

ISSUE

Under-investment in Canada's infrastructure is a chronic issue that has emerged slowly over many decades. Reduced public investment by the federal government has shifted the burden to local municipalities that do not have the tax base to fix crumbling infrastructure nor to build what is needed for the future of our cities and communities. In addition, despite increased funds since the 1990s, deficit-focused budgeting has been inadequate and public-private partnerships (P3s) are not the solution as was hoped.

CONTEXT

According to a 2007 report for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Canadian municipalities have a combined infrastructure deficit of \$123B. This estimate includes four categories of infrastructure:

- Water and Wastewater Systems (\$31 billion);
- Transportation (\$21.7 billion) and Transit (\$22.8 billion);
- Waste management (\$7.7 billion); and
- Community, Cultural and Social Infrastructure (\$40.2 billion).

A further \$2B is estimated to be needed annually to maintain existing physical infrastructure across Canada. Factors such as aging infrastructure and higher material costs are compounded by climate change and destructive weather events. These figures do not include other types of infrastructure such as affordable housing and shelters, low-carbon energy systems, and reliable information and communication technologies. These are all important to so municipalities are livable, resilient and economically competitive.

Along with reduced public investment, there has been a shift of investment from federal to local governments putting a strain on the property tax base and forcing municipalities to rely on service fees and philanthropy. Public-private partnerships (P3s) have not been a reliable solution.

Promises made in the 2015 Federal Budget are seen as optimistic but not sufficient or certain in all municipalities. Despite these types of announcements, the data indicate that the federal government can take greater responsibility for transferring payments to the provincial and municipalities.

QUESTIONS

- What will your party do to ensure our cities, towns and settlement areas have safe and well maintained infrastructure so people can live, work and play without risk?
- Does your party support local municipal control for determining priorities and planning projects so municipalities can leverage all investments most effectively?
- How will your party provide leadership to engage provincial and territorial governments to ensure that infrastructure programs are planned, implemented and funded to sustain and build vital infrastructure without burdening the local property tax base?

RESOURCES

For more information and additional fact sheets in this series: <http://spno.ca/canada-votes-2015>