2015 Federal Election Candidate Questionnaire – City of London

**Background**

As the 2015 Federal Election approaches, there are many issues on the minds of Canadians – many of which are vitally important London’s future prosperity and to the well-being of its residents. Growing London’s economy, investing in infrastructure (specifically rapid transit), maintaining and enhancing affordable housing programs, and supporting the City’s efforts in responding and adapting to climate change are just some of the issues that warrant thoughtful consideration. None of these issues can be effectively addressed without cooperation between the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. And we need this cooperation to help build a strong, prosperous, competitive, and sustainable London.

For general background on election issues with municipal significance, see [The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) 2015 Federal Election Platform](#).

**Local Jobs and Growth**

1. **How will you and your Party commit to strengthening the regional economy of Southwest Ontario and specifically the London area?**

   The London economy is doing well as you know. More than 20,000 new jobs have been created since the recession, 10,000 of those in just the past 12 months. Almost 90 per cent of these new jobs are full-time, well-paying jobs. As well, manufacturing sales in Ontario are up by 20 per cent.

   The economy is our Conservative government’s number one priority. That is why we have a low-tax, balanced budget plan for jobs and growth that will continue lowering taxes for businesses, families and seniors. We are making strategic investments in manufacturing, research and innovation that will benefit Londoners. We have also signed 51 new free trade agreements which are opening new markets for London businesses, including the new Trans-Pacific Partnership that provides access to 800 million potential customers.

   About 30,000 Londoners work in manufacturing. Some of our key investments to support manufacturers in London include Fanshawe College’s Canadian Centre for Product Validation, the National Research Centre’s Factory of the Future, Western University’s Collider Centre for Technology Commercialization, the Fraunhofer Project Centre for Composite Research, as well as direct investments in manufacturers locally, such as GDLS, Kongsberg Protech, Starlim North America, Artisan Metal Finishing and Dr. Oetker.

   A newly re-elected Conservative government will continue to build on this record by implementing our Manufacturing Strategy to support Canadian manufacturing, create new business opportunities, and increase the number of well-paying manufacturing jobs.

   Prime Minister Stephen Harper has announced that we will create a new $100 million Manufacturing Technology Demonstration Fund to support large, pre-commercial projects in the advanced manufacturing sector.

   We are introducing a nine-year investment incentive for Canada’s manufacturers and processors which will provide manufacturers with an accelerated capital cost allowance in order to spur continued
investment in required machinery and equipment.

We are creating the Automotive Supplier Innovation Program to provide $100 million worth of support over 5 years to help product development and technology demonstration for automotive parts suppliers, including auto parts manufacturers here in London.

We will establish a new Advanced Manufacturing Hub to encourage the development of cutting-edge products and technologies, which will benefit our manufacturers in London.

We have also announced that we will be lowering payroll taxes by 20 per cent, so that London businesses can invest more to grow and create more jobs.

2. What are you and your Party prepared to do to support and enhance dedicated funding for municipal infrastructure programs in London?

Our Conservative government has launched the largest and longest federal infrastructure plan in Canada’s history – the Building Canada Plan. We have done this without raising taxes and while balancing the budget. Over the next 10 years, we will invest $80 billion in Canada’s infrastructure. This includes $53 billion to support provinces, territories and municipalities with their infrastructure needs.

As you know, it is the responsibility of provinces and territories to prioritize projects and submit them to the federal government for funding consideration.

In addition, our government has doubled the Gas Tax Fund and made it permanent. The categories have been expanded to provide more flexibility, the funding has been indexed and will grow by $1.8 billion over the next decade. Through the Gas Tax Fund, our government has invested more than $175 million in infrastructure projects in London since 2006 and the city is receiving over $21 million annually for important local projects.

3. Will you and your Party support dedicated funding for municipal public transit projects, in particular, London’s Rapid Transit initiative?

Ed Holder was very pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with Mayor Brown on London’s Shift proposal earlier this year.

As mentioned above, our government created the largest infrastructure fund in Canada’s history, which has supported many municipal transit projects.

As you know, for a transit project to be considered under the New Building Canada Fund, Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component, it must be supported by the Government of Ontario to be considered for federal funding. We encourage the City of London to continue your discussions with the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure on this proposal.

You will also be aware that our government launched the Public Transit Fund to support large-scale, public transit projects of $1 billion or more. Note that the Public Transit Fund frees up funds under the New Building Canada Plan and the P3 Canada Fund that otherwise might have been used up by large-scale transit projects. This will ensure that more funding under the Plan is available for other municipal infrastructure projects, including transit projects of less than $1 billion.
For background on local jobs and growth, see the 2015 City of London Federal Pre-Budget Submission, FCM on the New Building Canada Fund, the FCM Budget 2015 Submission, and Shift: London’s Rapid Transit Initiative.

Livable Communities

1. Will you and your Party maintain Canada’s existing federal affordable housing programs and agreements and build on programs that provide housing support and reduce homelessness in London?

Absolutely. Our Conservative government has made historic and substantial investments in affordable housing for families and seniors in London and across Canada. We have made smart investments which have ensured that close to 1 million Canadian families have access to affordable housing.

In 2011, our government announced a $1.9 billion investment over eight years through the Investment in Affordable Housing program, matched by the provinces. This investment is supporting new construction, renovation, home ownership assistance, rent supplements, shelter allowances, accessibility modifications, and accommodations for victims of family violence. Through the program, our government is increasing the supply of affordable housing, improving and preserving the quality of affordable housing, improving housing affordability for vulnerable Canadians and encouraging safe, independent living.

Budget 2015 reaffirmed our commitment to significant funding for co-ops and non-profit social housing providers. We are eliminating the mortgage prepayment penalty on long-term, non-renewable loans held with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This initiative will enable eligible co-operative and non-profit social housing providers to access private sector loans with more favourable interest rates, significantly reducing their mortgage expenses.

In addition, we are investing $150 million over four years to support social housing in Canada by allowing social housing providers to prepay their long-term, non-renewable mortgages without penalty.

We are also investing more than $2.3 billion per year over the next four years to increase the supply, quality, accessibility and affordability of housing across Canada and ensure Canadians in need have access to affordable, sound and suitable housing.

We have helped create more than 226,000 new, affordable housing units and have made contributions towards the construction and renovation of 104,000 housing units for low income families through the Economic Action Plan.

Also, we’ve enhanced the Home Buyers Plan and announced a new permanent home renovation tax credit.

For background on livable communities, see FCM’s Built to Last: Strengthening the Foundations of Housing in Canada and The City of London’s Housing Briefing Note.

Safe Cities and Communities

1. Will you and your Party support London’s efforts in ensuring a safe community through the development of a new approach to fund new investments in emergency response and disaster
mitigation?

Last year, our government announced a series of new measures to better prepare Canadians and protect them from natural disasters. We also committed to assisting communities in response and recovery efforts following natural disasters, so that Canadians can return to their normal lives.

We are investing $200 million to establish the National Disaster Mitigation Program as part of our commitment to build safer and more resilient communities. This program will address rising flood risks and costs, and build the foundation for informed mitigation investments that could reduce, or even negate, the effects of flood events in the future. The Government of Ontario is an eligible recipient under the program. The province may collaborate with, and redistribute funding to municipal or other local governments.

We provide substantial funding each year through the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements to communities affected by natural disasters. The Government of Canada typically pays for nearly 90 per cent of the costs of response and recovery for large-scale disasters.

We also introduced a 15-per-cent non-refundable Search and Rescue Volunteers Tax Credit on an amount of $3,000 for ground, air and marine search and rescue volunteers to recognize the important role played by ground, air and marine search and rescue volunteers.

Finally, in Budget 2015 our government announced a two-year, $3 million investment to take initial steps to establish a Public Safety Broadband Network, a high-speed mobile network dedicated to emergency management. This will help fire, police and ambulance services to better communicate with each other and share information in emergency situations to help save lives and keep our communities safe.

For background information on safe cities and communities, see The City of London Emergency Response Plan and FCM’s Policy Statement on Community Safety and Crime Prevention (specifically points 3 & 4).

Environmentally Sustainable Cities and Communities

1. How will you and your Party ensure that London’s environmental sustainability efforts in responding and adapting to climate change are supported?

Our Conservative government is the first in Canadian history to achieve a net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Canada’s per-capita emissions have fallen steadily since 2006 and remain at historic lows. We did this while growing the economy and without imposing the job-killing carbon taxes being proposed by the Opposition.

We have also made a commitment to reduce emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. This is a fair and ambitious commitment in line with other industrialized countries.

Canada is a world leader in clean energy generation. Almost 80 per cent of our electricity comes from sources that emit no greenhouse gas emissions. The G7 average is just 38 per cent.

Our government has been implementing a responsible sector-by-sector regulatory approach and investing significantly in innovative clean technologies while building on our position as a world leader in clean-electricity generation. We have established regulations for the transportation and electricity sectors, which are two of the largest sources of emissions in Canada. We are also developing regulations to reduce methane emissions from the oil-and-gas sector, increase the efficiency of natural
gas-fired electricity plants and limit emissions from the production of chemicals and fertilizers.

In 2012, Canada was the first major coal user to ban the construction of traditional coal-fired electricity generation. Coal is the largest source of GHGs in the world. In their first 21 years, Canada's coal regulations are expected to result in a cumulative reduction in GHG emissions equivalent of removing 2.6 million personal vehicles from the road per year over this period.

We will continue working cooperatively with other levels of government to achieve Canada’s plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while respecting their jurisdictions.

For background information on environmentally sustainable cities and communities, see Paying the Price: The Economic Impact of Climate Change and The City of London’s Community Energy Action Plan.

Global Municipal Connections

1. How will you and your Party involve the City of London as a partner to advance its municipal engagement in the international arena?

In our government’s Global Market Action Plan, we committed to establishing stronger ties with other levels of government to ensure that all our efforts are focused squarely on achieving commercial success in priority markets. To this end, we have established a strengthened and renewed structure with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to ensure that communities of all sizes across Canada benefit from, contribute to and work alongside the Government of Canada toward shared objectives.

As part of the Plan, our government established the Invest Canada – Community Initiatives program, which provides financial support to communities for their foreign direct investment initiatives and activities. Last year, the London Economic Development Corporation received $175,000 under ICCI. More information on the program is available here: http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/eng/funding/icci/home.jsp.

2. What other actions will you and your Party take to strengthen the competitiveness, prosperity, and quality of life of the city of London?

A re-elected Conservative government will continue to implement our low-tax, balanced plan for jobs and growth. We will reduce taxes for London families, senior and businesses while making targeted investments that will benefit all Londoners. We look forward to the opportunity to continue working with the Mayor, councillors and officials of the City on shared priorities that will help our city and our residents succeed.

For background information on global municipal connections, see The LEDC 2015-18 Strategic Plan and The City of London’s International Involvement Briefing Note.

Federal Involvement

1. What will you and your Party do to expand and enhance the role that municipalities such as London play in the Canadian federation?
We will continue to meet regularly with and consult with local leaders and stakeholders in London. We will also continue to champion investments in projects that are priorities for London families, businesses, community organizations and local leaders and that create jobs and prosperity for our city.

Our Conservative government has always respected the role of each level of government, and we have worked together for the benefit of all Canadians. It is essential that - like all good partners and team - we respect each other's role in serving Canadians.

That is why we have introduced programs and made strategic investments so that local and provincial governments can address their priorities in partnership with the federal government in areas that are local or provincial jurisdiction. For example, the Building Canada Plan provides infrastructure funding allocated to provincial priorities, based on input from local governments. Likewise, the Gas Tax Transfer provides $21 million per year to the City of London to address your priorities.

By working with all levels of government to invest in local priorities, while continuing to decrease the taxes of Canadians and maintain balanced budgets, our city and our country will remain strong and together we will help create jobs and improve the quality of life for Londoners.

For background information on federal involvement, see: Canada’s Cities. Canada’s Future.