenance – from water and wastewater to expanding broadband – is a key priority for Manitoba’s municipalities, and the AMM expects to see more discussion on how the political parties will address our province’s infrastructure needs.
- ✓ All political parties have recognized the acute shortage of health care practitioners, and the need to attract, retain and train-in-place paramedics, physicians, and nurses throughout Manitoba. The AMM is pleased to see this emerge as a focal point in the provincial election. The AMM has also seen significant discussion across parties on

expediting recognition of internationally trained and certified tradespeople and professionals. This is another win for Manitobans.

- ✓ All three major political parties have recognized the importance of addressing rising crime rates, and discussions have focused on allocating additional funds to law enforcement. Different parties have offered different detailed commitments on how they would address crime, and all have merit; the essential point is that this has emerged as a consensus provincial priority.

Quotes

- *“Municipalities are an essential partner to the provincial government. We identified four priorities for the campaign. We feel we’ve been heard, but there are still some ways to go.”* – AMM President Kam Blight
- *“All provincial parties have made commitments to increase municipal transfers from year-to-year. That’s a win for Manitoba municipalities, but we need to work closely with the next provincial government to build a new funding model that’s based on growth.”* – Mayor Scott Gillingham, City of Winnipeg
- *“There have been some infrastructure commitments in this campaign, but we need to see more. Building and maintaining core infrastructure – from water and wastewater to broadband – is a priority for all municipalities and this hasn’t received enough attention in this campaign.”* – Mayor Jeff Fawcett, City of Brandon
- *“All parties have heard municipalities appeals for more paramedics, doctors, and nurses – and for training opportunities in all regions of this province. This is a win. We are also encouraged to see significant discussion on expediting international trades and professional credentials.”* – Mayor Jeff Fawcett, City of Brandon
- *“We appreciate the acknowledgement by all three parties regarding the surge in crime rates and their commitments to allocate increased funding and resources to support local law enforcement. Our municipalities are demanding action on rising crime rates and we’re glad that all three parties have heard this appeal.”* – Mayor Sharilyn Knox, City of Portage la Prairie

Manitoba Municipalities' Four Priorities for 2023

1. Fair and Predictable Municipal Funding

- Work with municipalities to establish a simplified, predictable funding model with an annual escalator;
- Rebate the PST paid by municipalities, similarly to the federal GST rebate;
- Streamline existing tax tools and grant greater flexibility and financial autonomy to municipal governments.

2. Invest in Core Infrastructure

- Increase Manitoba Water Services Board funding for water and wastewater infrastructure, and commit to a permanent federal and provincial infrastructure fund;
- Amend Bill 37 to enshrine the primacy of elected municipal councils over the unelected Municipal Board;
- Improve coordination between economic development offices and agencies for efficiencies, synergies and responsiveness to municipal economic development needs;
- Comprehensive rural broadband and cell service as essential infrastructure for economic growth, public safety, education, and health care.

3. Invest in People

- Accelerate a comprehensive provincial strategy to recruit health care professionals and paramedics throughout Manitoba;
- Implement recommendations from the Immigration Advisory Committee to increase regional settlement incentives for foreign-trained doctors and other professionals;
- Training opportunities for licensed professionals closer to home;
- Care closer to home – a plan to keep paramedics, doctors and other health professionals working in all our regions.

4. Public Safety

- Press the federal government for bail and conditional release reform;
- Refuse downloading of policing reform costs;
- Predictable police resourcing and flexibility to move certain enforcement and social service functions from police to separate provincially-funded authorities;
- Increase police funding to combat crime and drug trafficking;
- Expand municipal Community Safety and Well-Being plans.

About AMM

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities is comprised of the mayors, reeves, and councillors that represent all of Manitoba's 137 municipalities. Our mission is to identify and address the needs and concerns of our members to achieve strong and effective municipal government – the order of government closest to the people.
