

**City of London Federal Election Candidate Questionnaire****London**
CANADA

Background information and links will be available on the Federal Candidate Questionnaire page of the City of London website at www.london.ca.

1. How will you and your Party involve municipal governments as partners in federal and provincial policy, program and budget deliberations on issues that have a direct impact on local governments and their citizens?

As councillors and staff know, I attend the regular meetings with the city and MPs. I have also brought colleagues to London to hear about specific concerns. On four occasions since my election, I have brought NDP leader Jack Layton to London to meet with city councillors and staff. NDP MPs Charlie Angus, and Bill Siksay have also met with council and staff in regard to concerns around their critic areas. In addition, I have provided opportunities for city council members to meet with Ontario New Democrat MPPs to discuss issues. If re-elected, I will continue to arrange meetings with city council and staff members to address concerns. New Democrats also send delegates to attend Federation of Canadian Municipalities conferences as well as the Association of Ontario Municipalities and will continue to do so. New Democrats believe that municipal funding transfers must allow for flexibility so that cities can address local priorities. New Democrats are willing to work with the municipal governments (through budget consultations, etc) to ensure that the needs of Canadian citizens are met as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

2. Will you and your Party support maintaining funding for existing municipal infrastructure programs? Will you and your Party commit to develop and fund – in collaboration with provincial and municipal governments – a long-term collaborative plan to create financial sustainability and find revenues that grow with the economy, equivalent to One Cent of the GST, to eliminate the 123 Billion dollar municipal infrastructure deficit within 20 years, and to plan for the 115 Billion dollars required to fund unmet infrastructure needs?

The municipal infrastructure deficit is of profound concern to me. When the “sinkhole” opened at Dundas and Wellington in the fall of 2007, I immediately brought this issue to the Prime Minister’s attention, and I was the only London MP to raise this issue in the House of Commons. During a

February meeting with London's Director of Intergovernmental Affairs—Grant Hopcroft—Jack Layton and I committed that the NDP would deliver the equivalent to one cent of the GST, in addition to a dedicated additional one cent transfer of the federal gas tax to specifically address transit infrastructure and operating costs.

New Democrats will dedicate one cent per litre of the federal gas tax to municipalities for investment in transit. This investment will mean \$12.4 million for London alone, and is flexible funding which can be applied to operating costs or capital expenses according to the local priorities.

We will also invest in new municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, and establish national standards to require a minimum of secondary treatment for all Canadian municipalities.

New Democrats will invest the equivalent of one cent of the GST in increased funding of the important priorities of our cities and communities by 2011. This will address the growing infrastructure deficit, and help cities and citizens avoid massive property tax increases. This increased infrastructure commitment, phased in over 5 years, will include increased investment and jobs in:

- **Expanded public transit.**
- **Affordable housing.**
- **Expanded child care.**
- **Building retrofits and environmentally friendly renovations.**
- **Immigrant settlement.**
- **Roads, highways and bridges.**
- **Public libraries.**
- **Community centres.**
- **Sewer and water treatment facilities.**

We will also expand employment in our communities, build new markets for Canadian suppliers, strengthen sustainability commitments, and encourage Canadian entrepreneurship by adopting a Made-in-Canada procurement policy for the federal government and its agencies.

3. **Will you and your Party develop and implement a National Transit Strategy in order to provide adequate resources for capital expenses, to appropriately integrate land use and transportation planning to ensure that development supports transit, to develop tax incentives to create demand and to engage in innovative research to increase ridership?**

Yes, New Democrats are committed to improving public transit throughout Canada, including the implementation of a National Transit Strategy. Canada is the only G8 country without a national transit program. Better urban transit reduces road congestion, which in turn allows people and

goods to reach their destinations more quickly. This is an incentive for investment.

4. Will you and your Party work with the Ontario government to continue to support social housing providers beyond the scheduled expiry of all federal housing and homelessness funding programs in March 2009? Will you and your Party commit to developing a long-term National Action Plan for Housing to eliminate homelessness, expand the stock of affordable non-market housing, reduce the backlog in core housing needs, preserve and modernize Canada's existing social housing stock, and extend and revise the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program?

The New Democrats leveraged Canada's first national housing strategy in minority government in the 1970's. Our national housing plan became a world leading strategy and was adopted as a model by many countries around the world. Regrettably, the Liberal majority government in the 1990's gutted and eventually cancelled the national housing strategy, replacing it with a patch work of inadequate short-term programs. After my election, I served as the NDP Housing Critic for almost two years. During that time I partnered with housing and homelessness organizations in London and around the country to force the Conservatives to reverse their attempt to eliminate housing funding. For London, this restored over \$350,000 in local programming funds. I also introduced Bill C-382, an Act to ensure adequate, accessible, affordable housing for all Canadians. The legislation died with the dissolution of parliament; however, I will reintroduce this bill when re-elected. Housing programs require long-term, stable funding, that maintains existing stock while funding new developments, and I am committed to fighting for that funding.

To help ensure Canadians will have adequate and affordable housing, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will implement a durable, comprehensive and fully-funded affordable housing strategy that meets Canada's international obligations, as set out by the United Nations. We will build towards the 10-year goal of the One Percent Solution – with one percent of federal spending allocated for truly affordable housing. We will implement the following programmes:

- **New homes: Non-profit and co-operative homes for families and single individuals, including students. Specific housing targets will be set for Aboriginals, seniors, women and others who currently bear the biggest burden of housing insecurity and homelessness.**
- **Special needs: Funding for supportive housing for people with special physical and mental health needs.**
- **Upgrading homes: Funding to expand federal housing rehabilitation programs to maintain and retrofit existing substandard homes.**
- **Homelessness services and transitions: Funding to extend federal homelessness programs to ensure that services and transitional housing are available across Canada.**

We will fund the "Bring Canada Home" strategy with a combination of new revenues and partial reinvestment of the net income from Canada Mortgage

and Housing Corporation, excluding contributions from provinces and territories in cost-shared initiatives.

5. How will you and your Party involve municipal governments in meeting national climate change and clean air objectives?

When the NDP rewrote the 2005 Liberal budget, we cancelled \$4.6-billion in pointless corporate tax cuts to invest in better priorities—including \$900-million for green public transit and a home energy retrofit program to help our cities and our citizens. According to information provided to me by city staff, London Transit has benefited from that NDP effort by approximately \$13 million in the past three years.

In the House of Commons, Jack Layton introduced Bill C-377, “Kyoto Plus”, to set scientifically sound, measurable targets to improve our climate. The NDP is the only party proposing a “Cap and Trade” plan for Canada as the carbon pricing system that targets big polluters best—in line with the European Union, all US presidential contenders, and the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It also creates a carbon credit market that will allow both business and governments to buy and sell carbon credits to balance our goals. Unlike the Liberal Carbon tax which allows anyone who can pay to continue to pollute, the NDP plan includes a hard cap on emission levels, ensuring that pollution levels are actually reduced. New Democrats will also provide new financial incentives for clean power, from solar, wind, water, biomass and other renewable sources for electricity production and from industrial co-generation and small-scale hydro-electric projects, to allow municipalities to build or retrofit community facilities and municipal buildings—saving long-term operating costs—while ‘greening’ our communities.

New Democrats will Establish the Canadian Renewable Energy Agency. The agency will be responsible for encouraging and developing renewable energy in Canada. It will:

- **Work cooperatively with all stakeholders, including municipalities, towards meeting 35 percent of Canada’s energy needs with renewable energy by 2020, including hard targets for renewable fuels, biomass, wind power and other renewables.**
- **Provide funding for developing and supporting renewable energy programs.**

6. Will you and your Party commit to clarifying federal/provincial and municipal responsibilities on Community Safety and Policing programs and in ensuring that appropriate resources exist for municipalities?

Yes. New Democrats support dedicated federal/provincial police units to combat gangs and organized crime networks, backed by organized crime prosecution teams. We will also create 2,500 new police officer positions to make our city streets safer. We will also reinvest the recovered proceeds of crime in the affected communities to reduce crime and increase community safety.

7. What support and resources will you and your Party provide to Canada's Cities and Communities to enable them to continue to deliver essential services related to the attraction, retention and integration of immigrants/newcomers?

New Democrats will accelerate and streamline the recognition of foreign credentials, overseas degrees and previous employment experience in conjunction with provinces and licensing authorities. We will also review the point system used to assess new applications to match the reality of work in Canada, including specific provisions for blue-collar workers and tradespeople. New Democrats will also increase financial support for the settlement process for new Canadians to assist with literacy, community integration and orientation, including bridging, mentorship, English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs and resource service centres.

8. Affordable, accessible early learning and child care is a sound economic investment in the future of that child, the community and the country. What will you and your Party do to enhance early learning and child care?

In consultation with the provinces and territories, New Democrats will:

- **Enact the New Democrats' Early Learning and Child Care Act, which has already passed Second Reading in Parliament, to establish the program in law for the first time in Canada.**
- **In the first phase of this program, create 150,000 new child care spaces in the first year, growing to 220,000 spaces by year four.**
- **Ensure a healthy head start for kids. We will develop a Children's Nutrition Initiative to support and expand provincial and local programs that provide healthy meals to school children.**
- **Establish and adequately fund a Canada-wide child care and early learning program. We will make high quality, accessible, affordable, non-profit and licensed child care available to Canadian families, including aboriginal Canadians.**

9. What will you and your Party do to tackle the issue of poverty? A number of Provinces are currently working on anti-poverty strategies. Will you and your Party work with them to ensure that we have a holistic approach?

Ordinary Canadians are rightly concerned about the growing affordability gap, poverty, and economic inequality in our communities. We are one of the wealthiest nations on Earth, but under successive Conservative and Liberal governments it keeps getting worse – the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer and working families are getting squeezed.

New Democrats will meet this unacceptable trend head-on, with powerful poverty-fighting initiatives that will restore affordability, fairness and balance to families and individuals, including those who live in poverty.

New Democrats will:

Introduce a Poverty Elimination Act to eliminate poverty in Canada by the year 2020:

- **This act will set firm targets, and make the government accountable for achieving these targets.**
- **The act will make the government accountable for eliminating poverty in Canada by 2020.**
- **Every five years the government will have to report on its progress and deliver an action plan, to be approved by the House of Commons.**
- **Initial targets will include reducing child poverty by more than 50 percent and the overall poverty rate by more than 35 percent in the first five years.**
- **The act will establish a poverty elimination office housed within HRDC to assume overall responsibility for implementing our poverty-reduction strategy and developing concrete poverty indicators.**

To help families make ends meet – and to reach out to children living in poverty, we will:

- **Phase in a new Child Benefit. This benefit, modelled on the existing Canada Child Tax Benefit, will expand in phases to \$5000 a year per child, and consolidate the current piecemeal system of benefits and tax credits for children into a single, better, non-taxable monthly cheque to parents.**
- **Work with provinces to eliminate the provincial claw-back of much needed Child Supplement Benefits for families receiving social assistance.**
- **Make substantial investments in affordable, accessible child care for all Canadians.**
- **Provide aggressive incentives to help ordinary families and those with low or fixed incomes become more energy-efficient, helping you to both reduce your rising energy costs and contribute to the fight against climate change.**
- **Establish a fair minimum wage of \$10 and index it to inflation.**
- **Immediately reform the Employment Insurance system to ensure fairness and support for unemployed Canadians.**
- **Institute a “Bring Canada Home” affordable housing plan.**
- **Improve workplace standards and protect workers’ pensions.**
- **Expand literacy and skills training.**

10. What will you and your Party do to restore or replace the federal programs that support our arts and cultural industries?

From Fanshawe Pioneer Village, to the Grand Theatre, I have been a supporter of London’s arts and cultural institutions. I have also made efforts to include artistic and cultural components in local events, featuring local artists. One example of this is an event hosted at the London Music Club featuring London poet Penn Kemp and reggae band Mean Tangerine. A strong arts community is vital to our quality of life.

New Democrats will strengthen Canada's home-grown film and television production. We will:

- **Ensure Canadian television and telecommunications networks remain Canadian-owned by maintaining effective regulations on foreign ownership.**
- **Refocus the mandate of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to promote and protect Canadian cultural industries, and transfer mandates that conflict with this objective to other agencies.**
- **Provide sustained funding for the Canadian Television Fund and Telefilm Canada, and enhance federal film incentives to encourage film and television production.**
- **Establish targets and a strategy to expand screening and distribution of domestic films in Canada.**
- **Reverse efforts to legislate censorship, as the Harper Conservatives snuck into bill C-10. If passed, this bill would arbitrarily restrict and censor publicly-supported artistic works.**
- **End the federal government's double-dipping, by excluding provincial tax credit increases from the federal government's calculation of film support payments.**
- **Expand the federal tax credit to include the cost of post-production.**
- **Require clear, binding and enforced performance standards for broadcasters – including a significant and permanent increase in the production and broadcast of Canadian drama – backed by broadcast, cable and satellite license requirements.**

To invest in our shared cultural heritage, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

- **Restore arts funding arbitrarily cut by the Harper Conservatives. Increase public funding for the Canada Council for the Arts to better support artists and ensure we can produce high quality made-in-Canada shows for everyday Canadians to enjoy.**
- **Implement a system of tax averaging to provide fair and equitable treatment for Canadian artists and cultural workers.**
- **Implement “net neutrality” to protect everyday Canadians’ right to freely access the internet content of their choice at a flat rate and with clear and transparent rules. We will end price gouging and “net throttling”, preventing a two-tiered internet in Canada.**
- **Develop an aggressive pan-Canadian strategy for funding, supporting and preserving Canadian museums, historic buildings and heritage lighthouses.**
- **Strengthen public broadcasting and provide stable long-term funding for the CBC, Radio Canada and other public broadcasters. We will strengthen the ability of CBC and Radio Canada to deliver superior regional programming and new internet-based media services.**
- **Reform the role and structure of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), including enhancement of the role of the CRTC in Montreal so that it better reflects the**

cultural and linguistic reality of programming for Quebec and the francophone community.

- **Develop a digital on-line culture service to give ordinary Canadians expanded access to Canadian content.**
- **Increase career transition resources for artists.**
- **Protect children in the arts with minimum standards and trust fund rules for income earned by child performers.**
- **Ensure that new copyright reform legislation fairly addresses compensation for artistic creators and includes proper input from all affected stakeholders, including: arts/artist groups, educators, software innovators, consumer groups and ordinary Canadians.**

11. What steps will you and your Party take to preserve and enhance our parks, trails and open spaces? What measures will you and your Party take to ensure that everyone has access to affordable recreation, sport and parks facilities and programs? What will you and your Party do to support youth engagement? How will you and your Party use recreation and sport to promote community safety?

New Democrats will:

- **Dedicate one per cent of the Health Canada budget to physical fitness and amateur sports promotion, including:**
 - **Investing in the development of more community centres, seniors centres, recreational facilities and playing fields.**
- **Launch a federal Determinants of Health Initiative with emphasis on clean air, safe water, reducing poverty and improving children's health and nutrition. We will ban trans fats and expand other initiatives to promote healthy foods and healthy eating, including:**
 - **Addressing the crisis of childhood obesity by implementing a pan-Canadian strategy, and limiting the exposure of children to "junk food" promotion.**
- **Assure that all infants in Canada have access to hearing testing, in cooperation with the provinces and territories.**
- **Increase support for provincial and territorial health initiatives, including the Cancer Control System.**
- **Invest in trails associations across the country, joining forces with Canadians who are blazing new trails by walking, cycling, wheeling, skiing and running their way to healthier, more active lifestyles.**

12. What will you and your Party do to address the obesity epidemic and support active living?

See above answer.

13. What will you and your Party do to amend the Canada Health Act to include specific funding formulas for Long Term and Specialized Care and Mental Health Rehabilitation?

My own father waited months for a long-term care bed to become available after he suffered a stroke, so I know first hand the struggle facing families in our community.

New Democrats will create a pan-Canadian home care program, as recommended in the Romanow Report on the future of Medicare, including:

- **Helping people stay healthy at home and avoid hospital visits.**
- **Home mental health care case management.**
- **Post-acute medical care.**
- **Post-acute rehabilitation.**
- **Palliative home care.**

Our home care program will give 100,000 more Canadian families access to home care. It will significantly reduce wait times for seniors and hospital patients.

14. How specifically will you and your Party work with the Ontario government to address *Ontario's Fairness Campaign* and to strengthen Ontario's capacity to fund programs that build stronger healthier communities?

See question 15.

15. How will you and your Party commit to strengthening the regional economy of Southwest Ontario?

New Democrats will implement a prudent and sensible plan to keep good jobs in Canada, encourage innovation, and get the Canadian government engaged in creating good jobs in the new energy economy.

1. **Create a Green-Collar Jobs Fund of \$750 million a year to train new workers and re-train displaced workers. This will provide the skills to install and maintain energy efficient and renewable energy technology. It will support the transition from jobs in older, higher-pollution energy systems.**
2. **Appoint a Job Protection Commissioner to investigate major layoffs and shutdowns. The Commissioner will work with workers, the affected businesses, stakeholders (such as banks) and communities to maintain and develop good employment for Canadians.**
3. **Introduce an environmental automobile strategy:**
 - **Invest in Canadian production of low-emission cars to ensure our auto industry remains viable. This will include aggressive incentives for manufacturers who develop and manufacture in Canada cars with low or zero greenhouse gas emissions.**
 - **Provide federal government support for pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths in communities as part of our commitment to sustainable transport. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure will have health benefits for Canadians who choose to walk or cycle.**
 - **Bring in mandatory vehicle emission standards for all vehicles sold in Canada based on leading North American standards.**

- **Require vehicle fuel consumption labelling so consumers have better information about every vehicle's environmental performance and efficiency savings.**
 - **Reduce pollution through an Early Adopters Program that encourages the purchase of commercial electric hybrid vehicles.**
- 4. Create and support pan-Canadian sector-based strategies. Experts agree we need a pro-active plan to keep our country, our industries, and our workforce in a leading global position.**
- **All over the world, industries, government and workers are collaborating to build new opportunities for jobs and innovation. Canada has taken the opposite approach of picking winners, like the banks and oil companies, and losers, like manufacturers and the forest industry.**
 - **Sector-based strategies will include: lumber; pulp and paper; energy and petrochemicals; tool and die; machinery and equipment; aeronautics and transportation; fish and food processing; steel; mining exploration; environmental technologies; information processing; pharmaceuticals; health equipment and supplies; tourism; telecommunications; shipbuilding and repair; media and cultural industries; and agriculture and food industries.**
 - **These sector-based strategies will be accompanied by a systematic review of sector-specific tax measures. We will eliminate those that are economically or environmentally counterproductive. We will add new measures to stimulate investment in the broader public interest.**
- 5. As part of our job protection strategy, New Democrats will stand up against our jobs being exported out of Canada by implementing job-focused trade strategies. We will:**
- **Make it harder to import from countries with unacceptable environmental, employment and wage standards.**
 - **Make it easier to export from Canada by supporting industry.**
 - **Influence competitive advantage by ensuring that the macro-economic environment is growth-oriented.**
- 16. Will you and your Party commit to supporting enhanced rail infrastructure, including high speed passenger rail for Southwest Ontario and the Quebec City-Windsor Corridor?**

As some members of council will be aware, I have supported the Mayor's call for investment to improve the "North Main Line" rail corridor to allow for increased passenger traffic access to our community. New Democrats absolutely support enhancing existing rail infrastructure. Both passenger and freight rail offer a more environmentally friendly alternative to medium distance automotive transportation options. New Democrats fully support the creation of a high-speed rail corridor from Windsor to Quebec City. As an MP for London, I recognize the economic benefits such service would create for our community. New Democrats are also calling for a high-speed rail line between Calgary and Edmonton.

17. What other actions will you and your Party take to strengthen the competitiveness, prosperity, and quality of life of Canada's cities and local municipal governments?

The NDP platform is a balanced budget approach to helping middle and low income Canadians make ends meet, and close the growing prosperity gap. In the London region alone, more than 5000 manufacturing jobs were lost in 2007. Low paying service industry and retail jobs do not replace jobs that support families and pay mortgages. The NDP's "Green Collar Jobs" fund, offers tremendous opportunity for London. We have businesses, such as Diamond Aircraft, which could easily produce wind turbine products, or Trojan Technologies—already global leaders in water treatment technology, where the Green Collar Jobs Fund could create thousands of new jobs.

With predictable, long-term dedicated funding through the gas tax and the equivalent of one cent of the GST, cities will have the financial means to keep property taxes low, without cutting services.

The NDP commitments to create new childcare and long-term care spaces will make it easier for Londoners to look after family members, both young and old.

By cleaning-up our environment in an economically responsible way, and restoring arts and culture funding cut by the Conservatives, providing direct funding for municipalites, quality jobs, accessible and affordable community services, the New Democrats plan will create a higher quality of life for us all. Community isn't about the privileged few; it is about the common good of all people. The New Democrats plan is one that puts Londoners and their families first.

Respectfully



**Irene Mathyssen, MP
NDP Candidate, London-Fanshawe**