

Summary of Mayoral Candidate Interviews on Infrastructure



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RESEARCH INC.

...for what you need to know.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the key responsibilities of every municipal government is to build, maintain and improve their community's infrastructure. The catch-all term, infrastructure, refers to nearly every physical public asset in the community – roads, sidewalks, sewer and water lines, bike paths, libraries, community centres, and so on. Although senior levels of government do play an important role in terms of identifying which items will be prioritized and funded, municipal governments maintain primary responsibility for ensuring that these important public goods remain efficient and functional.

Public opinion polling conducted during the past year shows that an increasing number of Manitobans are deeply concerned about the state of their community's infrastructure. Against this backdrop, Probe Research interviewed candidates running for mayor in Winnipeg and Brandon, asking them to share their vision for how they would tackle the infrastructure-related challenges facing these urban centres. These discussions focused on the specific policy initiatives candidates would take to fix infrastructure, including how they would pay for improvements. As well, candidates were asked to describe how they would engage senior levels of government and other stakeholders to improve processes related to how infrastructure projects in Winnipeg and Brandon are planned, financed, constructed and maintained.

The results show that although there is an across-the-board level of consensus among mayoral candidates that infrastructure is the paramount challenge facing municipalities, there is a divide regarding how to pay for these improvements. Although a number of candidates are willing to increase property taxes for the purposes of dedicating these new revenues to improve their city's infrastructure, others are adamant that tax increases should be avoided if at all possible. This has led these candidates to propose other means of allocating resources to infrastructure renewal, including cancelling projects that are already planned (such as Phase 2 of Winnipeg's Southwest Transitway) and selling city-owned assets. Other candidates' plans for financing infrastructure renewal are also highly contingent on additional transfers from senior levels of government, such as the Manitoba government providing Winnipeg with its proportional share of new provincial sales tax revenue.

Regarding the relationship with senior levels of government, most candidates speak generally about improving what is seen (particularly in Winnipeg) as a strained relationship with the provincial government and also engaging in a more formal and ongoing dialogue with provincial representatives, as well as with other regional stakeholders. The expected result of this dialogue is that the provincial government (and perhaps the federal government as well) will defer to the city's infrastructure priorities and also be forthcoming with additional funding. Regional infrastructure planning is also regarded as an important task for the next mayor, given the current and expected level of residential, commercial and industrial growth around Winnipeg. There is also a strong desire, particularly among Winnipeg candidates, to improve internal planning processes within the civic government for major projects so that they are subject to greater council/public oversight.

There is a strong degree of consensus that public-private partnerships (P3s) are a desirable approach to building large-scale infrastructure projects, provided that the conditions for these developments are ultimately beneficial to the city government and to taxpayers. Although core infrastructure is the area that is regarded by the public as requiring the most attention, candidates generally want their civic governments to continue current levels of investment in social infrastructure, as these amenities are regarded as improving citizens' quality of life.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Probe Research Inc. was commissioned by the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) to conduct interviews with the candidates for mayor in Winnipeg and Brandon. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain their views and platform positions regarding infrastructure renewal and investment.

All of the candidates who registered to run for mayor prior to August 15, 2014 were sent an invitation to take part in these discussions. This invitation included a list of the questions to be asked along with background information on the MHCA's positions on infrastructure, including a list of the MHCA's "Six Principles" for investment in infrastructure, the Canada West Foundation's report "At the Intersection" and a recent MHCA op-ed published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The interview guide was designed by Probe Research Inc. in close consultation with MHCA and PRHouse representatives.

The following is a list of the interviews conducted with mayoral candidates in Brandon and Winnipeg:¹

City	Date	Candidate	Interviewer
Winnipeg	August 22	David Sanders	Curtis Brown
Brandon	August 26	Shari Decter Hirst	Curtis Brown
Brandon	August 26	Rick Chrest	Curtis Brown
Winnipeg	August 27	Gord Steeves	Roland Pajares
Winnipeg	August 29	Michel Fillion	Curtis Brown
Winnipeg	Sept. 5	Judy Wasylcia-Leis	Curtis Brown
Winnipeg	Sept. 5	Brian Bowman	Curtis Brown
Winnipeg	Sept. 10	Robert-Falcon Ouellette	Curtis Brown
Winnipeg	Sept. 15	Paula Havixbeck	Curtis Brown

All interviews were video recorded, with Probe Research Inc. preparing a transcript of each discussion. The key points from these discussions (as well as information from press releases and background documents issued by the campaigns after the interview) are summarized in this document. The transcripts of these interviews can be found in the Appendix.






¹ An interview was also conducted with Winnipeg mayoral candidate Mike Vogiatzakis, who registered to run for mayor but who did not meet the requirements to be placed on the ballot.

2.0 DETAILED FINDINGS



2.1 Infrastructure As A Campaign Priority

- There is near-universal recognition among the mayoral candidates in both Winnipeg and Brandon that infrastructure renewal is either the paramount issue in this election campaign, or that infrastructure ranks among the most important issues in the minds of voters. Virtually all of the candidates recognize that Manitobans are unhappy about the state of their community’s infrastructure and that their job – should they be elected on Oct. 22 – is to make significant improvements to their community’s core infrastructure.

Winnipeg Candidates On The Record – The Importance of Infrastructure



						
Brian Bowman	Michel Fillion	Paula Havixbeck	Robert-Falcon Ouellette	David Sanders	Gord Steeves	Judy Wasylycia-Leis
<p>“We’ve been knocking on doors now for about two months, and it is without question the No. 1 issue, closely followed by trust and integrity ... They do go hand-in-hand, and that’s why I’m being clear in my infrastructure priorities in my long-term vision as well my short-term steps as in how we get there.</p>	<p>“[Infrastructure] is my top priority ... When I see these crumbling roads in front of my face every day, when I hear people complain constantly about these roads, it does affect me.”</p>	<p>“It’s probably in the top two, I would say, next to improving processes and transparency at City Hall. ... Improving processes and transparency is linked to infrastructure as well because it’s about how we’ve done some projects over the last four years that concerns people.”</p>	<p>“If you think about cities and why they are important, it’s about the movement of goods, services and people around efficiently. If you can’t move those, if you can’t do that in a good way, then at the end of the day what you’re going to find is a city which has less productivity.”</p>	<p>“My second priority will be looking at the 2015 budget - operating and capital - immediately and (we’re) going to have to make decisions on what to do this coming year but it should be in the context of a longer range plan for infrastructure.”</p>	<p>“[Infrastructure] is number one. It’s a core service that municipalities have to provide. The reason I ran and was elected as the president of Canadian municipalities was precisely for the work (of) pushing the infrastructure idea.”</p>	<p>“At the rate we are going, unless this is addressed as a number one priority after the next election, we are doing the most irresponsible thing possible where we’re handing a legacy of debt to our children. We’re facing and giving them the prospects of a crumbling city and I think that’s irresponsible.”</p>

Brandon Candidates On The Record – The Importance of Infrastructure





Candidate	
<p>Rick Chrest</p> 	<p>“I’m bullish on infrastructure, always had been when I was previously on city council and to do so in a strategic way. With the partnerships that are available from the senior levels of government and those are coming to the forefront, once again, that’s great news, and we need to be prepared to take advantage of those during the programs and the years those cost sharing programs are available.”</p>
<p>Shari Decter Hirst</p> 	<p>“We can’t build a city without an economy and can’t have a city without the infrastructure. People should have an expectation on a day-to-day basis that their basements will not flood. We have very good folks, here at the city, engineering and in public works and we have a solid set of projects lined up for the next four years, it’s just now a question of budget priorities because previous councils have decided that they want to keep taxes as close to zero as possible, and this city council we’ve always kept it under inflation. We can’t keep it to zero because we have to do the repair work, we have to grow the city, and make sure the city is safe and dry.”</p>

2.2 Plan to Address Infrastructure Deficit




- When asked to identify exactly how they intend to tackle their community’s infrastructure deficit, the amount of detail ranged considerably among the candidates. Some were able to point to very specific proposals or campaign pledges that had already been made, while others talked about their plan to improve infrastructure in their cities in more general terms.
- Among Winnipeg candidates in particular, the debate about tackling the infrastructure deficit is focused on transportation-related infrastructure – particularly, whether the city should or should not invest in the next phase of the Southwest Transitway. Although the majority of mayoral candidates support this investment (and one, Brian Bowman, has pledged to build up to six lines of rapid transit by 2030), one candidate (Gord Steeves) believes the city should not spend this money and should instead invest in fixing existing streets and water lines. Another candidate, Robert-Falcon Ouellette, advocates for moving towards a light-rail transit (LRT) system built upon existing railway rights-of-way (which would be moved to the outskirts of the city).
- The following tables show a synopsis of the key points made by candidates in Winnipeg and Brandon. It highlights the specific campaign pledges that they have put forward, as well as provides a description in their own words of how they would go about tackling the infrastructure deficit in their respective cities. (NB: Candidates’ responses are listed in alphabetical order):

Plan to Address the Infrastructure Deficit – Brandon Candidates		
Candidate	Position	Quote
Rick Chrest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in improvements to existing infrastructure and infrastructure in new areas, with a focus on ensuring revenue is allocated to infrastructure renewal as opposed to administrative costs. 	“Doing budgets is all about setting priorities. And our greatest priority is channeling as much of the funds we have available towards infrastructure. Some of the other things that may be nice to have may have to wait a little bit.”
Shari Decter Hirst 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement a three-pronged strategy to improve infrastructure by investing in improvements to existing infrastructure, financing improvements in new areas of the city and investing in improvements that lead to long-term flood mitigation i.e. flood protection along the Assiniboine River corridor and drainage improvements in southeast Brandon 	“We can’t move the city forward and increase our tax base and bring prosperity to Brandon until we get some of the infrastructure for our new developments in place. And there is nothing like a 350-year flood to remind you that you need that infrastructure in place.”

Plans to Address the Infrastructure Deficit – Winnipeg Candidates

Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>Brian Bowman</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on investments in roads, rapid transit and active transportation infrastructure • Create BUILDWinnipeg, which would bring together officials from different City of Winnipeg departments as well as provincial and federal government representatives and other partners to develop a 10-year plan for fixing the city's infrastructure. • Lobby the provincial government to provide Winnipeg with a proportional share of the money collected through the recent increase to PST • Major transportation proposal is to complete all six proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines by 2030 	<p>"The BUILDWinnipeg Partnership would be tasked with implementing - it would get the politicians out of the way, we would have better coordination between the various levels of government, and we'd have better coordination of the various investments needed for roads, public transit, and active transportation and investments."</p>
<p>Michel Fillion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find new funding for infrastructure renewal via property tax increases and development of new city revenue sources (i.e. revenue-generating city-owned businesses) • Improve maintenance of city assets through increased inspection 	<p>"The first thing is the funding, of course. After that, it would be to oversee the projects extensively, because I don't think that has been concentrated that much. ... It's also to ensure the long-term maintenance of these projects, which is very poorly currently done."</p>
<p>Robert-Falcon Ouellette</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on improving city planning, particularly on major infrastructure projects • Search for efficiencies within city operations so that additional funds can be freed up for infrastructure renewal • Lobby the provincial government to provide Winnipeg with a proportional share of the money collected through the recent increase to PST • Major transportation infrastructure proposal is to relocate rail lines outside Winnipeg and implement a light-rail transit (LRT) system rather than continue expanding the City's proposed BRT system. 	<p>"I'm sure we can always do things a little bit differently but at the end of the day if you we are going to ask the province for money, we have to demonstrate that we've done our part at City Hall and done the heavy lifting in order to find more cost savings. Sometimes that cost savings could just be doing our job better or in a different way, thinking about our tasks in a different light."</p>
<p>Paula Havixbeck</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with planned improvements to major regional roadways, including the extension of the Chief Peguis Trail and William Clement Parkway, the Waverly underpass and widening Kenaston Boulevard. • Repair existing infrastructure in a coordinated fashion through local improvement levies • Improve project management and tendering processes • Supports the City's existing plans to complete Phase 2 of the Southwest Transitway 	<p>"If we don't tackle this by a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis, where numerous water main breaks are occurring; frozen pipes are occurring, the infrastructure is just falling apart literally. So, we need to tackle it neighbourhood by neighbourhood like that, I think because the disparity is so huge."</p>



Plans to Address the Infrastructure Deficit – Winnipeg Candidates (CONTINUED)

Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>David Sanders</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop long-range capital plan for infrastructure renewal • Better coordinate investment with senior levels of government • Explore all options for raising funds to address infrastructure deficit • Supports the City's existing plans to complete Phase 2 of the Southwest Transitway, but has concerns about the transparency of this project 	<p>"The infrastructure debt is the total amount of work that is required to replace and provide for the infrastructure that we have and we need. And that's a big number, a very big number. And then what's referred to the infrastructure deficit and that would reflect in budgetary terms the fact that each year we are spending much less than we should spending in order to maintain and rebuild the infrastructure. And that's the key number to me and the amount that we are short every year in investment in the infrastructure that we need."</p>
<p>Gord Steeves</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell municipal-owned golf courses to create a capital fund to be used for infrastructure • Would cancel Phase 2 of Bus Rapid Transit • Focus as much as possible on fixing existing infrastructure 	<p>"The infrastructure deficit is one that is going to be one that is very difficult to address, but it can't be addressed without some rapid influx of money that doesn't exist right now."</p>
<p>Judy Wasylycia-Leis</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a permanent, sustained investment in infrastructure • Strike "blue ribbon" task force to develop long-term plan to address infrastructure deficit • Increase infrastructure spending to \$400 million between 2015 and 2018, with \$60 million in new spending on local and regional roads • Improve transparency and reporting on major capital projects • Start tendering process during the fall of the previous year • Improve design process • Supports the City's existing plans to complete Phase 2 of the Southwest Transitway 	<p>"We're not talking about a short-term plan. We have to look beyond the election cycle, and look towards a 20 to 30 year plan with clear markers along the way so that people will know that there is a plan and although we will go through some rough patches in terms of more frozen pipes or burst pipes, or water main breaks, or sewage backup, we're going to have to deal with this on a priority basis, street-by-street, block-by-block."</p>





2.3 Additional Sources of Infrastructure Financing

- After outlining how they would address the infrastructure deficit in their respective cities, candidates were queried as to how they would fund infrastructure renewal and investments in new infrastructure. This included exploring how they would manage existing infrastructure budgets as well as how they would seek out new revenue streams, including existing sources (such as property taxes, improvement levies and tax-supported borrowing), alternative fiscal tools (such as tolls, vehicle registration fees and municipal sales taxes) and transfers from senior levels of government.
- This is a key area of distinction between candidates in both cities. There are those who are open to increasing property taxes to finance infrastructure improvements (Decter Hirst in Brandon; Bowman, Wasylycia-Leis, Fillion and Sanders in Winnipeg), with some degree of variation in both the size of the proposed increase and the method to be used.
 - Winnipeg candidate Paula Havixbeck, for instance, proposes a dedicated local improvement levy to finance infrastructure renewal in certain areas as opposed to a city-wide mill rate increase.
 - Others, such as Chrest in Brandon and Steeves in Winnipeg, are seeking to freeze or at least minimize tax increases and finance infrastructure improvements through other methods, including (in the case of Steeves) selling city-owned assets and creating an infrastructure reserve fund.
- Winnipeg candidates Brian Bowman and Robert-Falcon Ouellette stand out for indicating that they will lobby the provincial government for the City of Winnipeg's share of the recent one percent PST increase, which is estimated to be \$154 million.
- Bowman has also pledged to lead a discussion on getting rid of municipal property taxes and replacing this with a municipal sales tax.




Financial Tools To Pay For Infrastructure – Brandon Candidates

Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>Rick Chrest</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep property taxes frozen (or below the rate of inflation) • Open to exploring selling city-owned assets 	<p>“My first goal would be to try to keep [the property tax rate] at zero, but to do things properly and to get cracking on this infrastructure, if we had to see small increases like that, the feedback I’m getting from residents is that they’re okay for that when they can see tangible use of the money.”</p>
<p>Shari Decter Hirst</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to increasing property taxes to pay for infrastructure • Revise system of levying development charges • Lobby the provincial government for changes to the Municipal Act should Brandon require other fiscal tools to finance infrastructure improvements 	<p>“Up until now, we have now been certainly have been looking to the residents of Brandon and picking up that piece [infrastructure in new subdivisions] and I don’t think frankly that’s what other communities are doing, some of them much smaller than us. And we’re going to have to make sure that it’s fair and that new growth is paid for by new growth.”</p>

Financial Tools To Pay For Infrastructure – Winnipeg Candidates



Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>Brian Bowman</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek efficiencies in city spending in an attempt to reallocate 2% of existing City budget • Increase property taxes at rate of inflation (approx. 2%/year) over four years and dedicate funds to infrastructure renewal • Lobby provincial government for Winnipeg’s “proportional share” of 1% PST increase • Develop long-term plan to eliminate property taxes and replace with a “growth” tax (Bowman’s preference is a municipal sales tax, as it would collect revenue from non-Winnipeg residents who use city services) 	<p>“What I want to do is create an incentive for the municipal government to really focus on economic development and one of the ways you can do that is by getting some skin in the game. As economic growth occurs, the city should be funded properly so that we can deal with our own house. Right now, we have to go cap in hand to the province, we have to go back cap in hand to the taxpayer, and it’s not sustainable.”</p>
<p>Michel Fillion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase property taxes 5% in 2015 and 5% in 2016, with additional revenue dedicated to infrastructure • Create city-owned “non-competitive” businesses (such as an amusement park) that would raise funds to finance infrastructure • Seek changes to legislation so that Winnipeg can levy new taxes, including one-cent municipal fuel tax, a vehicle registration tax and a payroll tax for employees who work in Winnipeg but who live outside Winnipeg 	<p>“It’s not that much of a (property tax) increase. When I tell that to the public, they are always shocked. Don’t raise my property taxes. But, that is pretty much the only way that we can go about this in this present time.”</p>
<p>Paula Havixbeck</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce local improvement levies that are used to dedicate revenue to infrastructure renewal in specific areas/neighbourhoods • Continue dedicating additional revenues raised through property tax increases to reserves for local and regional street renewal 	<p>“If we can better pinpoint how much that’s actually going to cost the residents so they know and can see it immediately that year, people feel OK about paying a little bit more or paying their fair share of taxes if they can see it. The way it goes right now is you do a tax increase, you do this frontage levy. This is going into a black hole and we can’t do that anymore.”</p>
<p>Robert-Falcon Ouellette</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue a 30-year bond to invest \$250 million in infrastructure renewal • Lobby the provincial government to provide Winnipeg with a proportional share of the money collected through the recent increase to PST • Introduce a land value tax that would tax surface parking lots in downtown Winnipeg at higher rates (to raise an estimated \$26 million) • Property tax increases would be a “last resort” • Would propose having school divisions collect their share of their property tax separately 	<p>“I pay \$2,000 per year for my school taxes. It leaves very little room for the city then, to increase theirs because people are already stuck. You have to have that balance between all the levels of government. You know, I could raise taxes by 100 percent. I could double them overnight. But would it be realistic? No. So this is why only as a last resort should we ever be raising those property taxes.”</p>

Financial Tools To Pay For Infrastructure – Winnipeg Candidates (CONTINUED)





Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>David Sanders</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would increase property taxes and issue bonds to finance major infrastructure renewal projects • Open to exploring (but not necessarily in favour of) alternative financing methods, including tolls • Opposed in principle to selling city-owned assets 	<p>“I would be prepared to use municipal debt, borrowing, for projects that would have a long-term life, like the mortgage on your house that you would be paying for the time that you are enjoying the benefit.”</p>
<p>Gord Steeves</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep property taxes frozen at 2014 levels • Create a reserve fund for infrastructure by selling city-owned municipal golf courses • Opposed to any other alternative methods of revenue generation, including tolls, vehicle registration fees, etc. 	<p>“We have to be very careful. Could the city use extra money? Yes. I guess it could. A property tax hike of two percent raises about \$8 million, maybe \$9 million. In the context of a \$1.5 billion budget, that is a pittance. It’s not going to make a difference to the city of Winnipeg, but it will hurt individual citizens and it will hurt individual businesses.”</p>
<p>Judy Wasylycia-Leis</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase property taxes by the combined rate of population growth and inflation, with 1% going to regional roads, 1% to residential streets and the remainder to increasing the City’s operational capacity • Borrow (using these dedicated property tax increases) to invest in these infrastructure priorities • Explore alternative financing options, including the creation of an infrastructure bank, green bonds, asset recycling and public-private partnerships. 	<p>“We all know that this money is a drop in the bucket. We have to find a way to leverage that money. I’ve been looking at ways for the city to up its numbers of its borrowing program. But the recent Moody’s report has put in a damper and I think we need some financial expertise brought into the City after October 22 to look at different options besides the property tax increase, besides the investment streams for infrastructure, and the ongoing work that we need to do to convince both the federal and provincial government that [infrastructure] is a shared responsibility.”</p>

2.4 Improvements to Infrastructure Planning




- Candidates were asked to describe how they would improve planning processes within their respective cities in order to better manage and build infrastructure. In Winnipeg, this included asking candidates about how they would better coordinate regional infrastructure planning with neighbouring municipalities in the Manitoba Capital Region.
- In both Winnipeg and Brandon, candidates spoke generally about the need to identify long-term infrastructure renewal priorities and to better adhere to these plans.
- In terms of improving planning in the Capital Region, Winnipeg candidates generally spoke about improving communication with these partners and meeting with them (and the province) in a more formal manner to identify regional infrastructure priorities.
 - Among the candidates, David Sanders spoke in the most detail about this issue by highlighting how there have been key problems in this area recently (such as with CentrePort’s water service agreement and the development of a proposed commercial area in East St. Paul right across from the city’s northeastern boundary) and about the need to identify and mitigate potential problem areas “proactively” ahead of time.

Improvements to Infrastructure Planning – Brandon Candidates		
Candidate	Position	Quote
Rick Chrest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue developing long-term plan for improving drainage and existing infrastructure • Work collaboratively with land developers 	<p>“We have a fairly strong planning component in Brandon. It’s certainly my desire to see it more streamlined and more consultative with the development community and so forth. ... If we can do things that are more conducive to keeping Brandon growing, and ways it can be a win/win with the city and the development community, I sure want to talk about it. It would certainly be my desire to be more consultative, more cooperative with the development community to create those win/wins.”</p>
Shari Decter Hirst 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue developing long-range plan for infrastructure renewal and investments in improvements to new areas of the city 	<p>“I think that it’s important for us to have that long range plan. We need a story arc, especially because the projects are very, very expensive. As we put in our 10, 15, or 20 year plans in place, we begin to say and ask how do we pay for it? How are we going to schedule it?”</p>

Improving Infrastructure Planning (Including At the Regional Level) – Winnipeg Candidates



Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>Brian Bowman</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination through the BUILDWinnipeg partnership • The interests/needs of neighbouring municipalities would be represented by the provincial government (as opposed to giving these RMs a formal part of this agreement) 	<p>“The reason is that I’m running for Winnipeg and I want to make sure [the BUILDWinnipeg Partnership] serves the best interests of Winnipeg - recognizing, of course, that the regional roads and feeders into Winnipeg are important for Winnipeg’s economic growth and development, and that’s why the provincial government would be invited to join in.”</p>
<p>Michel Fillion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the provincial government to identify priorities 	<p>“You have to work with the province. Everything is linked together. Our road system is all linked together. And it has to flow.”</p>
<p>Paula Havixbeck</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve coordination of repair work so that resources are used more efficiently • Have monthly/quarterly meetings with external stakeholders (such as MHCA, AMM, MPI, etc.) regarding infrastructure priorities • More frequent meetings/collaboration with Capital Region partners • Work towards the establishment of a Regional Transportation Authority to coordinate public transit in the Capital Region 	<p>“So, Sherbrook last year, Sherbrook Street, had pipes replaced. Businesses are interrupted because they can’t have people coming by car to park and come to their business. This year, the City resurfaced and did the bike lanes. That’s two years of business interrupted. We’re not thinking about ‘what is the user feeling?’”</p>
<p>Robert-Falcon Ouellette</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would seek to implement a Master Transportation Plan and a regional transit system for the Capital Region that involves the provincial government and the municipalities surrounding Winnipeg • Will rely more heavily on engineering and city planning expertise within the City of Winnipeg (as opposed to outside consultants from private firms) for planning on land development/infrastructure projects 	<p>“I think if the city has a large cohort of engineers, then we should be using those resources in the city. If we have city planners, then we should be giving them the freedom to actually sit about and design the city in an appropriate way. And using those human resources to actually produce the results that we want because that, at the end of the day, is the expertise of the city and I want to support them in everything that they do.”</p>

Improving Infrastructure Planning (Including At the Regional Level) – Winnipeg Candidates (CONTINUED)





Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>David Sanders</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with the Province and neighbouring municipalities to proactively improve regional planning prior to the initiation of projects – cited issues with Centreport Canada and service agreements between City of Winnipeg and RM of Rosser, as well as commercial development in the RM of East St. Paul on the northeastern edge of Winnipeg 	<p>“It’s not as if the city can insist that something can happen outside our boundaries, but we sure can be engaged on a regular basis, both in the political and the staff level with members of the capital region and the provincial authorities in order to consider the impact and the inter-relationships that both the problems that can be caused and (as) well the opportunities that may exist through a cooperative approach through things. And I think a lot is possible there.”</p>
<p>Gord Steeves</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a formal structure for prioritizing City of Winnipeg infrastructure projects that commits senior levels of government to first addressing those priorities that are identified by the City • Further discuss the creation of a Transportation Authority for the Manitoba Capital Region 	<p>“We spend a lot of money on infrastructure. My impression is with the exception of some things... generally speaking, infrastructure projects through the City of Winnipeg are designated by and large appropriately, not perfectly, but by and large, there are systems and those sorts of things. Where it gets complicated is when other levels of government come in, which often happens around election time with funding for different projects, priority systems, and priority goal setting exercise ... and projects have a way of leaping in front of the queue upon election time.”</p>
<p>Judy Wasylycia-Leis</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would work to implement the City’s existing Transportation Master Plan and develop a long-term (20-30 year) capital spending plan • Review existing infrastructure priorities/budgets with council • Hire a new CAO for the City and reorganize City budgets/departments as required to focus on improving infrastructure • Work with the province and neighbouring municipalities to identify and build required regional infrastructure 	<p>“Our hands are not tied by the actions of previous council. We have a fresh start. I like the basis that ... I like where we are at. But I want to make sure that we have all the information. I’m not sure to whatever skeletons are in the closet, or whatever financial issues we face, but I want to make sure that they are all on the table.”</p>

2.5 Engagement With Senior Levels of Government




- Candidates in both cities talked about engaging the provincial and federal governments in a more formal and persistent dialogue about financing infrastructure improvements.
- Several of the Winnipeg candidates, in particular, indicated that fixing the relationship with the provincial government is a particularly high priority, as they feel that the relationship has broken down during the past few years. Bowman, Ouellette and Fillion, in particular, pledged to lobby the government for Winnipeg’s “share” of the one percent PST increase and indicated that in order to do this they would use both dialogue and public pressure to accomplish this.
- The only candidates who described engaging the federal government at any length were Decter Hirst in Brandon and Wasylycia-Leis of Winnipeg. Ms. Wasylycia-Leis pointed to her experience as a federal MP and her work across party lines on key issues, such as passing the 2005 federal Liberal budget with NDP support for key spending provisions.

Engaging Senior Levels of Government – Brandon Candidates		
Candidate	Position	Quote
 <p>Rick Chrest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access as many cost-shared infrastructure programs, such as the Building Canada Fund, as possible • Not necessarily in favour of accessing dedicated portion of growth taxes i.e., PST 	<p>“It’s kind of the senior levels of governments’ responsibility to puzzle out how the money is going to flow down the scale. The feds to the provinces, the provinces to the municipalities. So on and so forth. If the money is there, we’re not going to really be telling them how they ought to have gotten it.”</p>
 <p>Shari Decter Hirst</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access the Building Canada Fund to finance major regional infrastructure projects, such as the 18th Street Bridge expansion • Lobby the provincial government as required to amend the Municipal Act as required (see above) 	<p>“So there is the business case piece ... [and] we also have to make a political case. The decision-makers are much like politicians like myself, they understand that this is a pivotal community when it comes to support from the federal and the provincial government. So it’s a reminding of that in a pleasant manner and frankly getting the community on side because you also have to make it a community priority.”</p>

Engaging Senior Levels of Government – Winnipeg Candidates



Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>Brian Bowman</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in collaboration with the provincial government through the BUILDWinnipeg partnership Lobbying the provincial government for Winnipeg's proportional "share" of the additional 1% of Provincial Sales Tax 	<p>"The province is the most important stakeholder that we need better coordination with and that's why I'm not just trying to score cheap and short-term political points during an election beating up on the province. I've created a vehicle where we can actually collaborate and work together. I don't care which party is in after the next election. We're going to have to work with them."</p>
<p>Michel Fillion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby the provincial government for an additional portion of the provincial sales tax 	<p>"The feds (federal government) has said that they are maxed out right now in terms of giving money towards, giving money to provinces and cities towards infrastructure. So in that point, I think it's a done deal, for right now anyways, from what I heard right now anyways. But as far the province is concerned, I would certainly, as other candidates have said, is to follow Sam Katz's legacy on pursuing on getting the one percent (PST) increase to get our fair share, which we are not getting right now."</p>
<p>Paula Havixbeck</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have monthly meetings with the Premier/provincial government Continue to lobby for a higher share of provincial "growth" taxes, such as the PST and fuel taxes 	<p>"I can't see the premier saying "oh yes, we'll give you your whole one percent that you've been seeking". I can't see it happening. But, I can see more negotiation and maybe some out of that and in consultation and having these ongoing meetings, maybe there will be some other tool that we discover together than can be utilized more effectively."</p>
<p>Robert-Falcon Ouellette</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would lobby the provincial government for Winnipeg's proportional share of the revenue raised by the recent PST increase Work with the province to develop a master plan for the Capital Region 	<p>"I think the mayor is going to have to become involved in that provincial election in a big way and demonstrate which party is actually going to be supporting Winnipeg and which party is not going to be supporting Winnipeg. It doesn't mean you can't be there and work in the background and be nice and play nice in the sandbox. But sometimes, you have to be like Danny Williams out in Newfoundland and say "At the end of the day, we don't think we have been receiving our fair share" and you have to fight for it and you have to fight hard."</p>

Engaging Senior Levels of Government – Winnipeg Candidates (CONTINUED)





Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>David Sanders</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a formal planning process for discussing infrastructure priorities with senior levels of government 	<p>“We can’t afford not to work together. Even with the federal government regardless of political differences. Everyone shares a common interest in doing the right thing. It’s demonstrated in the past and is now from time to time on different issues. I think we can be more systematic about it. And I would see that as a priority.”</p>
<p>Gord Steeves</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the provincial and federal governments quarterly in formal meetings and ensure that these funding partners commit to the City’s prioritized projects rather than funding other projects farther down in the queue • Take the focus off of which level of government gets credit for financing infrastructure improvements 	<p>“I have no political bell to ring and I don’t have a need to bring attention to myself or any particular project. I’ve been there long enough to know how this works. I will be totally upfront with the province and the federal government saying this is what we should do. And you know what else? You want to share the credit? You want all of the credit? I’m fine with that, just do the projects that we need to do.”</p>
<p>Judy Wasylycia-Leis</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve relationships with the provincial and federal government and work collaboratively on city infrastructure priorities • Improve lobbying efforts to the federal government through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Big-City Mayors Caucus • Not in favour of lobbying the province for Winnipeg’s portion of the 1% PST increase – says the City needs to “get its own house in order” first 	<p>“The mayor can play a role and has a job to do in terms of developing good relationships with other levels of government. ... We have to repair that relationship to work collegially on a collaborative basis not as if we’re in warring camps. That’s number one.”</p>

2.6 Public Private Partnerships (P3s)




- Remarkably, there is a great deal of consensus among candidates regarding the issue of public-private-partnerships (P3s), with candidates across the political spectrum in both cities supportive in principle of using this model to design, build and finance major infrastructure projects. There is agreement across the board that this model can work, provided that P3 agreements are relatively transparent and advantageous to taxpayers. This appears to be connected to both the fact that the P3 model has been used a number of times in Manitoba’s urban centres, as well as requirements imposed by senior levels of government, including the creation of the federal P3 Canada fund and the provincial *Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act*.
- Most candidates see this model working best with large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the rehabilitation and expansion of bridges and major regional roads in both cities. Among the candidates, Winnipeg candidate Paula Havixbeck stood out for advocating for the application of P3s to street renewal in residential areas.

Position on Public-Private Partnerships – Brandon Candidates		
Candidate	Position	Quote
 <p>Rick Chrest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to using P3s, but does not expect the model to fit with significant Brandon infrastructure projects (such as the expansion of the 18th Street bridge) 	<p>“I don’t think there would be an advantage to the city. Obviously, if they [a private developer] had an equation that they feel is advantageous, I’d love to have a look at one of those and see if there is some advantage to it. My first reaction is that is not likely the case.”</p>
 <p>Shari Decter Hirst</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to using P3s and exploring opportunities for implementing these on major infrastructure projects i.e. North Gateway/Black Farm development • Recently implemented City protocol for P3s (passed by city council in September 2014) • Explore opportunities for using this model for additional infrastructure needs in the city 	<p>“We decided that we needed our own framework to enter into these partnerships and we want to have a level playing field. We don’t want to make arbitrary decisions about who we partner with.”</p>

Position on Public-Private Partnerships – Winnipeg Candidates

Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>Brian Bowman</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to using public-private partnerships in principle 	<p>“I want to make decisions based on what’s right for Winnipeggers and what’s right for the future of our city and if that involves private sector – public sector partnerships, we have to look at them as viable vehicles. I’m open to anything that can move us forward as a city.”</p>
<p>Michel Fillion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undecided on whether to use P3s 	<p>“I’ve looked at it. And I still not have made my decision because there are pros and cons. And there are certain projects that they are more suitable for. I have to study it more, before I make any decisions.”</p>
<p>Paula Havixbeck</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive of P3s, particularly for local street renewal projects that are financed via a local improvement levy 	<p>“I’ve been part of two. They’ve been on time, on budget; they come back to the City as a brand-new asset at the end of 30 years. Why would we not do more? Other cities are going way past us - they are funding their whole rapid transit, rail lines, pipes, you name it, community centres, and hospitals ... it’s there and it’s working, so I would take a more aggressive approach with that. “</p>
<p>Robert-Falcon Ouellette</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not opposed in principle to using P3s, but would prefer to use public resources (such as in-house engineering expertise for the design phase) first 	<p>“I’m going to be demanding more from my engineers and my city planners and I’m going to be enabling them to do that work because we have those resources at City Hall. We are one of the largest employers of engineers in Manitoba and I’m going to be using them to the fullest extent possible.”</p>

Engaging Senior Levels of Government – Winnipeg Candidates (CONTINUED)

Candidate	Position	Quote
<p>David Sanders</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to using P3s, but doing so in a way that is transparent about the costs/risks involved 	<p>“The whole process requires that if one is to implement a P3 project that one prepares an analysis of the options including traditional construction and maintenance, funding and financing vs. the various forms of public – private partnerships.”</p>
<p>Gord Steeves</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to using P3s, but would ensure that the annual payments and accumulated investment remain at manageable levels 	<p>“You have to be careful though with the P3s. While they serve a good purpose, and in my opinion, if done properly they ensure the longevity of the asset over a longer period of time, versus if it’s a design built basis ... The one thing that you have to be careful of the accumulated obligation or obligations that exist over time.”</p>
<p>Judy Wasylycia-Leis</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to using P3s provided that the return to taxpayers at the end of the private ownership phase (typically 30 years) is sufficient 	<p>“With respect to P3s, that is a tool we always need to keep on the table. I have said that as long as we do any P3 project that is actually cost effective, and value for money, I would support it. I don’t have an ideological position against P3s.”</p>

2.7 Implementation of the IFC Report

- The Infrastructure Funding Council (IFC), which was chaired by Chris Lorenc of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, submitted a report to Winnipeg City Council and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities in May 2011.² This report contains 17 recommendations for the Manitoba government and municipalities within the province to follow. Some of these recommendations include:
 - Increasing current municipal infrastructure budgets equal to an annual average of the last five years and provide for annual increases equal to the rate of inflation and population growth
 - Publicly setting out a clear detailed strategy for addressing the infrastructure deficit including a time frame, benchmarks, periodic reviews and public accountability for results.
 - Adopting best practices related to construction practices, budgeting and asset management
 - Relaxing municipal borrowing requirements
 - The province allocating a share of provincial consumption taxes and vacating education tax room to infrastructure
 - Establishing a municipal-provincial implementation committee to put these recommendations into place
- The majority of the mayoral candidates in both Winnipeg and Brandon are only somewhat familiar with the IFC report. Most felt that it is a good report and that they would seek to review it in greater detail before trying to implement specific recommendations.
 - Of all of the candidates, only Brian Bowman has announced publicly that, if he becomes mayor, he will implement the recommendations in the IFC report.³ He has indicated that his approach to seeking new revenue and new planning processes for infrastructure investment is linked to focusing on methods that facilitate economic growth: *“We have to grow our way out of the infrastructure deficit and we need the tools in order to do it and we need the processes in order to implement the plans that are sitting on the shelves.”*
 - Paula Havixbeck was also extremely supportive of implementing the IFC report, indicating that her preference would be to update this document with new information available since it was submitted in 2011. *“I would go back and see if we could, again, make this document just a little bit more current or look at what research has been done in each of these areas,”* she said. Havixbeck indicated that she was particularly interested in implementing a number of “best practices” outlined in the report, including improving tendering processes and developing a working group with the provincial government to coordinate infrastructure planning and spending.

² Infrastructure Funding Council (2011), *New Relationships, A New Order: A Balanced Approach To Funding Infrastructure in Manitoba*. <http://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/mayor/pdfs/newrelationships.pdf>



³ Bowman’s infrastructure announcement on September 17th also noted that the “guiding principles” of his infrastructure plan relate to: 1) making infrastructure investment permanent; 2) making investments based on economic growth; 3) embracing innovation; 4) developing partnerships, including via P3s; 5) dedicating revenue streams to infrastructure and 6) public accountability and transparency. These are the same six principles as articulated by the MHCA.

- A sampling of comments by other candidates on the IFC report included the following:
 - Shari Decter Hirst: *“The specifics of (the IFC report), even if they don’t apply to Brandon, were always right there to lend our weight for support. I participated with my other colleagues in the province when I did the big announcement in Winnipeg when we were trying to convince the province to increase funding for infrastructure. It was important that speak with one voice on that issue and I think that’s one of the huge benefits coming out of that report because it actually coalesced us to act cohesively.”*
 - David Sanders: *“And so I see that particular document, plus others really, related to infrastructure, providing a really good starting point for the new council and new administration to start making the right decisions, engage with the public and the budget process, consultation process, which is under way now which tends to feed into the new council and to make it possible to begin a dialogue on some basis of understanding.”*
 - Gord Steeves: *“My sense is that we squarely put the recommendations out on the table for council and we prioritize what’s important and what folks want to do, and we do that with the proper stakeholders, and the folks who have an interest in this, and we grid timeline everything, based on priority, based on funding - look at our capital budgets, our operating budgets and see how everything fits together and you come up with a plan. It takes a little bit of time to do that but you roll through. Once everyone understands what you’re doing and what the timeline is and how you’re going to recommend you’ll see the pieces unfold.”*
 - Judy Wasylycia-Leis: *“(My infrastructure plan) will rely heavily from the information from the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association. The six principles, I think, have to be included in any kind of infrastructure planning. They’ve provided us with the basis, if not the framework for tackling such a humungous problem.”*

2.8 Social Infrastructure Prioritization

- The 2011 Infrastructure Funding Council (IFC) report, as well as other reports regarding infrastructure challenges, distinguish between “core” and “social” infrastructure:⁴
 - Core infrastructure includes roads (regional, collector, local, lane and sidewalk), bridges and culverts, public transit, active transportation, riverbanks, flood protection, water and sewage facilities, land drainage and solid waste facilities.
 - Social infrastructure includes parks and buildings including police, fire paramedic, libraries, pools, arenas, community centres and administration buildings.”
- Candidates were asked to outline how they would balance investment between these two infrastructure requirements and to outline their ideas on some of the specific types of social infrastructure where they would like to see additional investment.

Emphasis on Social Infrastructure – Brandon Candidates

Candidate	Position	Quote
 <p>Rick Chrest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would further study investment in parks and recreation facilities within the context of flood protection/mitigation • Balance investment in parks and recreation facilities that have been damaged by flooding with other core infrastructure needs 	<p>“My view of everything is that we have to strike a balance in dealing with all of this. We can’t just put all of the money underground. At the same time, we can’t put all of the money into restoring the riverbank. Or all of the money redoing the soccer park. We have the elephant that we have to bite (one bite at a time). You could say that we have several elephants and we have to bite.”</p>
 <p>Shari Decter Hirst</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on investment in social infrastructure that helps improve health and quality of life 	<p>“I think that’s critically important and I’m spending a lot of time over the next few weeks during the election talking not just growth and prosperity, but community because there is no sense building a bigger city or a more prosperous city - you also have to build a city you want to live in and certainly some of that is social infrastructure. The challenge is the funding of it.”</p>

⁴Infrastructure Funding Council, p. 35.