



October 7, 2020

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Dear Party Leaders and Regional Candidates,

Questions on Regional Election Items to Party Leaders and Regional Candidates

Expressing regional issues, the Capital Region Mayors have the following questions to all party leaders and regional candidates. Please can you provide your answers by Wednesday, October 14 via reply to this letter and during election town halls so that our residents can be informed on your positions as they prepare for voting.

Child care

Access to affordable childcare continues to be a challenge for families within the Capital Region. Families continue to look for affordable infant and toddler care, and the need for affordable “before and after school care” continues to grow.

Families must make difficult financial choices, and women in particular are halting their careers or finding shift work to accommodate the school schedules. In addition, the impact of COVID-19 has many child care centres reducing the numbers of children, thus resulting in higher childcare costs and a shortage in space.

Our economy will recover when all players can participate equally.

Please address in your election platform how or if your party will:

1. Ensure adequate child care centres are available to meet community needs.
2. Address certification of early childcare educators.
3. Provide funding to families or programs to address gaps in infant care, toddler care, and before- and after-school care centres.

Mental Health, Addictions and Treatment

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there has been an unprecedented escalation in the challenges facing our communities stemming from the mental health and addiction crises. Too many of our residents are affected by mental health and addiction issues and, increasingly, brain injury.

These crises existed before COVID-19 but have been exacerbated by a toxic drug supply, the level of pandemic-related homelessness and encampments, and increasing stigma and anger from some members of our communities. Our businesses – already struggling from the economic impacts of COVID-19 – are facing increased break-ins and other challenges, as a result of increasing social disorder and unpredictable, sometimes violent behaviour from people in crisis.

Please address in your election platform how or if your party will:

1. Quickly address addictions and mental health treatment and recovery options in our communities for youth, adults, and all those with complex needs.
2. Address the toxic drug supply and scale up access to safer pharmaceutical alternatives for people at risk across British Columbia.
3. Help provide appropriate 24x7 response to mental health and addictions calls in the community.

Transportation from Nanaimo South:

Transportation issues on southern Vancouver Island have been largely ignored by successive governments for many years. We acknowledge that a lot of time and effort has gone into the recently released South Island Transportation Strategy yet we are concerned that the outcome plan does not properly address the vision or desired strategy expressed by local residents and elected officials. In these times of a climate crisis we must be looking to all modes of transportation as we work to reduce emissions and to reduce gridlock.

Transportation decisions have been made in an ad hoc fashion for far too long. A regional governance body is necessary.

The population of Vancouver Island is rapidly nearing one million people. We must lay the groundwork now for the future. Local government can only do so much without provincial support.

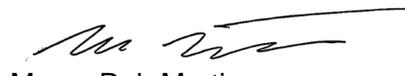
Please address in your election platform how or if your party will:

1. Take action to invest in transportation and transportation related issues on southern Vancouver Island.
2. Ensure a type of regional governance body for transportation matters would be established through working with local government.

3. Acknowledge that transportation issues and governance on southern Vancouver Island must be addressed.

As mayors within the capital region, we wish you all well in the coming provincial election.

Sincerely,



Mayor Rob Martin
City of Colwood



Mayor Geoff Orr
District of North Saanich



Mayor Maja Tait
District of Sooke



Mayor Barb Desjardins
Township of Esquimalt



Mayor Kevin Murdoch
District of Oak Bay



Mayor Lisa Helps
City of Victoria



Mayor Ken Williams
District of Highlands



Mayor Fred Haynes
District of Saanich



Mayor David Screech
Town of View Royal



Mayor Stew Young
City of Langford



Mayor Cliff McNeil-Smith
Town of Sidney

cc: Regional Party Candidates:

- Gord Baird – BC Greens - Langford-Juan de Fuca
- Karen Bill – BC Liberals - Victoria-Beacon Hill
- Florian Castle – Communist Party of BC – Oak Bay-Gordon Head
- Kelly Darwin – BC Liberals - Juan de Fuca
- Mitzi Dean – BC NDP - Esquimalt-Metchosin
- Nicole Duncan – BC Greens - Oak Bay – Gordon Head
- Rob Fleming – BC NDP - Victoria-Swan Lake
- Roxanne Helme – BC Liberals - Oak Bay-Gordon Head
- AnneMieke Holthuis – BC Greens - Victoria-Swan Lake
- John Horgan – BC NDP - Langford-Juan de Fuca
- Zeb King – BC NDP - Saanich North and the Islands
- Grace Lore – BC NDP - Victoria-Beacon Hill
- Andy MacKinnon – BC Greens - Esquimalt/Metchosin
- Desta McPherson – Independent – Esquimalt/Metchosin
- Jenn Neilson – BC Greens - Victoria – Beacon Hill
- Kate O'Connor – BC Greens - Saanich South
- Adam Olsen – BC Greens Saanich North and the Islands
- Lana Popham – BC NDP - Saanich South
- Murray Rankin – BC NDP - Oak Bay-Gordon Head
- Jordan Reichert – Independent – Victoria-Beacon Hill

Stephen P. Roberts – BC Liberals - Saanich North and the Islands
RJ Senko – BC Liberals - Esquimalt-Metchosin
Rishi Sharma – BC Liberals - Saanich-South
Jenn Smith – Independent – Victoria-Swan Lake
David Somerville – BC Liberals - Victoria-Swan Lake
Tyson Riel Strandlund – Communist Party of BC – Langford-Juan de Fuca