

Election Campaign

# ENGINEERING<sup>\*</sup> on the Hill

www.engineerscanada.ca

REPORTING ON ISSUES ON PARLIAMENT HILL OF INTEREST TO THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION

This publication is not extensive and represents statements and activities made by the different federal parties during the last week relating to our position statements. Engineers Canada will work with the newly elected government on issues of importance to the engineering profession. This week the focus is on the issue of infrastructure.

## Infrastructure

**Engineers Canada is concerned about the state of Canada's infrastructure as it directly affects Canadians' quality of life.**

**Engineers Canada wishes to contribute the expertise of professional engineers to the federal government in developing a sustainable and planned approach towards infrastructure.**

**Engineers Canada believes a sustainable and planned approach to infrastructure renewal is required by the federal government.**

### Green Party

To support communities, there is a need to invest in critical infrastructure of transport and water works to modernize and reduce energy demand. A Green Party government will continue the gas tax commitment as envisioned by the previous government to allow for stable and predictable funding. As well, a Green Party government would liberate billions of dollars a year through Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) deductions for municipal bonds.

Municipalities need stable and predictable funding so that they can invest in critical infrastructure such

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A Liberal government will implement a 10-year, \$70-billion plan to invest directly in Canada's infrastructure. As part of this commitment, they will honour all existing framework agreements that the Conservative government has signed with the provinces. They believe that when the Government of Canada puts its name on an agreement, future governments should respect that commitment and all specific funding commitments will also be honoured.

A Liberal government will pursue in its discussions with the provinces and municipalities under the framework agreements. To that end, over the next 10 years, a Liberal government will allocate:

- at least \$10 billion for strategic infrastructure, particularly green infrastructure such as clean water and sewage treatment, and clean energy grids;
- at least \$8 billion for a national transit strategy that will enable our cities to expand their systems and green their transit fleets;
- at least \$3 billion for a dedicated small communities fund, to ensure that all Canadians are able to see strengthened, more resilient infrastructure;
- at least \$4.5 billion for our country's gateways, corridors and borders to ensure that Canada's infrastructure facilitates, rather than hinders, our trade and tourism industries while keeping Canada safe and secure; and
- at least \$3 billion for sports and recreational facilities because an active society is a healthier society and Canada must renew and expand its arenas and other leisure facilities.

In addition to these priorities, their 10-year plan includes the transfer of almost \$25 billion to the municipalities through the gas tax transfer. The Liberal Party will index the transfer to nominal GDP growth so that municipalities have the funding certainty they need to keep up with economic growth.

### Liberal Party

For more on the full Liberal platform visit [www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca)

## Green Party (continued from page 1)

as mass transit, sewage treatment, energy efficiency improvements, better water systems to reduce waste and cope with erratic precipitation patterns of a changing global climate, as well as community amenities like sports fields, arts and cultural opportunities.

The Green Party will create a new pool of municipal infrastructure funding by changing tax rules to create a municipal RRSP bond that can be held in RRSPs and self-directed RRSPs. According to the Green Party, in February 2006 alone, Canadians bought \$8 billion in mutual funds.

This would be in addition to allocating an additional portion of the federal gasoline tax directly to the provinces for transfer to municipalities. The Green Party supports the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Large Cities Caucus request for a commitment of one cent from GST as a reasonable approach to stable financing. This is made possible through carbon tax revenue. Municipal governments must enter into agreements to ensure that sprawl is not permitted through extensive infrastructure funding. Densification, speedy, safe and pleasant mass transit, safe cycling paths and other investments to conserve electricity and water will all merit stable GST-sourced financing.

**For further details and a more in depth view of the various party platforms, please consult their websites at:**

[www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca)

[www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca)

[www.presentpourlequebec.org](http://www.presentpourlequebec.org)

[www.greenparty.ca](http://www.greenparty.ca)

[www.conservative.ca](http://www.conservative.ca)

## Conservative Party of Canada

By the time that this publication was prepared on Monday, September 29, 2008, the Conservative Party of Canada had not yet released their election platform material. Once a comprehensive platform is made public, we will include their position on **infrastructure**.

## On October 14<sup>th</sup>, Do You Know Where to Vote?

Go to [www.electionscanada.ca](http://www.electionscanada.ca) and punch in your home postal code in the Voter Information Services Box in the centre of the web page. You will find the name of your home riding, be able to determine whether you are on the eligible voters list, and who to contact if you appear not eligible.

## Proposed Green Party Solutions to Canada's Infrastructure Issues:

Change tax policy to create a new pool of long term municipal infrastructure funding by allowing municipalities to issue new Municipal Registered Retirement Savings Plans Bonds

Allocate one cent from GST on an approximate per capita basis to municipal governments for "Green Cities" initiatives, ensuring (through contractual agreements) that the funding is not used in ways that encourage urban sprawl, but instead to reduce sprawl and greenhouse gas emissions, conserve electricity and water, increase densification, expand convenient, safe, reliable and affordable public transit, and build cycling and walking paths. This funding could be transferred through municipal superfunds

Create six municipal superfunds of \$500 million/fund/year (an average of \$100 for every citizen per year) to which municipalities can apply for grant funding to replace the less specific Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF). To read the entire platform on the specifics of these proposed funds, visit [www.greenparty.ca](http://www.greenparty.ca)

Increase the gas tax transfer to municipalities to five cents/litre to be used in funding the above sustainable transportation initiatives such as public transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and rural roads.

Make transit passes tax-deductible to encourage workers and businesses to use public transport and make employee parking a taxable benefit.

## Bloc Québécois

The Bloc Québécois will urge the federal government to ensure that investments in infrastructure are modified based on the following jurisdictional scheme: the federal government would assume 50 percent of spending, Quebec and the provinces 35 percent and 15 percent from the municipalities.

The Bloc Québécois demands that the federal government, rather than expand infrastructure programs, unifies spending into a single unconditional transfer of funds in order to respect the powers of Quebec and the other provinces.

The Bloc Québécois will insist that the government of Quebec makes decisions on the transit systems most effective in establishing this new structure. The Quebec Minister of Transport and the Quebec Government have also called for the establishment of a light rail train on the Champlain Bridge. The federal government will not affect the choices of the Quebec government in infrastructure matters. The new system will have to integrate the choices made by Quebec. The Bloc Québécois will continue to put pressure on the federal government so that the establishment of this bridge meets Quebec's preference in the matter.

### NEW - Voter Identification at the Polls

#### Option 1:

Provide **one original piece of identification** issued by a government or government agency containing your photo, name and address.

#### Option 2:

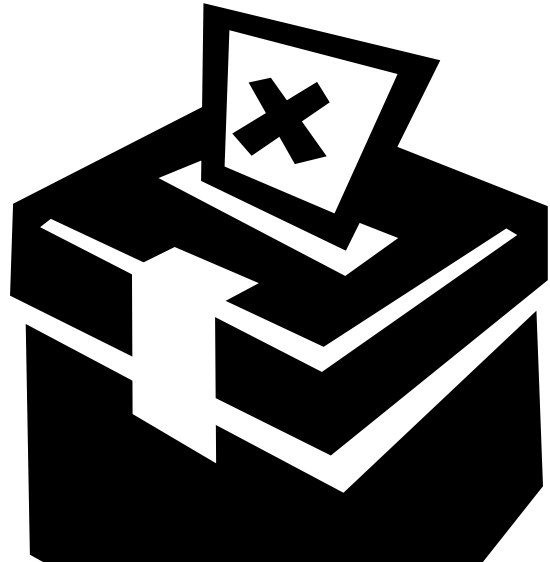
Provide **two original pieces of identification** authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada. **Both pieces must contain your name, and one must also contain your address.** For a full listing of accepted identification, please go to

[www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=ele&dir=ids&document=index&lang=e&textonly=false#two](http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=ele&dir=ids&document=index&lang=e&textonly=false#two).

#### Option 3:

You can be vouched for by an elector whose name appears on the list of electors in the same polling division and who has an acceptable piece or pieces of identification. Both will be required to make a sworn statement. An elector cannot vouch for more than one person, and the person who has been vouched for cannot vouch for another elector.

For more information please go to [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)



### New Democratic Party

The 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. They believe this will address the growing infrastructure deficit, and help cities and citizens avoid massive property tax increases.

This increased infrastructure commitment, phased in over five 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 border crossings
- Public libraries
- Community centres
- Sewer and water treatment facilities

The NDP will 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.

As well, in negotiations with provinces, territories, municipalities and other stakeholders, the NDP will develop Made-in-Canada procurement protocols for federal investments in public transit, infrastructure and other investments.